

The Grass Mark: A Study on the Lifestyle Impacts on the Parents of Indian Female Student-Golfers

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ABSTRACT

The demands of amateur student-athletes in competitive sports extend well beyond the athletes and influence their families. The involvement of young female athletes in national-level sports significantly impacts their parents' work and lifestyle on a variety of levels. This study aims to investigate the numerous impacts on mainly their parents' lives and the degree of its impacts. Different methods are employed in order to gain a holistic perspective on the data collected; a structured survey was conducted, categorising responses into themes such as education of the student-athlete, work and travel arrangements, shopping patterns, social life, stress patterns and their support system. Most parents assist with academics and believe their chosen curriculum supports their child's lifestyle. Findings reveal that one parent typically works full-time, travel for events is frequent, and occupational patterns are influenced by these commitments. Parents report moderate stress, primarily due to balancing academics, athletics, and travel logistics. The study highlights the need for a structured support system but acknowledges limitations in sample size, suggesting future research on broader trends and longitudinal studies investigating the same.

Keywords: Golf, Student-athlete, Lifestyle, Academics, Athletics.

INTRODUCTION

Golf is a precision-based, non-contact sport that requires a combination of physical skill, mental resilience, and strategic decision-making, as players compete individually rather than as part of a team. Golf is riddled with a social perception of being an elitist and individualistic sport, often marked by poor awareness and inadequate knowledge¹. In reality, there is a diverse cohort of

¹Ankan, B., et al. (2019, April 13) A study on people's perception of golf in India. International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health. <https://www.kheljournal.com/archives/2019/vol6issue3/PartD/6-3-10-930.pdf>

players competing as amateurs and professionally, as well as playing for leisure. Golf requires a significant financial investment to cover the cost of equipment, frequent travel for tournaments, access to and use of practice facilities and more. A combination of financial burden and social perception can often serve as a bottleneck for entry into the sport and the building of a career for players. An additional set of challenges faced by female athletes is exposure to the sport and the lack of institutional support, such as the lack of washrooms on golf courses, intrapersonal constraints or structural constraints².

A student-athlete is an individual who balances being an athlete actively competing in their sport and actively studying as a high school, undergraduate or graduate student. This role requires the individual to train and hone different skills like time management and discipline to manage the demands of both their academic and athletic career³.

The role of the parents in each student-athlete's journey is imperative. Many psychological factors such as decision-making, stress and lifestyle adjustments follow after the parent's decision to support their child in competitive golf. The parents assist the student-athlete in balancing both academic and athletic aspirations⁴. Psychological resilience is required to meet the heavy demands of this lifestyle.

Our sample size includes parents from Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities in India. A Tier-1 city consists of a population of 1,00,000 and above, whereas Tier-2 cities have a population between 50,000 to 99,999, according to the 2001 census, mentioned in the Reserve Bank of India circular⁵.

The objective of this study is to investigate the child-parent patterns of active Indian female golfers who are currently or in the past competed on the Indian National Tour, with a focus on the variety of factors in their lives. The significance of these findings has broader implications for the understanding and development of future endeavours in sports to promote the participation of female athletes.

Given this understanding of the sport on a competitive and social level, we hypothesise that the parents of these female student-athletes experience significant lifestyle adjustments to their

² Gentry, J.W., McGinnis, L.P. (2006, April), Getting Past the Red Tees: Constraints Women Face in Golf and Strategies to Help Them Stay. *Journal of Sports Management*. DOI:10.1123/jsm.20.2.218
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287516269_Getting_Past_the_Red_Tees_Constraints_Women_Face_in_Golf_and_Strategies_to_Help_Them_Stay

³ Gayles, J. (2009). The student athlete experience. *New Directions for Institutional Research*. 2009. 33 - 41. 10.1002/ir.311. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229574190_The_student_athlete_experience

⁴ Holt, N. L., and Knight, C. J. (2014). *Parenting in youth sport: from research to practice*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203798553>

⁵ (2011, July 1). Reserve Bank of India.

