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**Promotion of the
Competitive women's sport
In Israel**

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers, who are investigating the many aspects of changes in the modern society, are inclined sometimes to focus on the changes which occurred along the years in the functions of the woman and in her status. The changes in the woman's functions are being expressed in many social fields. Together with the increasing penetration of women to functions, which men are mainly ruling, there was also a considerable increase in the interest which sociologists found in many aspects which are connected to the differences among the sexes in the field of work. In that point, it is liable to assume, that the all-social differences between man and women are being expressed also when we are dealing in sports.

From an historical aspect, it is possible to see clear differences in relating to female athletes. In the past the participation of women was forbidden, and they were not allowed to watch the competitions. Today, the situation is different. In spite of the women's discrimination, changes occurred for improving the woman's status in sports.

From the beginning of the seventies, the number of women who participated in the Olympic Games increased. Additional events and professions were added which were open to women, including professions, which in the past were regarded as being masculine. The image of women's sports was considerably changed. The female athletes turned to become professionals and skilled. Myths, which are connected to the processes of training, scope, standard and type, changed. In spite of the improvement, which occurred in the woman's status in sports, and the penetration of women in the competitive sports in the recent decades, the control of resources and the opportunities to deal with sports remained mainly masculine.

The need for that change was also expressed in Israel. Israel forms an exclusive case of an immigrants' society, which was established on the basis of ideological movements. In the beginning of the 20th century, during the development of the Jewish settlement, life in Israel was difficult from the economic and security aspect. In those circumstances, the woman participated in the doing, in field works, in protection and defence against enemies. That situation brought equality between the women's status to the men. In those circumstances, a society grew up, which was not conforming to the European conventions, though the crucial majority of the society came from Europe. That society created a new type of an active and independent woman (Sherman, 1982).

Later, after the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, following the immigrations which arrived from the countries of Oriental traditional Jewish heritage, a society was formed in Israel, with a traditional structure of a family, which maintains a differentiation in the function of the sexes, and which is committed to national, ethnic and religious values. Most women did not deal with sports, and even those who did, preferred to give up in favor of a career for the benefit of the traditional family function (Kaufman, 1999).

The changes of the political structures in Israel, and following the increased number of religious parties. Created religious values, which are not democratic and liberal as in the past. That brought an inequality between women and men.

The political – military actuality also contributed its share. The lack of equality in that field was expressed by the women's obligation to serve in the army, while limiting their possibilities, in comparison to men. The women have not equal duties and rights in the military array. They do not take a considerable part in the vital arrays. All these, and additional reasons, caused an inequality between the sexes in Israel, which also affected additional social fields, among them sports. That conduct along the years harmed the development of sports, and especially the women's sports, in Israel.

Education, since it is, by its very nature, an institution that preserves the Jewish culture and the social values of the State of Israel, influences the subject of physical education taught in the schools. The goals of physical education are determined according to the needs of society and the needs of the individual, through the emphasis on motor, physical, emotional, and psychological aspects. One of the main topics in the curriculum of physical education in the schools is competitive sport. Physical education in the schools in the upper classes is divided in boys and girls, with a similar curriculum. The difference in the studies of the two sexes is expressed in the exposure to competition and achievement orientation. This fact influences the development and cultivation of competitive sport in Israel in general and competitive sport of women in particular.

This research, will examine the sports structure in Israel, and especially the structure of women's sports. We shall examine which are the steps, which were taken by various governmental bodies, in order to encourage and to promote the Israeli women to deal with sports. We will suggest a complete and comprehensive framework for the development,

cultivation, and promotion of women's sports in Israel in general and competitive sports for women in particular.

It seems that the topic of women in sport is being discussed widely at many conferences and events. The reasons for this might include an attempt to encourage and foster the culture of women's sport; to increase women's involvement in sport in all fields and roles; to raise women's awareness to the importance of sport and its contribution to personal development. All the issues mentioned above will be explored in a number of ways; through the presentation of statistical data illustrating the changes that have taken place in the development of competitive sport over the years and through explanation, presentation of personal, relevant ideas and solutions for the future.

WOMEN'S STATUS

The woman's status in modern society

One of the most important aspects of social change in modern society is the changing of the woman's function, as it was expressed by the consistent increase, which occurred of the participation of women in the active working power from an economical aspect. (Semyonov and Levin-Epstein, 1988).

