



Attitudes towards women's sports, sportswomen and women in India

2026

Attitudes towards women's sports, sportswomen and women in India

2026

Lucile Stengel, Ella Gradidge, Claire Rooney



Survey by:

KANTAR

Contents

Methodology p.4

Authorship and Acknowledgments p.6

Executive Summary p.7

Section 1. Sport in women's lives p.11

Cricket participation doubles amongst women surveyed

It's now even more about cricket

Urban India less sporty than it used to be

Positive shifts in childhood participation not carrying into adulthood

Finding time to play the biggest challenge

Section 2. Viewership and attendance of women's sports p.19

One in two people now follow women's sports

Women's cricket closing the viewership gap to men's

With higher viewership comes heightened negativity

More space for sportswomen in men's sports broadcasting

Section 3. Professional sportswomen: awareness and attitudes p.25

Women now know a bit more about individual sportswomen

Indian teams – and individual athletes – are inspiring people to watch sports

More women have considered sports as a career

Support for equal prize money strong as ever

Section 4. Breaking barriers: the road ahead p.29

Improving access to school sports facilities

Making space for women in neighbourhoods and communities

Progress slows where attitudes don't shift

Can broader progress towards gender equality pave the way for change?

Appendix p. 35

Methodology

This research was commissioned as an independent study by the BBC and Collective Newsroom to assess women's participation in sports and the wider societal attitudes shaping this participation and the consumption of women's sports in India today. Kantar was commissioned to design and conduct the survey component of the research.

The present report builds on an earlier study published in 2020 around the launch of the BBC's inaugural *Indian Sportswoman of the Year* initiative. Six years on - against a backdrop of growing international success for Indian sportswomen - the research assesses whether participation levels have shifted nationwide, and whether public attitudes toward women athletes have evolved. The study's core research objectives therefore remain consistent with those established in 2020:

- To assess women's participation in sports and in physical activity, to establish how it differs from men's, and to identify the factors that facilitate or hinder this participation
- To understand current levels of consumption of women's and men's sports – coverage and events - as well as who engages with it
- To get a sense of which Indian sportswomen are most popular across the surveyed states, and to examine the role sportswomen play in people's lives, including their role in driving engagement with sports
- To delve into broader societal attitudes toward gender equality, including views on women's right to work and to exercise personal autonomy, and how these attitudes shape perceptions of sportswomen and participation in sport more broadly

For all of the questions above, we assessed differences by gender, geographic location (across various Indian states, and across rural and urban), age, and socio-economic class.

Research design

This report lays out the findings of a large quantitative survey covering 10,304 respondents across 14 Indian states.

Research fieldwork was conducted by Kantar using a similar research design and sample as in the previous study commissioned in 2020 to ensure comparability of data. The survey conducted covered a significant share of India and aimed to adequately represent the diversity within each state being surveyed.

- Face to face interviews were administered in local language to a sample of 10,304 respondents across 14 Indian states: Bihar, Odisha, Meghalaya¹, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.
- Fieldwork in Manipur was not feasible this year due to ongoing socio-political unrest and security concerns. Manipur was replaced with Meghalaya in this year's sample design. Given the comparable population size and regional characteristics of Meghalaya and Manipur, Meghalaya served as the most appropriate alternative when security conditions prevented fieldwork in Manipur. Please note that Meghalaya was excluded in data tables showing like for like comparisons - and so was Manipur, which was surveyed only in 2020 - to ensure full comparability between the two studies.
- The sampling methodology used in the study was multistage stratified random sampling, achieving state representativity across the states surveyed. Fieldwork was conducted across a spread of rural and urban locations, in different town classes and village classes, with men and women, young and old, and across socio economic classes (NCCS²). Town and village classes followed the standard Kantar classification framework.
- Fieldwork started on December 26th 2025 and ended on January 30th 2026. For ease of reading we are reporting findings from this study as '2026' findings throughout this report, although fieldwork included a few days in December, and respondents answered questions about sports participation and sports viewership with the months preceding fieldwork in mind.
- State-level representativity was ensured through weighting and stratified sampling. The study was designed to represent the 14 selected states at the aggregate levels of state, urban/rural, town classes, and village classes. The final achieved sample covered a population base of 751.62 million. Please note that the research design did not aim to represent the whole of India. Therefore, any findings reported from this study should not be reported as applicable to all of India.
- At the total respondent level, sampling error is 0.97%. For the various age groups it ranges between 1.84% and 2.78%; and at the level of the individual state it ranges between 2.76% and 4.57%, all at 95% confidence interval³.
- Surveys capture people's claimed behaviour, which does not always reflect actual behaviour due to biases and imperfect recall. While surveys are useful to gauge people's opinions and to establish trends in reported behaviour, they may not match other available industry data, such as viewership data, which is often based on people meters or web tracking.

You can find a more detailed description of the methodology including sampling, approach to analysis and weighting methodology in the report's appendix.

¹ This state was surveyed for the first time this year.

² Specifically NCCS, or new Socio Economic Classification, co-developed by the Market Research Society of India and the Media Research User's Council, used to understand a person's -well- socio economic context. See for details: <https://www.barcindia.co.in/resources/pdf/NCCS%20is%20the%20New%20SEC-Sept%2015.pdf>

³ Further details of the sampling and methodology are given in the appendix.

Authorship and acknowledgments

Lead authors

Lucile Stengel, Ella Gradidge, Claire Rooney – BBC News Global Audiences

Questionnaire and research design

Lucile Stengel, Ella Gradidge – BBC News Global Audiences

Khushboo Sandhu – Collective Newsroom

Data cleaning, weighting and data tables

Kantar India teams – in particular Puneet Avasthi, Arnab Dutta, Madhura

Sompurkar and Anuja Vengurlekar

The project team would like to thank:

- At the BBC: Tim Awford, Kevin Cowan, Anna Parker, Thad Varey, Emma Theedom, Sana Safi, Vandana Vijay, Pinar Ersoy
- At Collective Newsroom: Rupa Jha, Mukesh Sharma, Khushboo Sandhu, Jyoti Priyadarshi, Sushila Singh. We would especially like to thank Khushboo Sandhu who contributed her expertise to the findings
- The team at Kantar India for their continued collaboration and commitment throughout the project. We would especially like to thank Puneet Avasthi, Arnab Dutta, Madhura Sompurkar and Anuja Vengurlekar who led on fieldwork management, weighting, data quality and data processing
- The many fieldworkers who worked on this project often in challenging conditions
- The study's 10,304 respondents across the fourteen Indian states who gave us their time

Executive Summary

This study comes at a time of significant and ever-growing achievements for Indian sportswomen. At the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, female athletes delivered historic performances, from Manu Bhaker's historic double medal win to the ten medals earned by para sportswomen across four disciplines. 2025 saw further milestones, marked by the women's kabaddi team winning the World Cup and the Asian Championship, the expansion of the national women's football league, and perhaps the biggest turning point of all - the Indian women's cricket team securing its first ICC Women's World Cup on home soil.

There is no doubt the momentum around women's sports has accelerated. This drive is also reflected in government initiatives like Khelo India or the Asmita League, which have sought to improve access to and participation in sport at all levels. Against this backdrop, our findings reveal positive shifts in women's overall engagement with sport, although barriers remain in wider societal attitudes and behaviours, which continue to hold sportswomen back.

A decisive shift toward cricket

A notable shift in this study is the sharp rise in the proportion of Indian women surveyed who reportedly play cricket. Women's participation in the sport has doubled across the states surveyed. From 5% of Indian women surveyed playing in 2020, 10% now say they play the sport. And the gender skew in cricket participation has reduced as a result – it is now a 25/75 male-female ratio.

Our findings indicate that individual athletes and national teams may play a role in driving engagement with sport. We find that women's participation has gone up mostly in disciplines in which Indian women have had recent successes on the international stage. Badminton is one of them.

Across the board, however, cricket has extended its lead as the most played sport, and the picture is more mixed elsewhere. Kabaddi has seen a decline in reported participation for both women and men, in spite of reports of growing viewership and investment. Participation in running and football has also dropped, though these sports remain popular in key hubs.

Women's sports have narrowed the viewership gap and broadened their audience

More than one in two people surveyed (51%) now say they have seen any coverage of women's sports, and the viewership gap to men's events has narrowed. We see

trends in viewership mirror trends in participation, with cricket driving much of the growth in viewership of sport. The claimed audience to the women's league (WPL) is now nearly double the audience of the Women's T20 Challenge in 2020 (28% have viewed the WPL in 2026, against 15% for the T20 Challenge in 2020) - and not too far from the men's league (IPL).



1 in 2

People say they watched women's sports in the last 6 months

The findings suggest men are now really engaged with women's sports. Half of the men surveyed say they have viewed a women's sporting event in the last six months, and a third have attended an event in person. Although the ICC Women's World Cup (September–November 2025) will likely have contributed to this number, it also reflects the ability of women's sports to draw significant audiences.

Young Indians emerge as strong drivers of change

Young women are driving growth in both sports participation and viewership across the states surveyed. One in six women under 24 years old now say they play cricket – this used to be one in fourteen – and places young women as the fastest growing demographic. A similar pattern is emerging in badminton, where young women appear to be driving the strongest gains in participation across the fourteen states surveyed.

This momentum is mirrored in how young people consume sport. Young women have become one of the most engaged audiences, with 54% of those surveyed watching some form of sports coverage - up from 40% in 2020. Young men remain the largest audience for men's sports, but their interest in women's sports has expanded: six in ten consume any coverage of women's sport, and four in ten say they have attended a women's match in person.

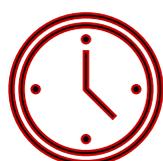
Alongside these shifts in viewership and participation, our findings indicate that young people's outlook on sports as a career is also more positive. Three in ten 15-24 year olds have now considered sport as a career – for young women, this has gone up from one in seven (16%) to one in four (26%).

Overall sports participation only slightly up, down in cities

Despite progress within cricket, broader patterns of sports participation in India show only modest improvement to our last study in 2020. A majority of respondents - over six in ten - continue to report no involvement in sport or physical activity. The overall

picture masks diverging trends: participation has increased in rural areas while declining among urban populations.

The study findings indicate childhood participation has risen across the board and particularly among girls (up to seven in ten women say they played sports in childhood). But this early engagement does not translate into sustained participation in adulthood. Time scarcity has emerged as the dominant constraint, with 65% of those who don't play sport identifying *lack of time* as the primary reason why they don't - an increase since 2020, which could point to the growing pressures of work, mobility, and domestic responsibilities in adult life.



41%

Of Indians surveyed say they do not have the **time to play sport**

Making space for women to play in neighbourhoods and communities

Access to sports facilities is no longer one of the top reported barriers to girls' participation in sports during childhood, yet gender differences in where and how children play remain. Women in this study report playing in school much more than men do: 37% of women who were active in childhood say they played mainly at school, compared with 26% of men. Men, by contrast, are more likely to play in neighbourhood spaces or informal social settings, indicating that public and community environments continue to be more accessible and socially permissible for boys.

