



## Status and recognition of sportswomen in India

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### Abstract

In the early 1900s when club life was introduced in India, sporting activities also found a serious place in female lives due to the facilities provided. Women pioneers had started blazing the trail. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Health Minister in India first set an example for North Indian women by taking to competitive tennis. The efforts of such sporting personalities have yielded fruits. The female sensation in badminton today is world no 2 Saina Newhal. Similar legendary sportswomen are Karnam Malleshwari, Anju Bobby George, PT Usha and Sania Mirza. Even if they are a step ahead, a number of factors ensure that sportswomen stay two steps behind. Though the Indian culture looks up to a woman as a mother of a race, the Indian society is firm with the belief that women are naturally inferior to men because of the faith that a woman's duty is bound only to birthing and taking care of her family. The level of physical education and sports for females has been hampered because of the endless limitations. This article aims analyze the status of sportswoman status in India. We need sportswomen of generation to achieve the reigns and encourage the upcoming generations. This new role made women visible in the social space which enabled women to enter into the field of sports too. By looking at the institutional and other realms of sports in India the paper explains how the gendered practice of sports marginalizes women in multiple ways. Our society has to work towards a massive cultural reform where we have a healthy work ethic. Until that is done Indian women will be only chasing a mirage, not medals, in international sporting events. Although the most welcome gains in opportunities and an ever growing publicity of women's sports, the effects of a long traditionally gender bias in sports still persist. Our society has to work towards a massive cultural reform where we have a healthy work ethic. Until that is done Indian women will be only chasing a mirage, not medals, in international sporting events.

**Keywords:** sportswomen, physical education

### Introduction

Sport is a universal in nature. It does not discriminate on colour, caste, creed, sex or race and so on. Participation in sports not only focuses on health but also the overall development. Earlier day's men used to participate in most of the games, sports and athletics, women faces many constraints such as physical, mental, family, social, cultural, religious and so on later they also started active participation in all events. The women witnessed different status during different ages which is given as below.

As women were supposed to be and in some areas of India are still considered to be curse by some strata of society their birth was taken as a burden. Women In particular, women in sport leadership can shape personality towards women's capabilities as leaders, especially in traditional male domains. Women's involvement in sport can make a significant contribution to social life and tradition development. In all this procedure women do not have any say they have to do according to the wish of their husbands even if she does not want to abort she have any choice. With the help of these social reformers women of India slowly started recognizing her true potential. She started questioning the rules laid down for her by the

society. The Indian woman's focus of this is a new Olympic, constructed on a former industrial site at Stratford in the Next Olympic Sports. The Games also make use of many venues which were already in place before the bid. Researchers that surveyed the content of numerous issues in a variety of sport Magazines came to the general conclusion that women's sport experiences were depicted in stereotypical gender roles and that women were often infantilized and/or Depicted as sex objects. His aristocratic and religious beliefs led him to state that: "The solemn periodic manifestation of male sport based on internationalism, on loyalty as a means, on arts as a background and the applause of women as a recompense. Women and girls stand to achieve specific individual opportunity from participation in physical activity. Females and girls have taken up top leadership space in sport, such as Presidents and Secretaries-General of National associations and team. More women have also taken up employment opportunities in all areas of sport, including as national coach, refry, managers, officials and sport journalists.

### Women in India after Independence

In addition to the measures to uplift the status of women in

India initiated by Britishers, many vigorous steps (legal, social, economic and political) have been taken by Government of India after independence by removing the hurdles put in their way by traditional past. The efforts of the social reformers and their movements launched in the pre-independence period also bore fruits. The Indian National Movement also led to the liberation of Indian women. The leaders of the national movement realized that the liberation of the country from the bondage of imperialism was impossible without the active participation of women who constituted half of the population of the country. Most of the social reformers and thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries were influenced by the tenets of the liberal philosophy of the West, which emphasized the principle of contract rather than status, a rational outlook of life and problems, freedom of speech, criticism of authority, questioning of accepted dogmas and finally the recognition of the value of the individual and insistence on the rights of man as opposed to his duties. They also got push from Upanishads and other scriptures. The decades after independence have seen tremendous changes in the status and position of the women in Indian society. The Constitution of India has laid down as a fundamental right the equality of sexes.

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### Modern Indian Women

The status of women in modern India is a sort of a paradox the women have left the secured domain of their home and are now in the battlefield of life, fully armored with their talent. They had proven themselves. But in India they are yet to get their dues. The sex ratio of India shows that the Indian generation is still prejudiced against women's. There are 933 females per thousand males in India according to the census of 2001, which is much below the world average of 990 females. There are many problems which women in India have to go through daily. These problems have become the part and parcel of life of Indian women and some of them have accepted them as their fate. The theoretical discussion on female body and sports unravels the complexities of the notion of masculinity.