The inequality at work has deep historical roots. The women in the western world, were limited to domestic functions, and were removed from the public field. The religious and political ideology of ancient, classic and even modern societies, advised, that the woman's place is at home. Taking women out of the public – political life circle was going on as an official policy, with a legal seal until the beginning of the 20th century.

A heavy load of stereotypes and prejudices, which derive from the 18th century, is keeping on accompanying us in regard to the work market of the 20th and 21st century. Functions of managing a household and treating children and sick people by women became from a historical fact to a normative expectation. The stereotypes still exist and they are feeding prejudices, which are harming the women in the processes of reaching decisions by various factors in the work market and are causing discrimination in receiving work, in work's conditions, in promotion, in professional training and in wages. (Raday, Shalev and Libon-Kobby, 1995).

The woman's status in Israel

The status of women in Israel is similar to the status of women in the western world, but it is more inferior due to specific processes, which are influencing the status of women in Israel.

In order to comprehend the development of women's status in the Israeli society, it is necessary to consider first of all the wide system of work – family in its feminine context. In Israel there is a society, which is much concentrated around the family, which strives to integrate work and family (and not to encourage one at the expense of the other, as is customary in the western world) (Izraeli, 1999).

The State of Israel is preserving the big family values also due to demographic reasons, which are connecting between demography and security, but in parallel is adopting a modern life style, which emphasizes contradicting values, such as a personal extraction, responding to professional challenges, pastime culture, utilitarianism etc.

Most findings are pointing at the inferiority of the woman's status in the Israeli society in all its extensions as a fixated pattern. The Israeli society, as a sexist society, creates a negative incentive for an equal integration of women in the military and civilian system. The incriminated integration of women in that frame is not forming something exceptional in the general social context. The unequal nature of women's service in the army is also influencing the woman's status in the civilian society, and it deepens the inequality in society (Jerby, 1996).

THE WOMEN IN SPORT

Historic perspective

The participation of women in sports – trends and changes.

Traditionally, sports is regarded as a masculine activity, and as one of the masculine ruling fortresses in society. In spite of the fact, that women always took a part in sports, only in the recent decades of the 20th century there was a significant increase in their sportive activity. That phenomenon assumingly reflects changes of women's functions also in the social fields (Bar-Eli, Shpiegel and Yaaron, 1998).

During the years, social powers and institutions influenced, and helped to cause a dramatically increase of opportunities for women in

sports. Many girls, and women, began to participate in sports, and many changes began to occur (Birrell, 1988).

As of the beginning of the nineties, sports helped to change the image, status and even the skill of women. The fact that women are showing physical skills, power, braveness and charm, gaining recognition for a certain club, or country, are all helping to promote the idea of the independent woman, who operates for her own sake. (Riordan, 1994).

Social mechanisms which influence the participation of women in sports

The increasing growth of women's participation in sports was affected by a number of reasons (especially in medium and up layers), In spite of all that, there was a slow, and unsatisfactory, change in the sexual functions which appear in various society, and, or, in certain social segments, which are not encouraging the participation of women in sports, and are even discriminating it.

That established discrimination, was expressed by allocating an inferior allocation of resources in terms of budgets, wages, installations, available training hours, grants to female athletes etc., in a lower availability for women of sports events and sportive events, by the arrival of less women to key positions in the sports organizations, by giving lower money prizes to women (such as in tennis and golf), by a narrowed, communication coverage, which was inclined according to traditional sexual stereotypes etc. (Bar-Eli and Tenenbaum, 1996).

The assumption is, that social characteristics, which are promoting a changed in on field (such as in working power), will also contribute to changes in other social fields (such as in sports). It was found out: that the rate of women's participation in sports is increasing the more that the percentage of women in the working power is increasing. (Kuath, 1990).

The development of women's sports in the Olympic Games

One of the proofs to the increased number of women in sports was expressed by the significant increase, which occurred in the number of female athletes, which participated in the Olympic Games. (Riordan, 1994).

In the first Olympic Games of the modern era, in 1896, women did not participate at all, mainly due to the vigorous objection of the initiator of renewing the games, the French Baron Pierre de Coubertin. The objection of participating women in the Olympic Games was mainly concentrated around sexual stereotypes. During the years, the image of women's sports was considerably changed. Women were integrated almost in all the existing sports for men (Zimri, 1996).