Meanwhile, safety remains a concern for women. 13% of the women who say they are not involved in sports cite 'safety concerns' as the reason, reflecting how fears of harassment and gender-based violence continue to limit participation. These concerns are especially pronounced in states where people perceive gender violence to have risen over the past decade, suggesting that broader climates of insecurity continue to shape some women's relationship with sport today.

Wider societal attitudes towards sportswomen have not changed

While behaviours appear to have changed, the findings in this study suggest broader attitudes towards sportswomen and towards coverage of women's sports have not.



3 in 5

Say there is **too much coverage of women's sports**

A high proportion of the people surveyed (59%) say there is “too much coverage of women’s sports” – many of them are people who have also said they are followers of women’s sports. Young respondents are also more likely to agree with this statement.

This finding may also reflect the changing nature of the sports audience. With young people now the top group consuming sport, social media has become the top platform for keeping up with the topic, while the number of people using TV news to keep up with coverage has gone down (-10pp).

But stereotypes about what professional sportswomen should look like, and about their sporting abilities, continue to hold strong, too. Almost a third of the people surveyed still think professional sportswomen need to look attractive, and that they are not as entertaining compared to men. The same share believe they are ‘damaging their bodies’ and ‘affecting their fertility’.

As visibility and investment in women’s sport continue to expand, and as the broader momentum towards gender equality continues, there is reason to believe that wider public attitudes towards sportswomen will shift in parallel. Meaningful progress is likely to be gradual, and will depend on sustained support across institutions, media and culture.

Section 1. Sports in women's lives

How many women engage in sports and fitness activities today, and how does this compare to men? We asked Indians across the states surveyed about the role of sports in their lives, assessing participation in sports overall as well as in individual disciplines. We were keen to understand what had changed since 2020. Are women more engaged than they were six years ago, and if so, with which sport?

Cricket participation doubles amongst women surveyed, now women's most played sport

Cricket was the most played sport in 2020, but featured a strong gender skew. A bigger proportion of women in fact played kabaddi, the second biggest sport (one in ten women surveyed played kabaddi, against one in twenty for cricket).

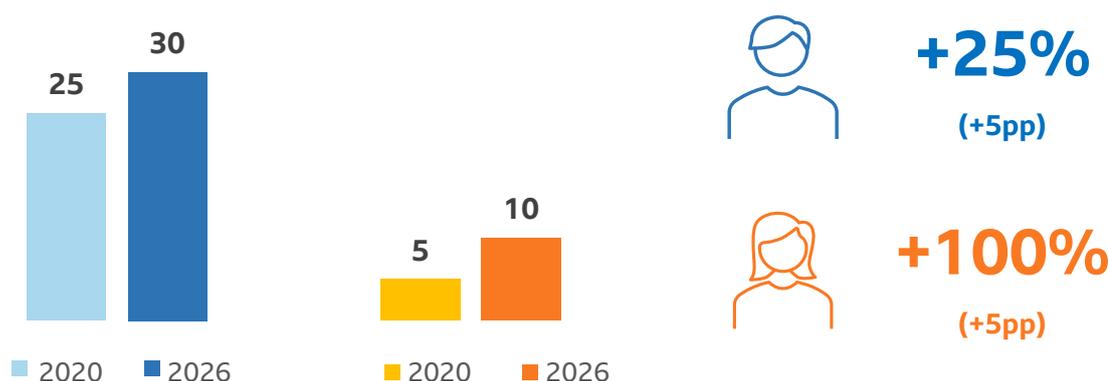
In 2026, this picture has changed. The proportion of women saying they play cricket has doubled – up from 5% in 2020, to 10% in 2026 – one in ten women. For young women respondents, it is as high as one in six (16%), up from one in fourteen (6%) in 2020.

There has been growth in the number of men playing cricket, too. 30% of male respondents now say they play the sport (+5pp, +20%). But the sheer pace at which women's cricket participation has increased means the gender gap in cricket has narrowed. In 2020, there were five times more men playing cricket than women. In 2026, this has reduced to three times more men. A quarter of all those who play cricket are now women (24%), up from 17% in 2020.

% Women, % Men playing cricket - 2020, 2026

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

Base: women and men in all states surveyed across 2020 and 2026 (Men: 2020=5062, 2026=5165, Women: 2020=4628, 2026=4677)



Gender profile of cricket players in 2026

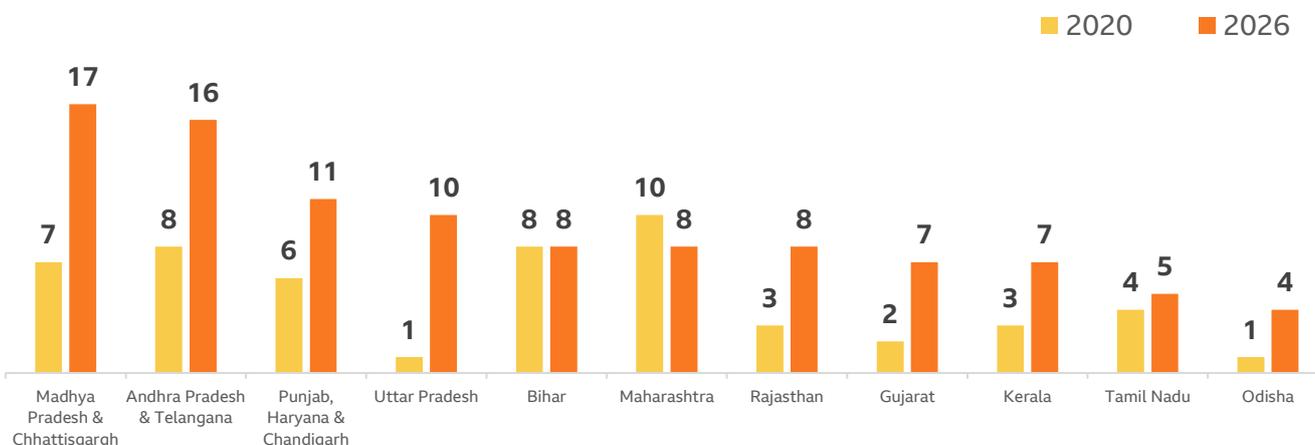
Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?
 Base: women and men who play cricket in all states surveyed. (Men: 5474, Women=4380)



Where have we seen the biggest changes? All Indian states surveyed bar Maharashtra and Bihar have seen growth in the proportion of women playing cricket. In Uttar Pradesh, the number has grown tenfold. The state, where the UP Warriorz team play, has been investing in talent development in recent years. In late 2025, Lucknow University reported its highest ever turnout at the university’s women’s cricket trials⁴.

% Women playing cricket, by state

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?
 Base: women in all states surveyed across 2020 and 2026 (2020=4628, 2026=4677)



It’s now even more about cricket

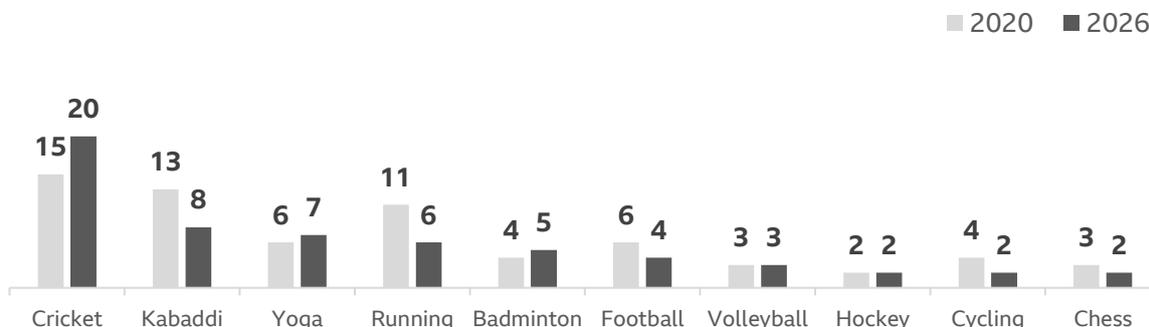
In our 2020 study, cricket just about edged kabaddi as the most played sport. The sport has now consolidated its lead as the most played sport across the fourteen states - far above any other sport.

⁴ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/world-cup-victory-inspires-record-turnout-at-lu-womens-cricket-trials/articleshow/125172109.cms>

Top 10 sports played (% all respondents playing)

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (2020=9690, 2026=9842)



We observe a drop in kabaddi participation everywhere, apart from in Punjab and Haryana, where kabaddi remains smaller than other sports (6% play kabaddi, against 21% for cricket). The drop is proportionally larger among lower socio-economic categories (SECs CDE) as well as older respondents (45+ years old). The profile of kabaddi players has become younger: 76% of the people who play now are under 34 years old, against just over half in 2020.

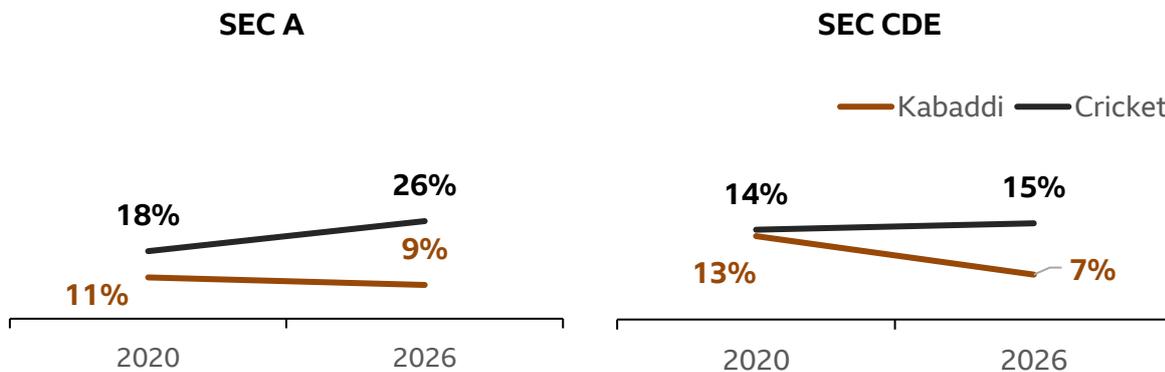
But it doesn't look like people in lower socio-economic groups have left kabaddi for cricket. These groups only report a one percentage point increase in cricket participation. Cricket now skews more affluent than it did in 2020, with 26% of the most affluent respondents (SEC A) saying they play the sport.

Kabaddi remains very popular in some states. It is played by more than one in ten people in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (14%) and Tamil Nadu (18%) and by just under one in ten (9%) people in Maharashtra.

% Respondents in SEC/NCCS A (left, affluent category) /SEC/NCCS CDE (right, less affluent categories) playing cricket or kabaddi

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

Base: all respondents in SEC A. (2020=3227, 2026=4128), SECs C, D, E. (2020=3366, 2026=2624)



Looking at other sports, the picture is mixed. This year's data shows a much lower proportion of respondents take part in running activities than in 2020. This comes at a time when organised running events are reporting big growth across major Indian cities. But we are seeing a decline in this study – which looks at all demographic groups - and the drop is steeper amongst the 15-24 year-old age bracket, indicating younger people may be choosing other sports instead.