**Table 1:** London 2012 Olympics: Indian Team Women Participants

S. No.	Name	Sports/Game
01	M.C. Mary Kom	Boxing
02	Deepika Kumari	Archery
03	Chekrovolu Swuro	
04	Krishna Poonia	Athletics
05	Seema Antil	
06	Tintu Luka	
07	Mayookha Johny	
08	Sudha Singh	
09	Sahana Kumari	Judo
10	Garima Chaudhary	Badminton
11	Saina Nehwal	
12	Jwala Gutta,	
13	Valiyaveetil Diju	Wrestling
14	Geeta Phogat	Shooting
15	Rahi Sarnobat	
16	Heena Sidhu	
17	Annuraj Singh	
18	Shagun Chowdhury	Badminton
19	Saina Nehwal	
20	Jwala Gutta	
21	Valiyaveetil Diju	Judo
22	Garima Chaudhary	Table Tennis
23	Ankita Das	Lawn Tennis
24	Sania Mirza	
25	Rushmi chakrvarthi	Weightlifting
26	Ngangbam Soniya Chanu	

The above women had showed whole world that they are not inferior to men and they had proved their talent at international arena and bring laurels to the country.

### Constraints of women participation in sports in India

#### Physical Constraints

Physical constraints refer to the morphological feature

adaptations to particular sports. Basically, it refers to the qualities of the sports person such as the physical fitness parameters. If there is failure in any of these required parameters results in the reduction of sports performance.

- Heavy musculature of limbs
- Heavy abdomen musculature
- Heavy pelvic musculature
- Obsessive structure
- Improper posture/ postural deformity
- Flat foot

### **Physiological Constraints**

Physiological constraints refer to the organ functions ultimately resulted in the system coordination. If there is any dysfunction of the organs resulted in reduction of sports performance.

- Lower level of RBC
- Lower percentage of Hemoglobin
- Smaller or weaker heart and its circulation
- Smaller or weaker lungs and its mechanism
- Dysfunction of organs of endocrine system
- Greater body fat percentage
- Dominance of neither of aerobic power or anaerobic Power
- Menstrual disorders

### **Psychological Constraints**

Psychological constraints comprise the behavioral process. It is in which the body and mind coordinates produces the desirous behavioral, failure alternately resulted in the reduction of sports performance.

- Higher level of anxiety
- Higher level of aggression
- Lack of self confidence
- Lack of achievement motivation
- Lower self-esteem
- Lack of interest
- Full of restless mind because of media and cell phone
- Hesitate to participate during menstrual periods

### **Social Constraints**

Social constraints refer to the behavior in the sports society. During training and competition the relationship with coaches, arena persons, training-mates, co-participants, opponents and officials during competition. If there is any undue relationship or misbehaving during in this period especially love affair results in reduction in sports performance or ultimately termination from sports participation.

- Present days are unsafe for women's free movement such as ragging, traffic lug & raping
- Because of robbery of chain snatch and other costly ornaments
- Lack unsafe mode of road transport due to more vehicle motor movement
- Indulging in undue love affair
- Lack of good nurturing
- Lack of parental peace i.e., lack of support and encouragement from the family

### **Economic Constraints**

Economic constraints are considered most important factor

that hinder the women participation in sports. Considering the above said all the constraints either any failure or insufficient economic status or no sponsors resulted in the termination from the sports participation. Secondly constraints represent the triangular or pyramidal factors. It is in which the non-availability of expert trainers, no sufficient infrastructure and non-availability of sports constraints and gadgets. In considering infrastructure facilities it refers to the non-availability of area for training halls, indoor stadiums or constructed play environment to undergo training. Lack of non-availability of qualified coaches results not to produce better performance and they only become the cause of sports injuries. The sportsman should wear the sports costumes and certain sports gadgets to prevent injury. Besides that women should be provided the kits in order to boost their moral.

### **Government Apathy**

Government officials in a sport fall over each other to accompany a team when they participate in an international tournament. Why? So that they can travel free, stay in top hotels and indulge in shopping sprees to their heart's content. For the sake of formality, they will attend the tournament. However, you never see them cheering in encouragement or waving the tricolor the way *real* supporters do. Just because they are officials does not mean they should not be expressive. They will just be sitting placidly, enjoying a few snacks, chatting or texting on their cell phones or, even worse, snoozing away.

Despite all these setbacks a female athlete bags a medal at the international level. Then see the drastic change. Suddenly the officials are all over the place, grabbing photo ops with the winner and giving egoistic sound bites. It is as though *they* are responsible for the success!