In spite of the data, it is possible to say, in general, that a constant increase occurred in the number of women who participated in the Olympic Games along the years, and a trend of narrowing the relation gap between the number of female and male who participated in the Olympic Games. There is also an increase in the number of sports, which were opened to women during the years. In spite of that, there is still a relatively great gap between the numbers of male to the number of female who are participating in the competitive sports in the world.

THE SPORTS IN ISRAEL

Israel is an exclusive case of an immigrant society, which was established on the basis of ideological movements. That fact had a crucial influence on the development, and organization, of sports, and it caused the establishing of the sports inside a frame with a very high political standard. (Kaufman, 1999).

Generally, all the sports events are controlled by a number of political bodies, such as the government, the ministry of education and culture, the sports and physical education authority and the sports association. (Kaufman 1999).

Today, the Israeli sports has no conventional structure which is accepted by its leaders and public workers – a structure which will be compatible to the demands of sports in general, and the modern competitive sports in particular. The sports authority cooperates with the competitive and with the popular sports organizations, in order to promote the male athletes in their various standards. One of the main purposes of the sports and the physical education authority is the promotion and development of women in sports and in physical education, the absorption, cultivation, and incorporating of female athletes, as trainers, as physical education teachers and as scientists in the sports field.

Israel in the Maccabiyah Games

One of the exclusive enterprises for the Jewish people, which takes place in Israel, is the Maccabiyah Games. The Maccabiyah Games are an exclusive competitive sports enterprise, in which Jewish male athletes from all over the world are assembling, every four years. Since the year 1932 until now, another 13 regular Maccabiyah were held (a total of 17 Maccabiyah) in Israel, on the background of the various events in the 59 years of its existence. Beyond their being a spacious sportive enterprise, the great success of the Maccabiyah was in strengthening the relations and in heartfelt nearing for thousands of Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel. (Kaufman, 2001).

Israel in the Olympic Games

Israel was invited for the first time to participate in the Olympic Games in 1936. But that opportunity was rejected because the host was Nazi Berlin. In 1948, Israel intended to participate in the London games, but a formal reason of the international Olympic committee's refusal to recognize Israel's Olympic committee, prevented the participation of Israel in that sport. Only in 1952 Israel participated in the Olympic Games, which were held in Helsinki. And since 1956 and onwards Israel participated in all the Olympic Games (except in 1980 in Moscow).

Out of the data, which is related to the participation of male and female in the Olympic Games and in the Maccabiyah Games, it can be said, that generally the female athletes that represented Israel is much lower than that of the male athletes. Nevertheless, there was indeed an increase in the frequency of female in the Olympic Games and in the Maccabiyah Games, especially in the last decade, but the relation between female and male is not constant.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

According to Lidor and Fejgin (2004), the goals of education in general and the goals of physical education in particular are determined on the basis of the needs of the learner and those of society and are founded on the principles of the sciences upon which the subject is based. The goals of physical education change from country to country and in every country emphasis is placed on different areas. However, comparison between the goals shows that in all the countries there is reference to the physical realm, the social realm, the emotional and character realm, and the cognitive realm.

Competitive sport was chosen as one of the main topics in the curricula, when the assumption at the basis of this choice is that the development of competitive sport in schools is important, since it leads to the development of competitive sport in every country. (Williams, 1997).

Physical Education in Different Countries

Physical Education in Britain

The development of physical education commenced through games in the private schools in the 19th century. In 1950s the emphasis in physical education was on competitive sports. In the 1980s, the promotion of health became the mainstay of physical education, primarily in the secondary schools. While the balance changed perhaps in the direction of health ideologies, the games ideology still remained strong. Games retained their prominent place in almost all the curricula of physical education, primarily in the secondary schools in Britain, to this very day. (Kirk 1998; Roberts 1996).

Physical Education in West Germany

In the middle of the 18th century, the goal of education was to cultivate the body and the mind. Physical education was a part of education. Consequently, the tradition of gymnastics in open air and sports games was established, and this founded the basis of the activity of the organization of sports associations' organization that exists today in the sports of Western German.