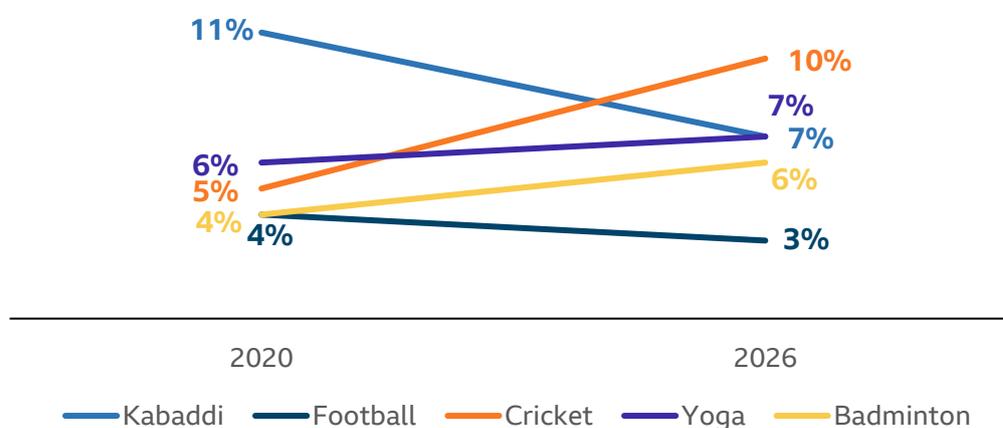
Football participation has also declined across the states surveyed, although this hides regional differences. In Kerala, where football is popular, participation among female respondents has increased (from 4% to 6%), and so has participation among male respondents. 15% of all people surveyed in Kerala now say they play football (up from 12%). In Meghalaya, another hub for football, claimed participation is as high as 16% amongst women, or one in six women surveyed.

One sport growing amongst women is badminton – now played by 6% of women surveyed against 4% in 2020 (2020 fieldwork was conducted prior to the Tokyo Olympic Games), while participation amongst men has stayed level (4%). Unsurprisingly, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana partly drive this increase. The proportion of women playing badminton in both states has tripled since 2020, from 3% of the population to 9%. Another state seeing big change is Punjab, where a staggering 11% now report playing badminton, months following Tanvi Sharma's latest win on the international circuit. There remains an urban-rural divide to the sport – twice as many players are found in urban areas - but the age profile indicates good growth potential. One in ten (10%) people aged under 24 in this year's study say they play badminton.

Top 5 most played sports by women (% Women playing) – 2020, 2026

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

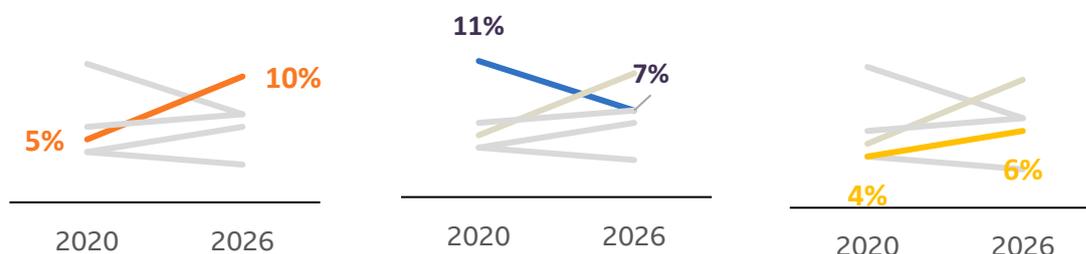
Base: women in all states surveyed across 2020 and 2026 (2020=4628, 2026=4677)



% Women playing cricket (left), kabaddi (middle), badminton (right)

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

Base: women in all states surveyed across 2020 and 2026 (2020=4628, 2026=4677)



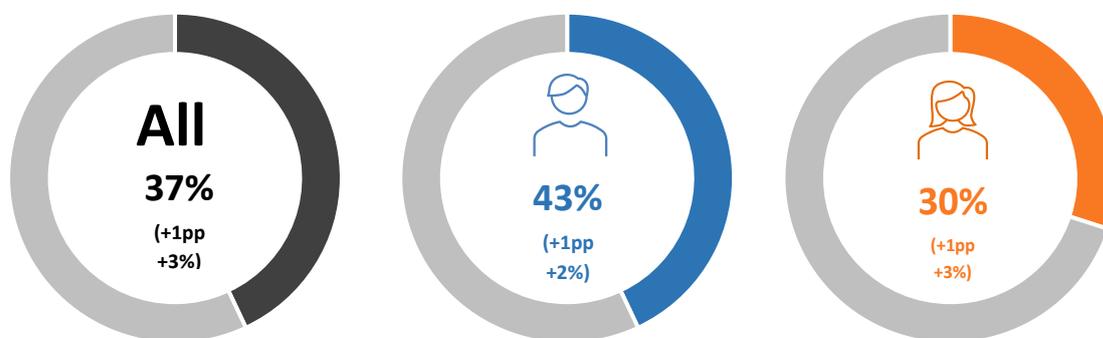
Overall sports participation only slightly up, down in urban centres

Cricket is the big story this year. But this increase in participation is not mirrored across all other sporting disciplines. Participation in sports overall is only slightly up – from 36% of people saying they play any form of sport in 2020, to now 37% across the fourteen states (+3%, +1pp).

Sports participation in 2026 (% playing any sport) – All, Men, Women

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

Base: Respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (All: 2020=9690, 2026=9842, Men: 2020=5062, 2026=5165, Women: 2020=4628, 2026=4677)



Northern and Eastern states⁵ have grown participation and are now closing the gap to the South. Bihar emerges as the sportiest state in this study, with as high as one in two (51%) people saying they play sport (up from 36% in 2020). This increase aligns with the state's substantial investment in sports infrastructure and with its hosting of the 2025 Khelo India Youth Games⁶. Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh have also seen big increases, climbing from 15% to 43% overall sports participation. Both Haryana and Punjab continue to contribute disproportionately to India's Olympics

⁵ Note by 'Northern and Eastern states' we refer to the Northern and Eastern states covered in this study of 14 Indian states

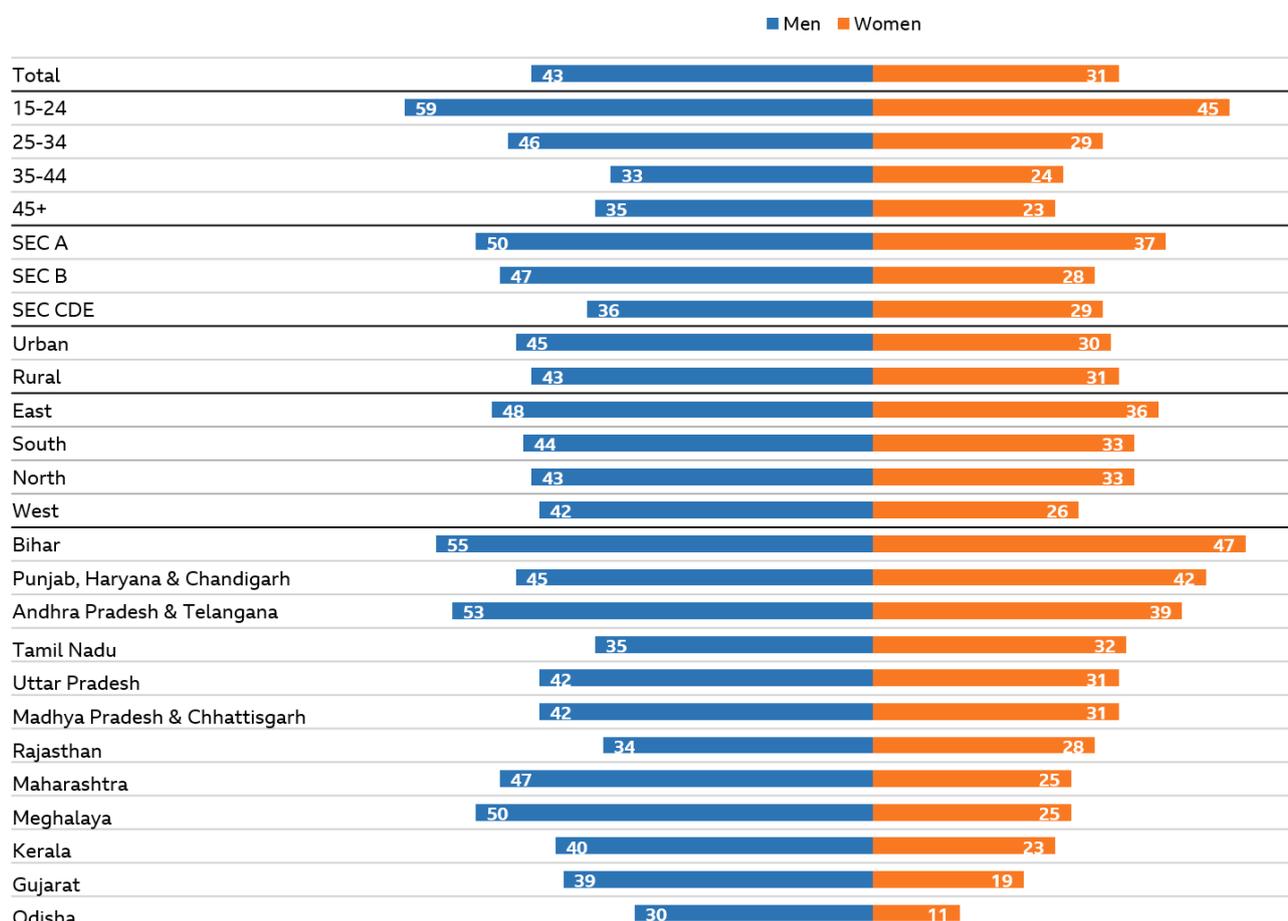
⁶ <https://www.newsonair.gov.in/khelo-india-youth-games-2025-ends-maharashtra-tops-with-158-medals/>

squads. Incidentally, athletes from Punjab have secured two of India's six medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics⁷.

Sports participation in 2026 (% playing any sport) – by demographics

Question: Which sports and games or physical activity, if any, do you play or engage in?

Base: All respondents surveyed in 2026 (10304)



The overall picture on sports participation also hides important differences between urban and rural respondents. While more people say they play sport in rural areas (+4pp, +12%) fewer say they do in urban centres (-4pp, -10%). 37% sports participation across any discipline in the states surveyed would place India somewhere in the middle compared to other countries. The European Union average for instance is at 44%, but participation ranges from as high as 84% Norway, and as low as 6% in Romania⁸.

⁷ <https://www.olympics.com/en/news/paris-2024-olympics-india-medals-tally-winners-table>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Sport_participation_-_practicing_sport_and_physical_activity

Increases in childhood participation not carrying into adulthood

Sports participation in childhood has noticeably risen. 74% of respondents now say they have played sports as children, against 69% in 2020 (+7%). There have been positive shifts for women: 70% of women now report having played sports in childhood (it was 66% in 2020).

Our data suggests schools are playing a big role in this. 31% of the people who played any form of sport as children say they did so mostly at their school. This figure is now much higher amongst women surveyed (37% - it was 27% in 2020). And our data indicates improvements to school facilities may have helped usher more girls into sporting activity. Fewer women cite a *lack of facilities at school* as a reason for not playing sports as kids – this is down to 16% in 2026, from 25% in 2020. For female respondents aged 15-24, this is now down to one in ten (10%).