### **Lack of good sponsorship**

In team sports, such as hockey, the squad may be lucky to have a sponsor to provide their kit and basic needs. Yet, even such a squad is never given the same amount of sponsorship as their male counterparts. This is quite demeaning, as though they are incapable of giving the same 100% dedication as do the men. By no means are they lacking in talent & skills. What's more, they are equally passionate about giving their best for the nation. Then why this discrimination? The situation is worse for individual athletes. Who will sponsor them? When they have the raw talent, why are they ignored? Why do they have to make do with ill-fitting shoes and sub-standard equipment?

### **Lack of family support**

While there are some sportswomen who do get support from their families, this is not always the case. There is a general mindset that females should be married off quickly so that (a) "society" does not comment on their non-marital status and (b) the parents no longer need to spend on looking after them. Once married, they are not expected to take up activities outside the home, that too sporting activity which could be harmful to their bodies and future progeny. The one common thread running through all the above factors is gender discrimination.

### **Role of gender discrimination in Indian sports**

Overall there is a very regressive attitude towards women in the sporting arena: that they are just not on par with the men. When a sportswoman breaks a record and outshines her male counterpart, it is dismissed as a one-off thing, that it is a fluke. It is possible that she may not achieve that feat again, but why should that one time be considered as nothing really great? Why do the achievements of sportswomen get a bare mention in a small column on a back page whereas those of the men get splashed over an entire page? True international stars get good coverage but, here again, there is discrimination. Why should only Saina Nehwal's success be front page news? Why not the feats of, say, the women's archery team?

### **Suggestions to improve the status of women in Indian sports**

On the positive side, things are looking up as far as achievements of sportswomen in India go. The achievements of discus thrower Krishna Poonia, archer Deepika Kumari, Tintu Luka (P.T.Usha's protégé), boxer Mary Kom and others are something to be proud of. They inspire young ladies from smaller towns and rural backgrounds to take up a sport & have big dreams to achieve the best.

To let such dreams take concrete shape and not die out, here's what could be done:

1. Create a special core team in the Sports Ministry consisting of sportspersons from various disciplines. Let them be involved in creating a team of managers and coaches for each sport. Such a team should again be those individuals who are part of the sport itself. They will have a far better understanding of the athletes' needs than those from a non-sporting background.
2. Provide backing, financially and otherwise, to more people like P.T. Usha to train budding sportswomen.
3. Training facilities, nutrition and accommodation should be of high quality. To ensure this, let not red tape and formalities come in the way. When training in foreign countries is provided, ensure that the training is done by individuals who are not tainted by doping scandals. Regular surprise doping tests should also be done to ensure a clean image at all times.
4. Start aggressive educational campaigns against female foeticide, early marriage and hampering a woman's goal to pursue sporting activity. Emphasize through promotional campaigns the importance of encouraging the female members of a family to take to sports.

### **Method**

Data were collected from different research articles, journals, magazines, research works published in reputed journals. Besides these sources the data was also collected from internet (Google) and from different discussions and debates.

### **Discussion**

The Indian Constitution has bestowed equal rights on women. Gender and Sport in India is a very vast topic. This is a reality of all aspects of human life in India. Indian women have mastered anything and everything which a woman can dream of. Between the men's and women's versions of the sport they identified. One of the most consistent justifications for the

apparent lack of equality between men's and women's Professional sports put forth by many of the respondents was that men's sports are faster, more aggressive and dynamic, and thus more exciting. Thirty-six boxers will compete across three weight categories. Among them, India's Mary Kom, who's already a five time world champion. Saina Nehwal is also international badminton ranker. PHYSICAL EDUCATION can help increase self-confidence by gaining women opportunities to play new skills, engage in positive relationships, acquire achievements, and engage in volunteer service.

### **Conclusion**

According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men. The most important factor for this is the motivation factor, and it is there for all of us to see. We analyzed that all the girl players that we met were really enthusiastic and concerned with sport. They wanted not only to play but also to have a career in sport. Empowerment in this sense refers to the process through which women gain the self-confidence, strength, and in some contexts the information and skills, needed to make strategic choices to improve their lives. The essay tried to explore this ambivalent status of Indian sporting women. Media now focus on women problems in a decisive way as their role is detrimental for the women sports in India. Indian media needs to be sensitized to gender issues. The London Olympics are breaking down the last of the gender barriers and for the first time, female boxers are going to be included in the competition. There is must acceptance for Next Olympics medal achieved to woman Indian players. Sportswomen in India should not be like the etc. at the end of a sentence, a mere add-on. They should not be considered to be as something seen vaguely from the corner of an eye. In fact, don't even look upon them as sportswomen but as sportspersons, individuals who deserve a better status in the world of Indian sports. Provide better benefits and sponsorship, hone their talents, inspire and motivate them. Then only can the status of women in sports go up a notch higher.

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