According to Hardmark (1981), in 1967 there was a change in the emphasis of the German Sport Federation (DSB) from the promotion of physical education in the schools to focus on the promotion of competitive sports. Today, too, the emphasis is on interest, abilities, and performance, which reflect the approach of modern German society.

Physical Education in the Soviet Union

Soviet physical education today shows a number of trends that distinguish it from the past. First, the curriculum of physical education includes a wide variety of activities. Second, the trend is to stay away from gymnastics and to focus on sports and games according to the areas of specialization. There are several reasons for these trends. One clear reason is the increasing availability of apparatus for more areas of sports. Another reason is the less urgent need today to focus on the

cultivation of health and the encouragement of fun for the masses. (Riordan, 1998).

Physical Education in Israel

In the Ottoman Era, the teaching programs that were implemented in Israel at this time and even many years later were based on three new main approaches in the teaching of physical education: Germany, Sweden, and Britain. These approaches were characterized by different goals and means. The German approach was built from free exercises and from work on comfortable apparatus. The Swedish method was built on scientific-medical gymnastics, which emphasized the person's posture and aesthetic movement, while the English method included group games and competitions. (Zimri, 1967; Ram, 1999).

In the British Mandate Era, between the years 1918-1948, with the increase of the military orientation in the Hebrew educational system, activities such as practice drills and pursuit and following games were added to the work programs in physical education. The physical education programs in the school, in the youth movements, and in the sports associations now included pre-military physical training as an essential and major element. An extensive program of physical education was decided upon, including: physical training – general, drill exercises, applied sports – camping and orientation in nature with maintenance of hygiene, pedagogy, aesthetics, and morality. (Ram, 1999).

According to Ram (1999), it can be said that in spite of the many positive developments in the fields of physical education in the period until the establishment of the state of Israel (1948), it could be determined that, all in all, the subject did not assume its appropriate position among the study subjects in the Hebrew school of the Settlement Period.

After the Establishment of the State of Israel, in the decade 1950-1960, the goal of physical education was comprehensive physical fitness. Beginning in 1970, the new perception of physical education was individualist and physical and based on health. In light of these principles, the objectives of physical education in Israel were determined. The aim was to shape, develop, and cultivate in the individual patterns of activity and physical and sportive behavior, in the framework of the individual's personal potential, in order to ensure

his quality of life, health, and harmonious personality in the present and in the future.

The 1970s were the years in which the most apparent extensions in the constellation of physical education in Israel occurred, for example: Active Recess, 'dancing school', sports classes etc. (Shuval and Nauvell, 1996).

In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a decline in the attitude towards physical education, especially in regards to the programs for the entire student population. If there were extensions in the framework of certain programs, these primarily pertained to the excellent students in this subject, and mainly occurred in the period in which the Ministry of Education and Culture supported the emphasis of excellence. Thus, it was decided to establish the school sports clubs as a solution for the promotion of the health and physical activity of all the children in the schools in the physical education lessons. One of the roles of the school club is to the increase of the chances of girls to engage in competitive sport. (Lidor and Fejgin, 2004).

COMPETITIVE SPORT IN ISRAEL

Competitive sport serves as a political 'display case' and as a factor that cultivates national pride and excellence. Competitive sport constitutes a model for imitation for popular sport and encourages the entrance of economic factors into sport. The competitive sport demands a special status in terms of budget, organization, management, medicine, and science. Without such a status, there is no basis for a true expectation of competitive on the international level. (Ben-Melech, 2006).

To promote competitive sport in Israel it is necessary to promote sport as a whole with emphasis on the promotion of competitive sport for women. Thus, we recommend the establishment of a national body for sport in Israel, which will be the supreme body with the authority to fashion policy, indicate the ways of action, determine priorities in the development of sports areas, address the recruitment of financial resources, and strengthen the independence of the sport associations and the unions.

The supra-goal of this body is to develop and promote sportive activity in the State of Israel on the popular and competitive levels, on the basis of educational, democratic, social, and cultural values. In addition, the body develops and promotes women's sport in general and

competitive sport for women in particular so that we can attain high competitive similar to those of other Western countries.