But while most of the Indians surveyed say they have played in childhood, something happens on the way to adulthood. Only half of them continue to practise sport as adults. This ratio was slightly higher in 2020, and featured an urban skew: 57% of urban respondents carried on playing sports as adults. Today, this proportion has gone down to 52% for urban respondents, suggesting people in urban centres are facing bigger barriers.

Finding time to play the biggest challenge

For many people in this study, time scarcity has emerged as the main constraint. When asked about why they don't play sport, two thirds of respondents (65%) cite *lack of time* as the reason why they don't. This proportion continues to be higher amongst married people (67%) and people with children (69%), for whom finding time is even more difficult.

The trend in this year's data suggests time is a bigger constraint than it used to be. The proportion of those who do not play sport citing time as a barrier has gone up by as high as 44% since our study in 2020 (+20pp, from 45%). The increase is seen across the board, although more so amongst people under 45. And work-life balance may be playing a role in this. As high as 72% of the people surveyed who are in full-time work say they don't have time to play sports – this proportion rises to 74% for men in full-time work.



41%

**of Indians surveyed do not have the
time to play sport**

Globally, India continues to score on the lower side when it comes to work-life balance. In 2025, it ranked 42nd out of 60 countries studied in the Global Work Life Balance Index⁹. A 2024/25 study by the International Labour Organisation found India to be one of the most overworked nations, with over half of the Indian population working 49 hours or more per week. And a 2024 study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry and the Boston Consulting Group found that 58% of Indians had experienced burnout and workplace exhaustion¹⁰. This compares to 48% on average for the rest of the world.

The study's data suggests addressing issues of work-life balance could help free up time for people to keep fit, and to tackle future dropout from sports. Targeting improvements in work-life balance may also prove beneficial to women, who are more likely to juggle childcare, work and housework.

⁹ <https://remote.com/resources/research/global-life-work-balance-index>

¹⁰ <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/india-hr-revolution-building-workplaces-for-the-future>

Section 2. Viewership and attendance of women's sports

As well as participation, this study also looks at levels of interest in sports coverage and in specific sporting events, across both women's and men's sports. How big is the gap in viewership between women's and men's events? Has viewership grown, and if so, for what sports?

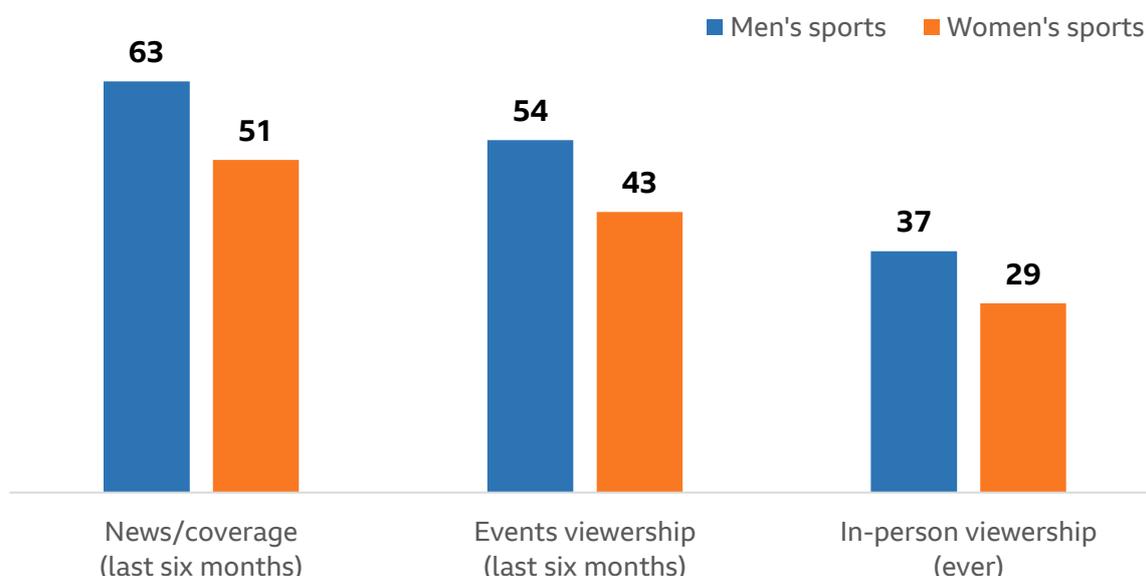
One in two people now follow women's sports

As many as half of the people surveyed (51%) say they have seen coverage of any women's sport in the last six months. This is lower, but not too far from the proportion of people who saw coverage of men's sports (63%). We see a similar trend for viewership of live sporting events, with 43% respondents saying they have watched women's games, against 54% for men's events.

And notably, the viewership gap between women and men's sports is even narrower when it comes to attending games in person. Three in ten claim they have attended a women's game (29%) compared to 37% for men's games. This is an 8 percentage point gap.

% Following coverage, viewing events, or attending women's/men's sporting events

Base: All respondents surveyed in 2026 (10304)

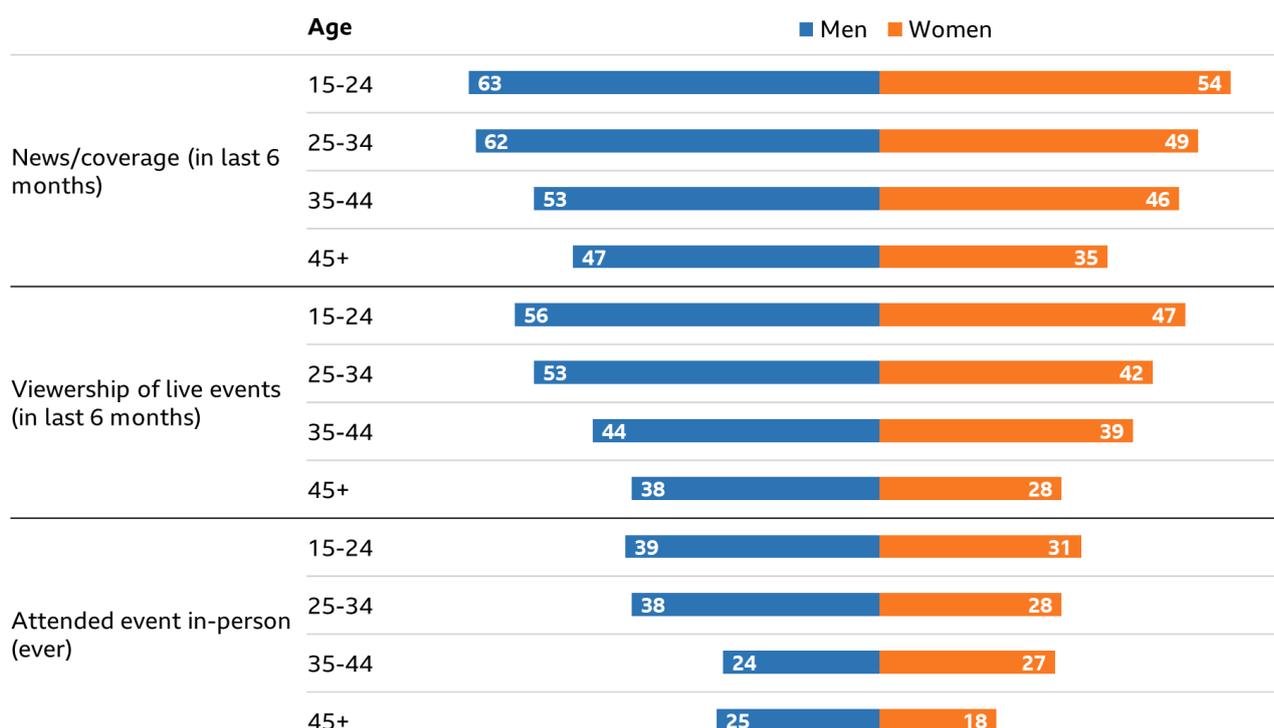


This picture looks positive in comparison with other countries. In the UK, for instance, while Gov.UK figures report that 75% had watched any live sports¹¹, a report by the Women's Sport Trust found that far fewer, 37%, had viewed women's live sports in 2025¹². In the USA, 23% follow women's sports compared to 45% following men's sports¹³. Of course, the figures in our report will be boosted by the ICC Women's World Cup, which happened in the autumn, however, our findings suggest viewership to other sporting events is also closing the gap.

We see that young women (aged 15-24) are playing a significant role in helping to close this gap. Half (47%) of young women have viewed women's sports in the last six months. And men have become big consumers of women's sports, too. Almost half the men surveyed (47%) claim they have viewed a women's event in the last six months, with a third (31%) attending one event in person, relative to 39% and 26% respectively for women. Here again, we see younger male respondents are most likely to engage.

% Following coverage, viewing, or attending women's sporting events by gender and age, 2026

Base: All men and women surveyed in 2026 (Men=5474, Women=4830)



¹¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-survey-2024-25-annual-publication/headline-findings-for-the-participation-survey-april-2024-to-march-2025#live-sports--gambling>

¹² <https://www.womenssporttrust.com/the-visibility-of-womens-sport-hit-new-highs-in-2025/>

¹³ <https://apnorc.org/projects/attention-to-mens-professional-sports-still-outpaces-womens-but-there-is-closer-parity-for-college-sports/>

This year, we also asked about awareness and engagement with women’s parasports. Claimed viewership is unsurprisingly lower, at just under one in six (15%), but this figure is not negligible outside of a summer Paralympic Games year. It is only slightly below the figure for men’s parasports (18%).

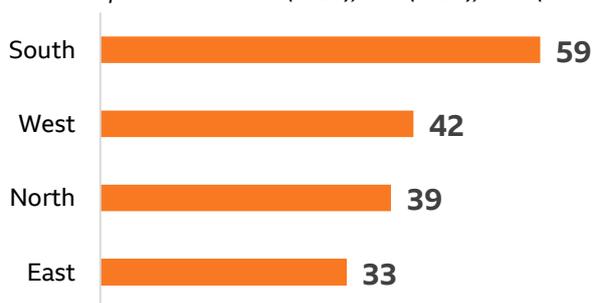
There continues to be Southern dominance in viewership to sporting events in general. A high proportion of people in Southern states - where sports participation is also higher - view and attend live games. This is also true for women’s sports – three in five (59%) people surveyed in Southern states say they have watched or listened to an event in the past six months.

But the picture still varies across states, influenced by local sports culture. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for instance, women’s cricket dominates viewership, while in Tamil Nadu, kabaddi is just as popular as cricket. Meanwhile, in Kerala, cricket remains the most viewed, but women’s football is also very popular.

Viewership of women’s sports in 2026 by region (% any)

Question: Thinking about women’s sports, which of these have you watched or listened to a sporting event on TV, radio or any other digital platform, in part/highlights or in full in last 6 months?