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work-life balance, alterations in social life and heightened stress. Furthermore, we hypothesise that the heightened stress can be attributed to the influence of the child's academic and athletic performance.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a qualitative survey-based research design to examine the impact of competitive golf on the parents of student-athletes. A qualitative study was chosen to gain a greater understanding of the personal challenges, experiences and adaptations of each respondent that may not be captured by purely numerical data. A thematic analysis is chosen to identify different patterns in parental involvement, occupational adjustments and other influencing factors.

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

The participants of this study were parents of amateur national-level female student golfers in India. All participants are from Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities in India and have access to golf courses and practice facilities. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants, ensuring they had direct experience supporting young golfers in their professional journey. The sample consisted of 23 individual parents with varying backgrounds in terms of occupation, location, and experience in the sport. Inclusion criteria required that participants had a daughter actively competing in a national or amateur golf tournament.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected through a structured survey designed to explore the themes of education, work, family, social, stress patterns and the support system. The survey included a variety of open-ended, multiple-choice and Likert scale questions for qualitative insights and analysis of statistical trends. The survey was distributed via Google Forms to ensure accessibility. All responses were anonymous to maintain participant confidentiality.

DATA ANALYSIS

The responses were thematically analysed to identify patterns in parental experiences. The quantitative responses were used for the analysis of statistical trends. The study was divided into sections to systematically fit the broader themes of the survey. It included a random mix of both qualitative and quantitative responses; they were further categorised into the following categories within the sections as follows: Educational patterns, Parental involvement in education, Work and travel patterns, Family patterns, Shopping patterns, Social life, Active and passive

relaxation, Stress patterns, Personal opinions and Support systems. This approach gave us a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the parents of the student-athletes.

LIMITATIONS

This study relies on self-reported data and is subject to the possibility of personal bias.

RESULTS

SECTION 1

PRIMARY STATISTICS

1. Age category of player

- Amateur category - 18+ years old; Category A - 15-17 years old; Category B - 13-14 years old, Category C - 11-12 years old, Category D - 8-10 years old, Category E - 5-7 years old

Category of the player	Amateur	A	B	C	D	E
Frequency	6	10	2	5	1	0

2. How long has the player been playing for?

Duration	8+ years	3 - 8 years	0 - 3 years
Frequency	10	13	0

EDUCATION (OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES)

1. Full-time or Part-time student

- 69.5% of the student-athletes go to school full-time.

Type of Student	Full-time	Part-time
Frequency	16	7

2. School Board/Curriculum

- 30.4% – CBSE; 26% – ICSE/ISC; 17.3% – NIOS.

Curriculum	NIOS	ICSE/ISC	CBSE	IB	CIE	Other
Frequency	4	6	7	3	0	2

3. Does the decision to choose the board support the child’s journey in athletics?

- 73.9% of the responses indicate that the choice of school board supported the lifestyle of the student-athlete.

Response	Yes	No
Frequency	17	6

- We aim to find a connection between the choice of board and whether the parents believe that their respective curriculum supports the student-athlete's journey in athletics.

Responses	NIOS	ICSE/ISC	CBSE	IB	CIE	Other
Frequency of choosing the ‘Yes’ option (in relation to Q2)	4	5	5	2	0	1

PARENTAL PATTERN AND INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

1. Do / Did you help or any other additional help was available with their academics? (helping with homework, exam prep, etc.)

- Roughly 74% of parents helped their children / aided in their children’s academics.

Response	Yes	No
Frequency	17	6

2. How does/did the school/board accommodate touring and tournaments?

- Other, None, Online classes, Extra classes, Stay back after school

Responses	None	Online	Extra classes	Other
Frequency	6	3	1	13

3. Who was the role model of the child to play golf?

- 43.4% – family; 26% – other; 21.7% – self-observed

Role Model	Self-observed	Family	Sports figure	Other
Frequency	5	10	2	6

SECTION 2

WORK AND TRAVEL PATTERNS

1. Do both parents work full-time?

- Nearly 66% of the responses indicate that only one parent works full-time.

Responses	Both	One
Frequency	8	15

2. Are either of the parents working part-time?

Responses	Neither	One	Other
Frequency	18	4	1

3. Does one or both parents travel with the golfer to events/tournaments?

- Approximately 91% of responses revealed that only one parent travels with the golfer.