We see the structure of sport as a pyramid. At the basis of this pyramid is sportive activity that is diverse in infrastructure. At the apex, there is a responsible and efficient leadership, which loyally represents all the factors who are active in the realm of sport and who can contribute to its promotion. This authoritative leadership will be in charge of all the areas of sportive activity, setting the sport system in Israel on the cultural and competitive level. Combined and adjusted activity in all these areas together can change, and within a short period of time, the miserable reality and to propel the sport culture in Israel to its social objectives and sportive achievements.

It is necessary to build and strengthen a correct infrastructure for the structure of sport in Israel, which will begin in the kindergartens and schools and the clubs and will continue in competitive physical behavior. Thus, a town/city master plan prepared by the Sport and Physical Education Authority and the Center of Local Government and regional councils should be adopted. It is necessary to develop the centers of training of competitive for women, to improve the training conditions of the competitive athletes, men in general and women in particular, in these centers.

To improve and promote women in competitive sport several issues must be addressed:

- Sport institutions and organization must make certain that their codes express the need for the equality of opportunities and realization of the competitive potential of women in sport.
- The division of the resources among the groups and sport clubs at all levels must be equal, without discrimination on the basis of sex.
- The Sport and Physical Education Authority must encourage the development and cultivation of special programs for the promotion and increase of the supply of activities for girls and young women in sport.
- The Supreme Council for Sport in Israel must act to train leadership among women in sport.

- It is necessary to continue to conduct researches on the topic of the importance for the understanding and cultivation of sport among women.
- The sport institutions and organizations must ensure that women are appropriately represented in their administrations.

In addition, to succeed in sport it is necessary to ensure the livelihood of the talented and skilled coach, so that he can invest his utmost in the training of his pupils. The investment in coaches, in scientists, in physicians, and in professionals is the basis of competitive sport. It is necessary to set (competitive) sport in its proper place as a main part in the life of culture and society in Israel.

CONCLUSION

Putting a mirror in front of the Israeli society is reflecting a clear picture of inequality between the sexes in society. The inequality is prominent in most areas of life, and is influenced from general social concepts, which were examined during the research.

It was found out in the research that in Israel there is a society, which is concentrated around the values of a family, which is striving to integrate work and family together. In the recent decades, the number of women in the working field increased. Following that, many changes occurred in the Israeli society. The women's status turned to become a central issue in the public debates and in private conversations.

The inequality between the sexes in the Israeli society is mainly expressed in the military system. Following that the military system is the most important, and dominant of all the other systems. The military system is contributing to strengthening the sexual inequality, and to its immortalization more than any other institution, not because it is more discriminating, but due to its dominant positioning, and its enormous influence on the culture and society in Israel.

The women's discrimination, and the inequality between the sexes, which are found in the military, economical and social systems, are also existing in sports. They are expressed by reduced resources to women, giving lower salaries and scholarships to the competitive female athletes etc. Due to that, lower participation rate of women were found, in a lower competition level in comparison to men. Hence, the status of the women

in the Israeli society is also influencing her status in sports in general, and in the competitive sports in particular.

Hence, it is possible to see that developing of the competitive sports for women in Israel, is not at the height of the state's interests, and the participation of women in representative enterprises, namely the Olympic Games, depends on the circumstances of time and place, and not on some arranged long range policy to which the government is strict.

In order to promote the competitive sports for women in Israel, we must build a wide infrastructure and a long range policy, which will be built as a pyramid. First, it is necessary to develop the awareness, and the exposure to the sports culture, in a way, which will enable the full participation of girls, maidens and women, in all the sports. We shall begin by locating the excelling girls, their preparation and training to participate in a high competitive standard. For that, we shall begin in the basic school level frame. It is necessary to programme motivation in the pupils, and to teach them valued tools, in order to deal in sports also in the future. It is necessary to encourage competitive activities in the schools, in a regional, national and international frames. In addition to the integration of the girls in the sports associations, whose main sport related competitive activities are after school hours, and to encourage them to continue their activities after graduation from school.

The competitive sports for women in Israel needs a new managerial structure. It must be separated from any other sports, cultivated and subsidized, and to operate in professional, methodical and scientific non-routine frames. The campaign for promoting women in sports is doing its first steps, but the road is still long and there are still many obstacles. After performing all the stages, which were raised in that research, and creating a favorable, stimulating and supporting, the atmosphere, we shall contribute to the development and promotion of sports in general, and particularly of the competitive sports among girls, maidens and women in Israel.

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