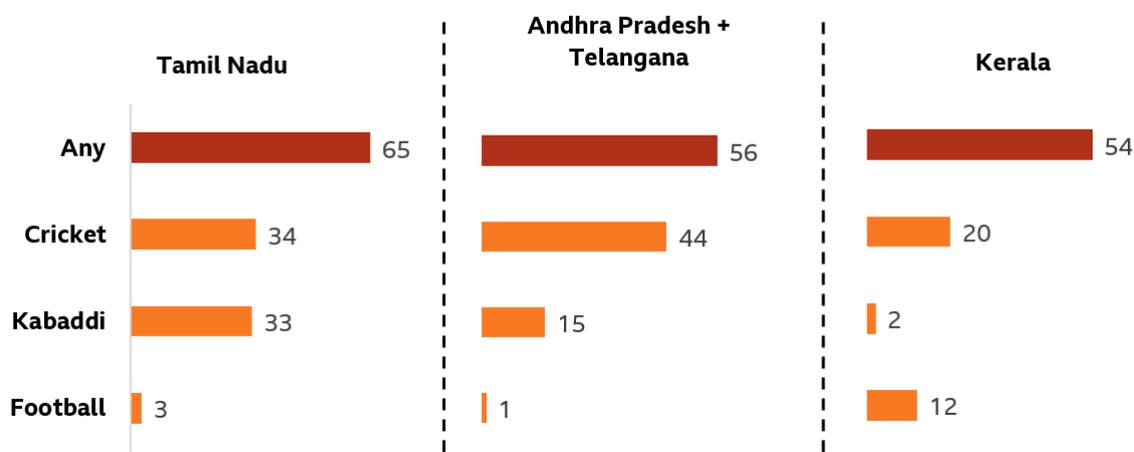
Base: All respondents in North (1820), East (1529), West (4033), South (2922)



Top 3 states with highest viewership of women’s sports overall in 2026 – broken down by sport (%)

Question: Thinking about women’s sports, which of these have you watched or listened to a sporting event on TV, radio or any other digital platform, in part/highlights or in full in last 6 months?

Base: All respondents in Tamil Nadu (1155), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (1104), Kerala (663)



Women's cricket closing the viewership gap to men's

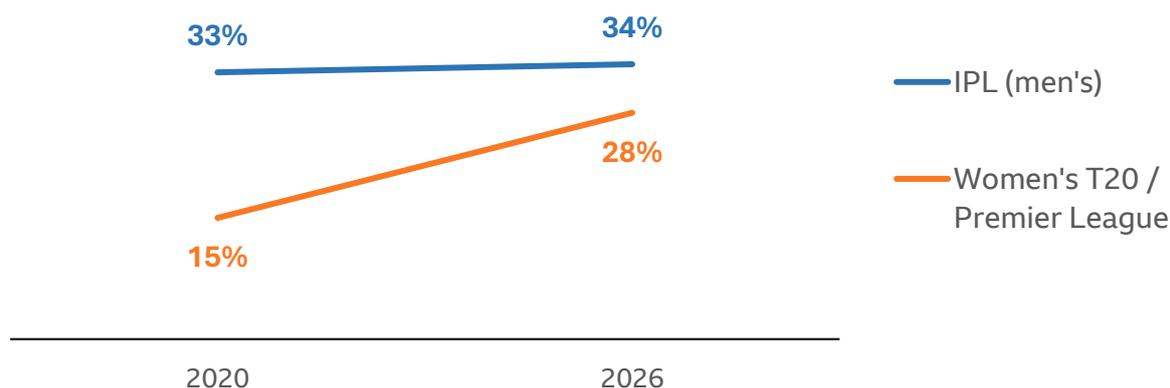
Viewership to women's cricket in particular is significantly higher than it was in 2020. Looking at league viewership for comparability, almost three in ten (28%) people across the states surveyed now say they watch the Women's Premier League (WPL). This compares with 15% who said they watched the Women's T20 Challenge in 2020, before the league was formed in 2023.

The gap in viewership between the women's and men's league is noticeably small. Just over three in ten people (34%) claim to watch the men's Premier League (IPL), leaving only a 6 percentage point gap between the two. The younger generation again emerges as a significant driver in this – more than a third of respondents aged 15 to 24 (35%) have watched the WPL.

Cricket domestic league viewership, men's vs women's

Question: Which of these men's/women's sporting events have you ever watched?

Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (2020=9690, 2026=9842)



With higher viewership comes heightened negativity

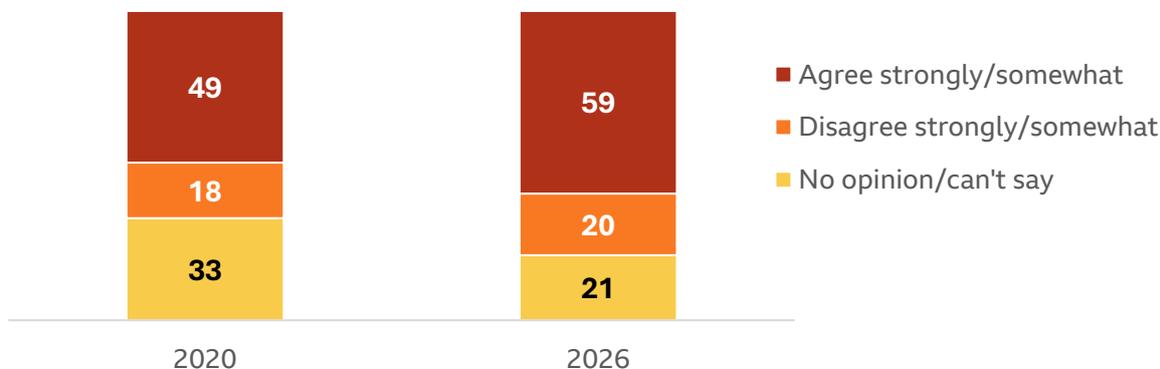
More people are consuming women's sports, but not all seem to be happy with its coverage. In 2026, as many as three in five (59%) say there is *too much* coverage of women's sports, up from 49% in 2020.

Young women (aged 15-24), who are more likely than older women to consume women's sports coverage, are also most likely to report that there is *too much* coverage these days – almost two thirds (64%) compared to half (53%) in 2020. This trend may suggest that the rapid growth in visibility has outpaced shifts in public acceptance.

Agreement “There is too much coverage of women’s sports” (%)

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree...

Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (2020=9690, 2026=9842)



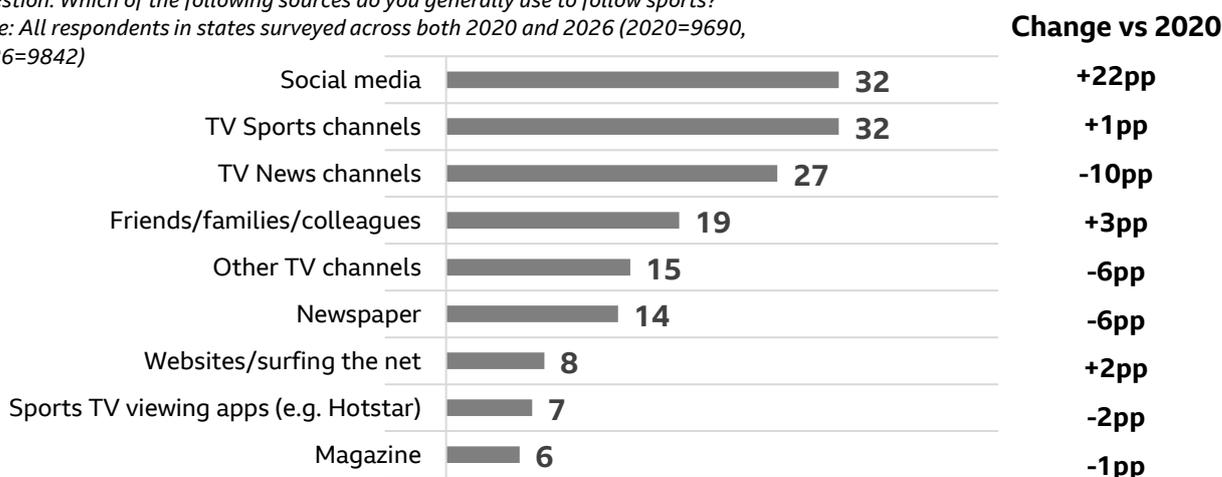
It could also signal dissatisfaction with the type of coverage audiences are getting. Incidentally, the nature of sports coverage, and the platforms used to follow sports, have been changing. While TV remains key for keeping up with sports, a growing number of audiences across the states surveyed - both men and women – say they are now following via social media. Among respondents aged 15-24, social media is by far the top channel, used by two in five (41%).

Audiences in the study have also moved away from newspapers (14% in 2026, 20% in 2020) and TV news channels (27% in 2026, 37% in 2020). TV sports channels have held strong, with a third of the respondents (32%) saying they use these sources to keep up with sports. But while TV news channels were previously used more by men than women, they have now become more gender equal.

Sources used to follow sports (mentioned by >5%)

Question: Which of the following sources do you generally use to follow sports?

Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (2020=9690, 2026=9842)



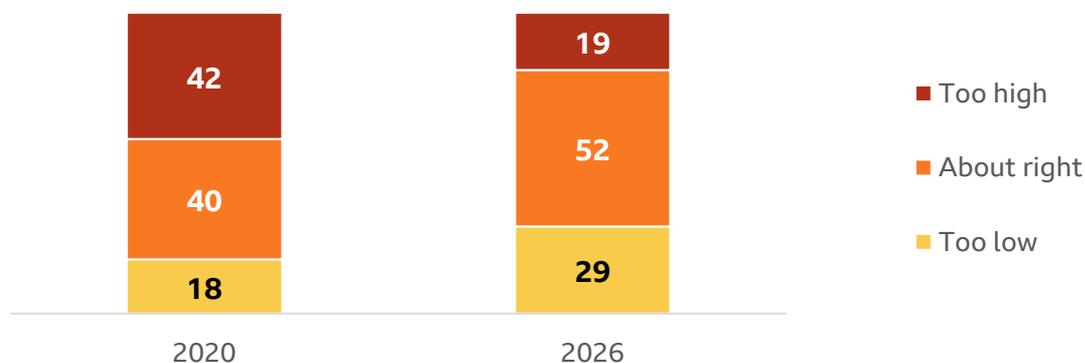
Women gaining ground in men's sport broadcasting

The data in this study suggests that attitudes towards female commentators and sports presenters have improved. A much smaller share of respondents now agree that the proportion of female presenters in men's sports is too high – just one in five in 2026 (19%) compared with two in five (42%) in 2020. Results are similar when asking people about female presenters in women's sports.

This change looks to be accompanying a broader shift in the Indian sports media landscape. Women are moving beyond just anchoring, into roles as expert analysts, reporters and commentators showcasing expert knowledge¹⁴. Although women remain a minority within men's sports broadcasting, their representation is growing.

Female presenters in men's sport (%)

Question: Is the proportion of women commentators/presenters on TV too high, about right or too low for men's sports?
Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (2020=9690, 2026=9842)



¹⁴ <https://www.hollywoodreporterindia.com/features/insight/from-mandira-bedi-to-shibani-akhtar-how-female-anchors-changed-cricket-in-india>

Section 3. Professional sportswomen: attitudes and viewership

Athletes and national teams could play a big role in driving engagement with sport. What does this year's data tell us about professional sportswomen – and sportsmen – and their role in people's lives?