Responses	Both	A non-parent family member	One
Frequency	1	1	21

4. What is the frequency of travel?

- 69.5% of respondents travel for almost every event

Responses	Almost every event	Few events	Some events
Frequency	16	2	5

5. Do you believe the work timings/patterns of your occupation are impacted by the travel required to accompany the golfer?

- 82.6% of the respondents believe that their occupational routine/patterns are impacted by the travel required

Responses	Yes	No	Somewhat
Frequency	19	3	1

- We aim to find a connection between the number of events travelled and the experience of this travel directly impacting the occupational patterns of the parent.

Responses	Almost every event	Few events	Some events
Frequency of choosing the 'Yes' option (in relation to Q4)	14	5	0

6. Do you believe that more flexibility to work remotely for the sportsperson's parent(s) will be beneficial?

- 82.6% of respondents believe that the flexibility in remote working is beneficial for the parent

Response	Yes	Not necessarily
Frequency	19	4

7. Do you believe the accompanying parent has evolved/is evolving into the role of manager/mentor for the player?

- 91.3% of the respondents believe that the accompanying parents have evolved into the role of a manager

Responses	Yes	No
Frequency	21	2

FAMILY PATTERNS

8. Does your other child/children participate in elite sports?

Responses	Yes	No	Doesn't apply
Frequency	6	9	8

9. Do you have elderly/very young family members to take care of while you are travelling?

Responses	Yes	No	Doesn't apply
Frequency	8	12	3

10. Do you have pets?

Responses	Yes	No
Frequency	6	17

11. Do you have a caretaker to take care of the pets while you're away?

Responses	Yes	No	Doesn't apply
Frequency	5	5	13

SHOPPING PATTERNS

12. Where do you go shopping for golf equipment/clothes, etc.?

Categories	Online	Store	Ask others to do	Other
Frequency	5	7	0	11

13. Where do you shop for non-golf products/necessities and house & personal requirements (groceries, clothes, home stuff, etc.)?

- 47.8% – online & store; 43.4% – store

Responses	Online	Online + store	Store
Frequency	2	11	10

14. How much of your time is spent on shopping for golf vs other requirements?

Duration Ratio	1:2	1:4	More than 1:4
Frequency	13	9	1

- We aim to find a connection between the amount of time allocated to purchasing golf and non-golf requirements and the parents' preferred mode of shopping.

Categories	Online	Online + store	Store
Frequency of choosing the '1:2' option in relation to Q13	0	7	6

SECTION 3

SOCIAL LIFE

1. How often do you meet extended family/friends/acquaintances from non-golf backgrounds?

Frequency of meeting	Once every few months	Once in a month	Twice in a month	Frequently in a month
Frequency	9	3	6	5

2. In a day, how much time do you spend on social media for golf communication or golf-related activities (like tournament schedule, registration, travel and caddies, etc.)?

- 43.4% spend 1 hour on golf communications

Time spent	1 hour	1 - 4 hours	4+ hours
Frequency	15	8	0

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RELAXATION

3. How do you spend major festivals?

Responses	Home	Tournaments	Extended family and friends	Others
Frequency	10	6	1	6

4. How do you like to spend holidays/vacations?

Responses	Home	Visit new places	Travel and golf	Others
Frequency	7	5	3	8

5. Which type of media do you prefer for entertainment?

- 47.8% – TV/OTT & sports; 30.4% – TV/OTT; 8.6% – Sports

Type of media	Sports	Television/Over-the-top services	Theatre	Other
Frequency	2	7	1	13

SECTION 4

STRESS PATTERNS

1. What is the degree of stress you feel while managing your and your child’s needs (On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest)?

- 43.4% are stressed to a degree of 3

Degrees of stress	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency	6	1	10	4	2

2. Which part(s) do you feel are stressful for you while managing your and your child’s requirements?

- 26% are the most stressed out by athletic performance

Category	Academic	Athletic	Travelling and bookings	Others
Frequency	5	6	5	7

3. Do you believe you are receiving support for managing the athlete-child (from family, spouse, athlete siblings, friends, therapist, etc.)?

- 56.5% believe they receive support for managing the athlete’s needs

Responses	Yes	Almost always	Somewhat

Frequency	13	7	3
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- We aim to find a connection between the degrees of stress experienced and the amount of support experienced.