Women now know a bit more about individual sportswomen

This year, one in two (51%) women surveyed could answer the question '*Which Indian sportswoman do you think is most loved by people around you?*'. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points since asking the same question in 2020. The Indian cricket team's vice captain, Smriti Mandhana, was mentioned by one in ten (10%) people – and one in fourteen (7%) women. The data also shows some athletes have a lasting impact on audiences. Sania Mirza, who retired in 2023, came joint top in the survey, also mentioned by one in ten people (10%).

We then asked people who their favourite *sportswoman of all time* is. In order to gauge spontaneous recall, we did not prompt respondents with a list for this. Sania Mirza came top, mentioned by 9% of the population. But Smriti Mandhana was a close second (8%) and the athlete picked most often by people aged 18-24 years old.

In 2026, we still see a gap in recall between people's favourite sportswoman and their favourite sportsman. Virat Kohli was chosen as the favourite sportsman of all time by 22% respondents, more than double the proportion of those who recalled Sania Mirza.

Favourite Sportswoman of all time (% citing, top sportswoman)



Sania Mirza 10%

Favourite Sportsman of all time (% citing, top sportsman)



Virat Kohli 22%

Respondents continue to have much lower awareness of international sportswomen and sportsmen. As high as 77% could not name an international sportswoman (slightly down from 80% in 2020), and as high as 68% could not name an international sportsman. Australian cricketer Ellyse Perry was the most recalled international sportswoman (at 4%) before tennis player Serena Williams (2%).

Indian teams – and individual athletes – are driving people to watch sports

In 2020, the people who had consumed women’s sporting events told us their main reason for doing so was their love for the sport. In 2026, the influence of Indian national teams and individual athletes is reflected in the survey data.

Over half of the people now viewing women’s events (54%) say they do so because they *‘want to support the Indian team’*. The second most cited reason is *‘supporting a sportswoman’* – this has also gone up (from 21% to 33%). Love for the sport is now the third top reason for following (27%).

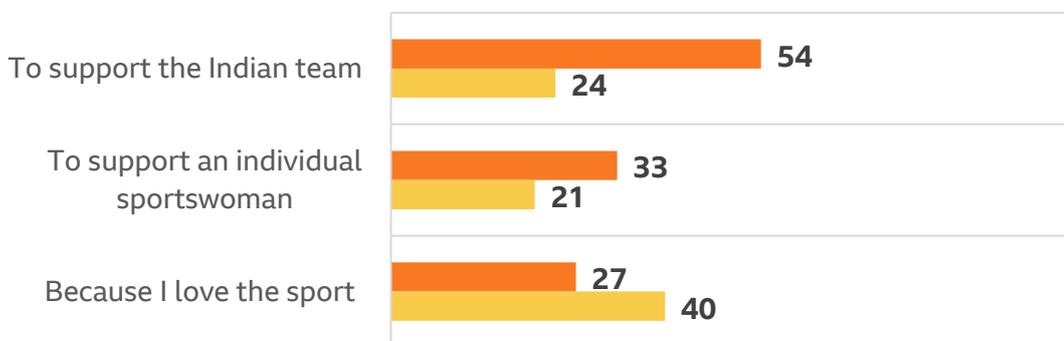
We see a similar pattern for men’s events. Over half of the people surveyed (56%) now cite *‘supporting the Indian team’* as their top reason for watching. Love for the sport remains the second top reason for viewing, just above *‘supporting a sportsman’*.

Top three reasons for watching womens events (%)

Question: What were the reasons why you watched the women's sporting events you said you had watched?

Base: All who had watched any women's sport event live or in person (2020=3800, 2026=5424)

■ 2026
■ 2020

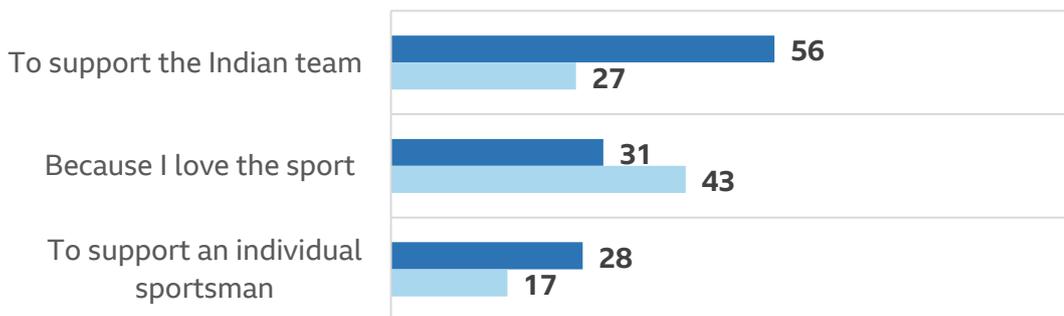


Top three reasons for watching men's events (%)

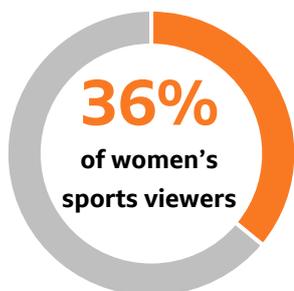
Question: What were the reasons why you watched the men's sporting events you said you had watched?

Base: All who had watched any men's sport event live or in person (2020=3800, 2026=5424)

■ 2026
■ 2020



The data suggests that the 2025 ICC Women’s World Cup, in which Indian women secured the title, could have played a big role in this. When asked when they started following women’s sports, nearly one in five people (18%) say they only started doing so two months ago, which sets the beginning of their women’s sport journey to about the time of the World Cup. Another 18% tell us they started viewing about 2-6 months ago.



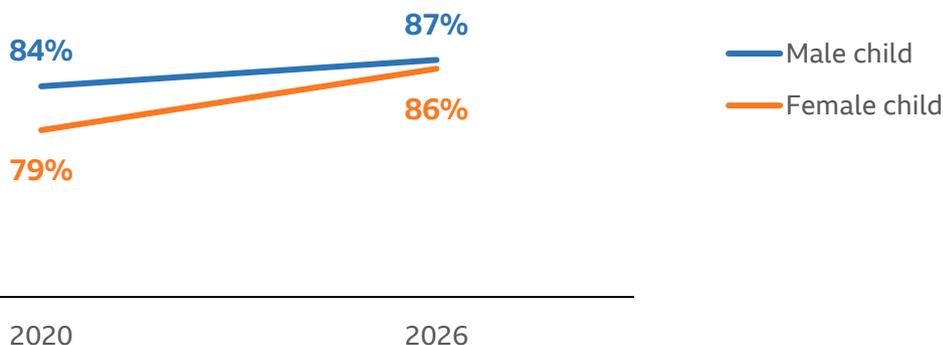
Started following women’s sports less than six months ago

One in four young women surveyed have considered sport as a career

While we cannot establish causation in this study, the data suggests that growing visibility – and success – of women professional athletes could have inspired parents and children alike. Nearly nine in ten parents surveyed say that they do, or would encourage, their child – regardless of gender – to pursue a sports career (87% for a son, 86% for a daughter). This used to be higher for male children than for female children, but has now levelled. Meanwhile, one in six (17%) women now say they have considered sport as a career. This is up significantly on 2020 (+70%, +7pp) and as high as one in four (26%) if we only look at women under 25 years old. The top states for women’s consideration of sport as a career are Tamil Nadu (27%), Madhya Pradesh (19%) and Meghalaya (19%).

% Parents encouraging child to pursue sports career

Question: Would you/did you encourage your male/female child if he/she wanted to make sports a career? - Yes
 Base: All parents (2020=6306, 2026=4919)



% Women considering sports as a career – 2020, 2026

Question: Did you ever consider sports as a career options?

Base: Women in all states surveyed across 2020 and 2026 (2020=4628, 2026=4677)



Support for equal prize money strong as ever

India has taken significant steps towards equal prize money in recent years. In 2022, the Board of Control for Cricket in India implemented equal match fees between international male and female cricketers. This decision made India the second country to follow equal pay in international cricket alongside New Zealand. Subsequently in 2023, the International Cricket Council announced equal pay for women and men in upcoming World Cups, starting with the 2024 T20 World Cup.

This decision, which places India among a minority of countries making moves towards equal pay, is supported by the vast majority of people surveyed in this study. It was already the case in our study in 2020, in which as high as 85% of the people agreed that '*men and women in sports in India **should** get equal prize money*'. This number is now nine in ten (89%).

Section 4. Breaking barriers: the road ahead

The momentum around women's sport is undeniable, but challenges remain. This section explores the barriers that continue to limit women's participation in sport, from structural inequalities to lingering stereotypes and negative perceptions of sportswomen.

Improving access to school sports facilities for girls – and boys

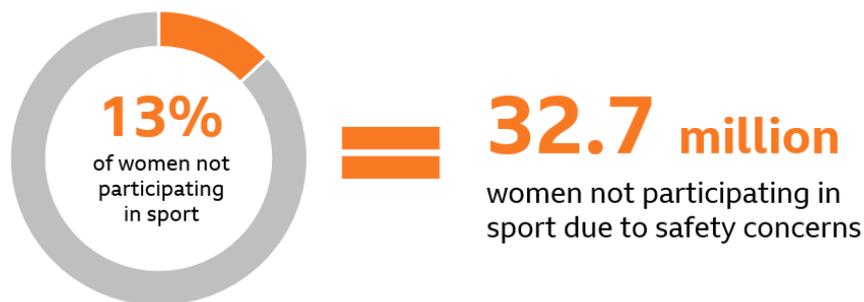
In 2026, fewer women surveyed cite *lack of sporting facilities in school* as a reason for not participating in sport in their childhood. The findings suggest this development could be helping to usher more girls into sport. But the barrier has not gone away entirely. 12% of 15-24 year old respondents who didn't play sport during childhood – and one in ten (10%) for women in this age bracket – still cite lack of facilities as a barrier to playing sports in school. This corresponds to a total of 1.5m young women across the states surveyed.

Making space for women in neighbourhoods and communities

The findings indicate that girls' early engagement with sport remains more concentrated within structured, school environments. When asking women and men in the study about where they played sport in childhood, we see important gender skews in people's answers. While female respondents say that they played mostly in school as girls (37%), male respondents say they played in school as well as in their neighbourhood (43%). If girls' experiences with sport are mostly confined to school, they may have fewer pathways into adult community or recreational sport. And while this study cannot look in depth at the reasons why girls don't play as much outside school, understanding this challenge and addressing its underlying causes could be beneficial.

One route to supporting women and girls playing more in public space is improving women's feelings of safety. Concerns about safety when practicing sports are cited by 13% of the women who don't currently play sport – the third biggest barrier to participation. This corresponds to 32.7 million women across the states surveyed.

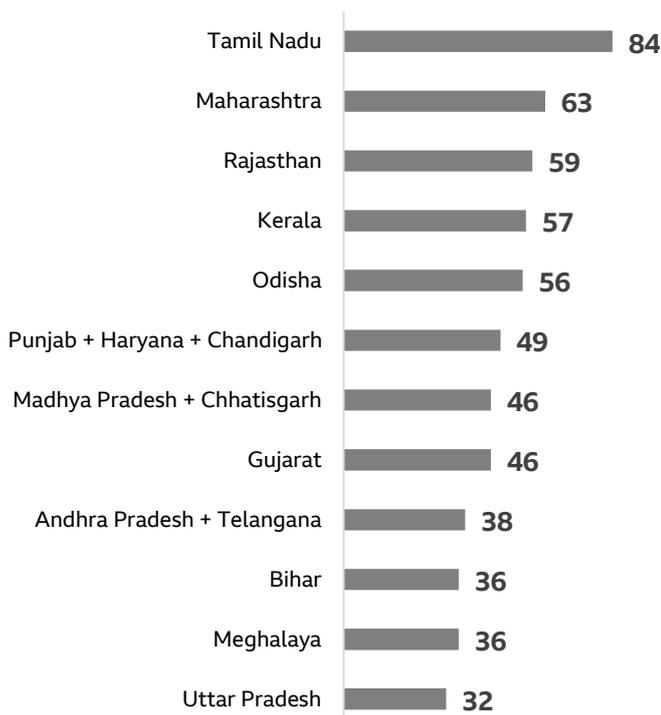
Safety concerns reported as a barrier by...



While this study does not examine causal relationships, we are able to examine how these perceptions of safety barriers in sport correlate with other aspects of women’s lives. The data suggests that safety in sports may be a bigger concern in places where women are more likely to report increases in sexual violence against women in the past decade. In Bihar and Meghalaya, for instance, fewer women surveyed say they don’t participate in sports because of safety concerns, while fewer women also think that sexual violence has increased in the past decade. It is important to note that this data reports *perceptions* of violence and not crime levels. Variations across states will reflect cultural differences in awareness and in levels of reporting of gender discrimination. Lower perceived levels of sexual violence in some states should therefore not be interpreted as evidence of lower incidence.

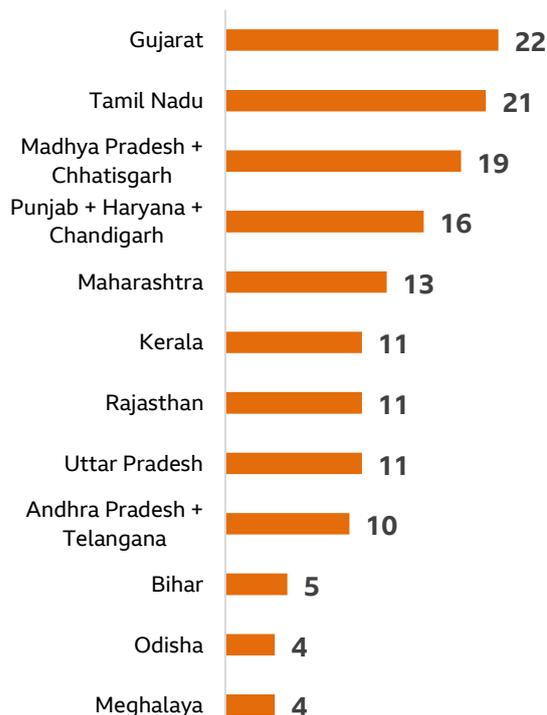
Sexual violence against women and girls has increased over the last ten years' (%)

Question: Do you think over the past 10 years, sexual violence towards women in India has increased, decreased or not changed?
 Base: all respondents 2026 (10304)



Safety as a barrier to participation in sport by state (%)

Question: What are your reasons for not participating in sports?
 Base: women not participating in sport 2026 (3369)



The broader point emerging in the data remains clear: some women are refraining from playing sport because they don't feel safe to do so. And nearly one in two (48%) women surveyed do perceive gender violence more broadly to have increased in their lives.

This year's data also indicates important shifts in attitudes to violence within households. More than half of all respondents asked in this study agree that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together (53% vs 51% in 2020), while an even higher share believe that a wife should obey her husband (57% vs 47% in 2020).



1 in 2

Respondents agree that a woman should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together

Progress slows where attitudes don't shift

Alongside growing visibility and achievements for sportswomen, stereotypes about sportswomen's abilities, and societal expectations about their appearance, persist in 2026, and are more widely subscribed to than they used to be in 2020.

Around two in five respondents now believe that sportswomen are not as entertaining (43%), or as good (38%), as sportsmen, and a slightly bigger share of respondents continue to place value on sportswomen's physical appearance, agreeing that 'sportswomen should look attractive' (46%).

Question: For each statement, please tell me how much you agree or disagree
Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026
(2020=9690, 2026=9842)

% NET agree somewhat/strongly

| | 2020 | 2026 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Female sportspersons should look attractive | 37 | 46 |
| Female sportspersons have difficulty having children | 38 | 44 |
| Sports featuring women are less entertaining to watch than sports featuring men | 38 | 43 |
| Female sportspersons are not feminine enough | 37 | 40 |
| Female sportspersons are not as good as male sportspersons | 32 | 38 |

These attitudes are not confined to older or male respondents - women and young people surveyed are just as likely to endorse several of these stereotypes, with women themselves more likely than men to agree that female sportspersons should look attractive.

And yet, as in our 2020 study, we also find people's attitudes to be at times contradictory. While demands on sportswomen's physical appearance have not gone away, more respondents do recognise that women face discrimination in sport, rising from 43% in 2020 to 48%. Young women in this study are particularly likely to acknowledge these inequalities.

Question: For each statement, please tell me how much you agree or disagree

Base: All respondents in states surveyed across both 2020 and 2026 (2020=9690, 2026=9842)

% NET agree somewhat/strongly

| | 2020 | 2026 |
|--|------|------|
| Women face discrimination in sports in India | 43 | 48 |

Geography also still shapes these attitudes. Those in rural areas and in Northern and Eastern states surveyed are more likely to agree with negative statements about women's sport, compared to those in urban settings or Western and Southern states.

Against this backdrop of persistent expectations about women's sporting abilities and appearance, the findings suggest that having the confidence to play remains a challenge for many women and girls. One in five (19%) women surveyed who don't participate in sports state '*not being good at sports*' as the reason why they don't in this study. This is significantly higher for women than for men (14% for men). Additionally, 12% of women across the fourteen states still think that '*Sports are not aimed at people like me*' – an area where greater representation may help going forward.

Will broader progress towards gender equality pave the way for change?

This study's findings suggest the Indian states surveyed are making steady, measurable progress in their broader pursuit of gender equality. When asked about equality, almost all respondents (97%) agree that men and women should have equal rights, and a large majority (91%) say they believe this equality already exists. Seven in ten (70%) also feel that gender equality has improved over the past five years – with men, however, slightly more confident about this progress than women.



7 in 10

Agree that gender equality has improved in India over the past five years

The results also indicate that people are more positive towards women's ability and desire to work. Among households where women do paid work, pride in this contribution has risen, from 72% in 2020 to 81% today. Support in favour of women working outside the home has also grown (from 76% to 84%), while more people now believe that marriages where both partners contribute financially are more satisfying (82% up from 75%).

In practice, the data suggests levels of financial independence for women are more equal to those of men. The proportion of women across the states surveyed who say they have a bank account has risen from 62% to 73% (+17%), now not far behind that of men (76%). And the proportion of women who operate their bank account themselves (rather than their spouse) has also grown, from 81% to 89%.

Young women report shifts in how they were treated as children across the states surveyed. In 2020, over a third (36%) of women surveyed said they were restricted during their childhood on account of being a girl. This has now fallen to fewer than one in five (18%) in 2026. And the proportion of young women (15-24) who now say they are married – a factor, which continues to impact women's time, mobility and opportunities when it comes to sport – has gone down significantly – from 42% in 2020 to 32% in 2026.

3 in 4 women have a bank account



+9pp since 2020

9 in 10 of them operate their bank account themselves



+8pp since 2020

But this study indicates that not all attitudes towards gender roles have shifted. Widespread endorsement of equal rights and of women's participation in the workforce sits alongside more traditional expectations within the household. More than half (54%) of those surveyed continue to believe that *a woman's place is at home*. This is in spite of saying they support women's right to work in the broader sense. And a gap remains in people's answers about the ideal age for marriage between women and men – a gap of nearly three years, at 21.7 years for women, and 24.5 years for men. Such household-level attitudes regarding women's ability to spend

time outside the home, and about when they should enter key life stages, like marriage, are likely to affect women's ability to pursue interests, including sporting activities.

Within this backdrop of growing yet nuanced support of gender equality, this study's results suggest there is room for cautious optimism. The shifts reported in this study – particularly the rise in sports participation among young women - provide a foundation for further improvement in wider societal perceptions and expectations about sportswomen. As the country positions itself for major global sporting ambitions, including a bid to host the 2036 Summer Olympics, it also faces an opportunity to challenge attitudes further and to address the remaining barriers faced by women in sport, aligning sporting development with the country's broader advances in gender equality.

Appendix - Methodology

This year's survey was conducted by Kantar across 14 Indian states – Bihar, Odisha, Meghalaya¹⁵, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. Research fieldwork used a similar research design and sample to the previous study commissioned in 2020 to ensure comparability of data.

Interviews were administered face to face (CAPI) using multistage random stratified sampling. Questionnaires were administered in respondents' native language to ensure accuracy of responses. These were: Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Meitei/Manipuri and Oriya.

Fieldwork took place between December 26th, 2025 and January 30th, 2026.

Achieved sample

The final achieved sample size of the survey was 10,304 respondents. This included 6963 interviews in urban areas and 3341 in rural areas. The following breaks down the sample achieved across key demographic cuts:

| Data cut | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Total | 10304 |
| Urban | 6963 |
| Rural | 3341 |
| Male | 5474 |
| Female | 4830 |
| 15-24 yrs | 2409 |
| 25-34 yrs | 2845 |
| 35-44 yrs | 2328 |
| 45-54 yrs | 1483 |
| 55+ yrs | 1239 |
| 45+ yrs | 2722 |
| SEC A | 4128 |
| SEC B | 3552 |
| SEC C | 1785 |
| SEC DE | 839 |
| SEC CDE | 2624 |
| Manipur | Not surveyed due to ongoing unrest |
| Andhra Pradesh & Telangana | 1104 |
| Bihar | 459 |
| Gujarat | 1056 |
| Kerala | 663 |

¹⁵ This state was surveyed for the first time this year.

| | |
|--|------|
| Maharashtra | 1263 |
| Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh | 964 |
| Odisha | 608 |
| Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh | 888 |
| Rajasthan | 750 |
| Tamil Nadu | 1155 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 932 |
| Meghalaya | 462 |

Comparing 2026 and 2020 samples

| Data cut | Sample Achieved - 2020 | Sample Achieved - 2026 |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Total | 10181 | 10304 |
| Urban | 6806 | 6963 |
| Rural | 3375 | 3341 |
| Male | 5309 | 5474 |
| Female | 4872 | 4830 |
| 15-24 yrs | 2046 | 2409 |
| 25-34 yrs | 2843 | 2845 |
| 35-44 yrs | 2400 | 2328 |
| 45-54 yrs | 1538 | 1483 |
| 55+ yrs | 1354 | 1239 |
| 45+ yrs | 2892 | 2722 |
| SEC A | 3227 | 4128 |
| SEC B | 3588 | 3552 |
| SEC C | 2271 | 1785 |
| SEC DE | 1095 | 839 |
| SEC CDE | 3366 | 2624 |
| Manipur | 491 | Not surveyed due to ongoing unrest |
| Andhra Pradesh & Telangana | 1006 | 1104 |
| Bihar | 485 | 459 |
| Gujarat | 1121 | 1056 |
| Kerala | 656 | 663 |
| Maharashtra | 1309 | 1263 |
| Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh | 830 | 964 |
| Odisha | 649 | 608 |
| Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh | 848 | 888 |
| Rajasthan | 746 | 750 |
| Tamil Nadu | 1113 | 1155 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 927 | 932 |
| Meghalaya | Not surveyed in 2020 | 462 |

Sample design and methodology

The survey used a multistage stratified random sampling approach to ensure state-level representativeness across all surveyed states, covering men and women aged 15 years and above across NCCS A/B/C/D/E, all urban town classes (from 40 lakh+ to under 5 lakh population), and both rural and urban India.