Degrees of stress	1	2	3	4	5
Frequency of choosing the ‘Yes, receive support’ option (Q1)	4	1	5	2	1
Frequency of choosing the ‘Almost always receive support’ option (Q1)	1	0	2	0	0
Frequency of choosing the ‘Somewhat receive support’ option (Q1)	1	0	3	2	1

PERSONAL OPINIONS

4. Do you think golf participation and competition will increase exponentially if golf is an affordable/accessible sport to all?

Responses	Yes	Maybe/Don’t know
Frequency	21	2

5. Do you think professional golf for women will grow further in India?

Responses	Yes	Maybe/Don’t know
Frequency	17	6

6. Do you think your golfer can travel in a state/regional team alone if travel/stay/food/health/ commute/ coaching/ safety is assured while hosting the tournaments?

Responses	Yes	No	Maybe
Frequency	10	9	4

SECTION 5

SUPPORT SYSTEM OF THE ATHLETE AND THEIR INVESTMENT

1. Are you (as a parent) a golf coach, or do you have an external golf coach?

- 86.9% of student-athletes have an external coach

Responses	Parent	External golf coach	Parent + external
Frequency	1	20	2

2. How much time do you spend with the player on the course/during the commute in a day?

- 65.2% spend around 1 to 2 hours commuting/on the course with the player in a day

Time spent	1-2 hours	2-6 hours	More than 6 hours
Frequency	15	4	4

3. Do you (as a parent) conduct fitness training, or do you have an external trainer?

- 73.9% of student-athletes have a fitness trainer

Type of trainer	External trainer	None	Parent trainer
Frequency	17	3	3

- We aim to find a connection between parents who employ an external golf coach or have a mix of parental golf coaching and external golf coaching and whether these parents employ external fitness trainers as well.

Responses	Parent	External golf coach	Parent + external
Frequency of choosing the 'External trainer' option (Q1)	0	15	2

4. How much time do any of the parents spend with the player on fitness in a day?

Time spent	< 30 mins	1 hour or more	Not required
Frequency	4	10	9

5. Are there any other sports/physical activities your child enjoys (running/swimming, etc.) besides golf?

- 78.2% of student-athletes enjoy a physical activity/sport beyond golf

Responses	Yes	No
Frequency	18	5

6. How much time do any of the parents spend commuting/talking/doing other activities in a day with their child?

- 78.2% of the respondents indicate that parents spend 1 hour or more with their athlete in commuting/talking/other activities

Time spent	< 30 mins	1 hour or more	Not required
Frequency	3	18	2

7. Do you (as a parent) manage your child's diet, or do you have an external dietitian/nutritionist?

- 56.5% of the respondents indicate that the student-athletes have a parent who manages the athlete's diet

Type of Dietician	Parent dietician	External dietician	Not required	Both
Frequency	13	5	3	2

8. How much time do any of the parents spend preparing their child’s meals as per the diet in a day?

Time spent cooking	Approx. 1 hour	1-2 hours	2 hours or more	Other
Frequency	7	7	5	4

- We aim to find a connection between the amount of time dedicated to cooking or managing the child’s diet and whether these parents employ external dieticians.

Type of dietician	Parent dieticians	External dieticians	Not required	Parent + external
Frequency of choosing the ‘1-2 hours’ option (Q7)	5	1	1	0
Frequency of choosing the ‘Approx. 1 hour’ option (Q7)	4	1	1	1
Frequency of choosing the ‘2 or more hours’ option (Q7)	3	1	0	0

9. Are you (as a parent) a sports psychologist for your child, or do you have an external sports psychologist?

Type of sports psychologist		External sports psych	Not required	Parents acting as sports psych	Parent + external
Frequency		11	6	5	1

10. How much time do any of the parents spend with the player on sports psychology in a week?

Time spent	< 1 hour	1 hour or more	Not required
Frequency	6	7	10

DISCUSSION

SECTION 1 ANALYSIS

The role of parents in nurturing student-athletes is critical. Aside from providing financial support, the parents also provide emotional support while juggling their own personal lives, careers and household requirements. The findings reveal that the majority of the parents assist their children in their academics within their capacity. The findings also reveal that the parents believe that their choice in the respective curriculum supports their child’s demanding lifestyle as a student-athlete. The responses also highlight the need for greater institutional support in educational structures for the student-athletes.

SECTION 2 ANALYSIS

Participating in competitive golf requires frequent travel. This can significantly change the work patterns of the travelling parent(s). The findings reveal that in most households, only one parent works full-time, with the majority travelling for almost every event. Most parents report that their occupational patterns are directly impacted by their child’s athletic needs, requiring flexible schedules or career compromises. Further findings also reveal that parents prefer a mix of in-person store and online purchases to manage personal and household requirements. Juggling the multitude of responsibilities can cause challenges for the parents of student-athletes.

SECTION 3 ANALYSIS

The demands of competitive golf and its commitments can create a limitation on the parent on the amount of time spent socializing. The majority of the respondents reported meeting extended family or friends at least twice a month to once every few months and spending major festivals at home. This indicates that parents prioritize their children’s athletic careers, forgoing their own social well-being and personal time. The findings emphasize the need for better social support systems for parents of student-athletes.

SECTION 4 ANALYSIS

A key focus of this study is assessing parental stress. Parents report moderate stress, citing a combination of stressors of academic performance, athletic performance and the logistical bookings for the golf commitments. A large majority of the participants responded that golf

competition would improve if the sport was made more affordable and accessible. These findings reveal the need for institutional support and greater access to this sport⁶. The structures are vital for the growth of this sport as well as the careers of these student-athletes.

SECTION 5 ANALYSIS

Just like the support of parents is crucial for athletes, similar frameworks of golf coaches, fitness trainers, and more are important to student-athletes. Although the majority of parents report employing external golf coaches and fitness trainers, many cite that their children do not require external dieticians or sports psychologists. Many parents reported limited access to specialised professionals such as sports psychologists, fitness trainers, and dieticians. While some families invest in these services privately, others struggle with accessibility. The majority of responses also reveal that most parents spend an hour or more commuting, talking, and spending time on fitness and participating in other activities with their student-athlete child.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of young female golfers' participation in competitive sports on their parents' lifestyles, job roles, and family dynamics. The findings reveal that parents of national-level female golfers often adapt their schedules, financial planning, and personal commitments to support their child's athletic journey.

In section 1, the analysis reveals that the majority of the parents help their athlete-children with their academics within their capacity. The majority of the parents believe that the choice in curriculum supports their child's lifestyle as a student-athlete.

Section 2 studies the work and travel patterns as well as the shopping patterns. The study reveals that the majority of the parental units have only one parent working full-time. Most participants believe that their occupational patterns are impacted by the travel required for the golf events.

In section 3, we delve into the social life as well as the active and passive relaxation of the participants.

In section 4, we explored the stress patterns and a few personal opinions related to the field of women's golf. The majority of the participants reported a score of 3 on a scale of 1-5 when studying the level of stress among the parents of the student-athletes.

⁶ Ankan, B., et al. (2019, April 13) A study on people's perception of golf in India. International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health. <https://www.kheljournal.com/archives/2019/vol6issue3/PartD/6-3-10-930.pdf>

In section 5, we explore the support system of the student-athletes. We explored different roles such as fitness trainer, dietician and sport psychologist – all vital in supporting a student-athlete. These findings suggest that female student-athletes in India require a well-structured support system that balances athletic and academic growth. Different methods like improving social media strategies⁷, increasing accessibility and affordability, and private and public provisions to increase entries into the sport can be employed.

The hypothesis was proved correct. It states that the parents of these female student-athletes experience significant lifestyle adjustments to their work-life balance, alterations in social life and heightened stress, and furthermore, the heightened stress can be attributed to the influence of the child's academic and athletic performance. The findings support the hypothesis, with a noticeable difference in the heightened stress, which can be attributed to a variety of stressors not limited to the student-athlete's academic and athletic performance. However, limitations such as sample size and regional specificity may affect the generalizability of these conclusions.

Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of fostering a culture that encourages young female athletes to pursue their passion without compromising educational and professional aspirations. As India continues to develop its presence in global sports, strengthening parental awareness and support networks will be crucial in shaping the next generation of successful female golfers. Future research should investigate the depth of these impacts and longitudinal trends in parental attitudes, compare experiences with male athletes or examine institutional support systems for young female golfers.

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