The age profile of the respondents was: 15-24: 23%; 25-34: 28%; 35-44: 23%; 45-54: 14%; 55+: 12%

The socio economic profile of the respondents was as follows: SEC A: 40%; SEC B: 34%; SEC: 17%, SEC DE: 8%

Sample design used the following steps:

- Stage 1: Districts were grouped in a state to create homogeneous regions by socio cultural parameters to create socio cultural regions (SCRs)
- Stage 2: Survey centres were selected: SCRs were stratified basis town and village class following Kantar's standard classification. Town classes: 4 million+, 1-4 million, 500,000 -1 million, >500,000; Village classes: 2000+ & below 2000
 - Across SCRs, if there was only a single Town representing a Town class, the latter was selected purposively in the fieldwork
 - Across SCRs, if there was more than a single Town representing the Town class, then one or more than one Town in each SCR was selected so that all SCRs were represented. This ensured representation of all SCRs in the state thereby ensuring all socio- cultural groups are represented. The decision on whether to select one or more than one depended on the population of the Town class in that SCR
- Stage 3: Selection of households in survey centres

In urban centres i.e. towns, starting addresses were randomly selected from electoral rolls:

- The number of starting addresses in all centers was the total sample size of that center divided by 4 (the cluster size).
- The sampling interval (k) was obtained by dividing the total number of voters in that center divided by the number of starting addresses to be obtained. Note that the project had no interest in electoral/political behaviour of respondents - and did not capture any data on those areas. Electoral rolls/ voter lists were used purely as sampling frames for sampling purposes.
- A random number smaller than the sampling interval was selected in a given center. The household in which the voter corresponding to this number lived was used as the starting address.

- The next starting addresses were obtained by adding the sampling interval to the random number selected and choosing the household in which the voter corresponding to that number lived and so on.
- After locating the starting address of a cluster, households were contacted using the RIGHT HAND RULE contacting every third household.

In rural centres i.e. villages, depending on the availability of a voters list or any other sampling frame there were two ways in which sampling of households was carried out:

- If a sampling frame or voter's list/household list was available, a systematic sampling of households was done using these lists in the same way as in the urban centers. The interview was then conducted in these households.
- If no sampling frame or voters list was available, the Village Head or another responsible resident of the village was contacted. With their help, the village was divided into four blocks of approximately equal population.
- A starting address was chosen randomly in each block and a listing of households was done using the RIGHT-HAND RULE contacting every third household.
- A systematic sampling of households (as in the case of the urban centers) was then done from this list. The list of households in which the interview was to be conducted was given to the interviewers.
- Similarly, villages in each population class were selected as fieldwork centres within each SCR using the PPS method of sampling.
- A starting address was chosen randomly in each block and a listing of households was done using the RIGHT-HAND RULE contacting every third household.
- A systematic sampling of households (as in the case of the urban centres) was then done from this list. The list of households in which the interview was to be conducted was given to the interviewers.

- Stage 4: Selection of individuals

After contacting a given household and speaking to a responsible adult aged 15+, interviewers listed down all the members in the household aged 15+ years (excluding guests and domestic help) in descending order. A respondent for the interview was then identified randomly through CAPI based selection. In case of non-availability of respondent, two call-backs were made at times when the respondent was likely to be available at home before recording non-availability. Substitute interviews (not in the same household) were done in cases of refusal. The substitute respondent belonged to the same SEC, age group and gender.

Projection of the data

Survey responses were weighted using a Random Iterative Method (RIM) framework ensuring state-level projection across multiple demographic dimensions.

- State-level targets for gender, age, and urban–rural residence were derived from the Government of India’s Population Projection Report, which is based on Census 2011 estimates and includes projections up to 2025.
- In the absence of a more recent Census, Census 2011-based projections represent the official demographic benchmark used across Indian market research and media measurement.
- Socioeconomic representation was incorporated using updated NCCS (New Consumer Classification System) distributions obtained from Kantar’s ICUBE study. This NCCS data is widely adopted in media research and are routinely used by regulatory bodies and industry associations

Projection universe

- **For states Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh, Punjab & Haryana & Chandigarh, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh:**
 - 1) Town class: 40Lacs+, 10-40Lacs, Less than 10Lacs, Rural
 - 2) NCCS (New SEC): AB, CDE
 - 3) Gender: Male & Female
 - 4) Age: 15-24 years, 25-34 years, 35+years
- **For states Maharashtra & Odisha:**
 - 1) Town class: Urban (Less than 10Lacs to 40Lacs+), Rural
 - 2) NCCS (New SEC): AB, CDE
 - 3) Gender: Male & Female
 - 4) Age: 15-24 years, 25-34 years, 35+years
- **For states Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya:**
 - Within Urban:
 - 1) NCCS (New SEC): AB, CDE
 - 2) Gender: Male & Female
 - 3) Age: 15-24 years, 25-34 years, 35+years
 - Within Rural:
 - 1) NCCS (New SEC): AB, CDE
 - 2) Gender: Male & Female
 - 3) Age: 15-24 years, 25-34 years, 35+years

Projection method

- 1) Census 2011 Population (final) data was used for all the states (Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab & Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh)
- 2) To get to current population estimates, a decadal growth rate was used and applied (basis Census 2001 & Census 2011) at state level and a current estimated population number was calculated.
- 3) For this study, the target population was individuals aged 15 & above. The proportion of the aged 15 & above population was calculated from Census 2011 for each of the state at Urban & Rural level

Survey significance

At the total respondent level, sampling error is 0.97%. For the various age groups it ranges between 1.84% and 2.78%; and at the level of the individual state it ranges between 2.76% and 4.57%, all at 95% confidence interval.

Sampling Errors (at 95% confidence interval)

| Data cut | Universe | Sample Achieved | Margin of Error |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total | 751620668 | 10304 | 0.97% |
| Urban | 231884473 | 6963 | 1.17% |
| Rural | 519736195 | 3341 | 1.70% |
| Male | 387493911 | 5474 | 1.32% |
| Female | 364126758 | 4830 | 1.41% |
| 15-24 yrs | 211008573 | 2409 | 2.00% |
| 25-34 yrs | 170197420 | 2845 | 1.84% |
| 35-44 yrs | 158079021 | 2328 | 2.03% |
| 45-54 yrs | 108999316 | 1483 | 2.54% |
| 55+ yrs | 103336338 | 1239 | 2.78% |
| 45+ yrs | 212335654 | 2722 | 1.88% |
| SEC A | 204464062 | 4128 | 1.53% |
| SEC B | 201372925 | 3552 | 1.64% |
| SEC C | 237405804 | 1785 | 2.32% |
| SEC DE | 108377877 | 839 | 3.38% |
| SEC CDE | 345783681 | 2624 | 1.91% |
| Andhra Pradesh & Telangana | 68360874 | 1104 | 2.95% |
| Bihar | 78522124 | 459 | 4.57% |
| Gujarat | 52293843 | 1056 | 3.02% |
| Kerala | 27645939 | 663 | 3.81% |
| Maharashtra | 94406346 | 1263 | 2.76% |
| Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh | 80265402 | 964 | 3.16% |
| Odisha | 33444131 | 608 | 3.97% |

| | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh | 45996832 | 888 | 3.29% |
| Rajasthan | 54311950 | 750 | 3.58% |
| Tamil Nadu | 59149609 | 1155 | 2.88% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 155163268 | 932 | 3.21% |
| Meghalaya | 2060351 | 462 | 4.56% |
| North | 201160100 | 1820 | 2.30% |
| East | 114026605 | 1529 | 2.51% |
| West | 281277541 | 4033 | 1.54% |
| South | 155156422 | 2922 | 1.81% |

Due to the large sample size (10,000+ respondents), most differences between waves are statistically significant at conventional confidence levels (95%). To ensure the report focuses on insight rather than noise, the report's analysis highlights only meaningful shifts - defined as changes that reflect a notable shift in behaviour, that align with wider patterns in the data, or have potential implications for decision-making. Statistical significance is not marked or called out in every instance.

References

- AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research (2025). *Attention to men's professional sports still outpaces women's, but there is closer parity for college sports*. Available at: <https://apnorc.org/projects/attention-to-mens-professional-sports-still-outpaces-womens-but-there-is-closer-parity-for-college-sports/>
- Boston Consulting Group (2024). *India's HR Revolution: Building Workplaces for the Future*. BCG Global. Available at: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/india-hr-revolution-building-workplaces-for-the-future>
- Channel 4 (2024). *Twenty million watch Channel 4 Paralympics TV coverage, as channel secures biggest audience share in 12 years*. Channel4.com. Available at: <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/twenty-million-watch-channel-4-paralympics-tv-coverage-channel-secures-biggest-audience>
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2025). *Headline findings for the Participation Survey (April 2024 to March 2025)*. GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-survey-2024-25-annual-publication/headline-findings-for-the-participation-survey-april-2024-to-march-2025#live-sports--gambling>
- Eurostat (2022). *Sport participation - practicing sport and physical activity - Statistics Explained*. Europa.eu. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Sport_participation_-_practicing_sport_and_physical_activity
- Hollywood Reporter India (2025). *How Female Anchors Changed Cricket in India | THR India*. Available at: <https://www.hollywoodreporterindia.com/features/insight/from-mandira-bedi-to-shibani-akhtar-how-female-anchors-changed-cricket-in-india>
- Remote (2024). *Global HR Solutions for Distributed Teams*. remote.com. Available at: <https://remote.com/resources/research/global-life-work-balance-index>.
- Women's Sport Trust (2026). *The Visibility of Women's Sport Hit New Highs in 2025*. Available at: <https://www.womenssporttrust.com/the-visibility-of-womens-sport-hit-new-highs-in-2025/>

- Times of India (2024). *Haryana shuttlers make a statement*. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/badminton/haryana-shuttlers-make-a-statement/articleshow/116668736.cms>
- Olympics (2024). *Indian Olympic medal winners: A comprehensive list*. Available at: <https://www.olympics.com/en/news/india-olympics-medals>
- News on Air (2025). *Khelo India Youth Game 2025 Ends*. Available at: <https://www.newsonair.gov.in/khelo-india-youth-games-2025-ends-maharashtra-tops-with-158-medals/>