



## INTRICACIES OF GENDER BIAS IN SPORT AND THE PATH TO PARITY

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### ABSTRACT:

It goes without saying that sport has an almost fascinating virtue of bringing together people from every corner of the world. Be it the young accountant in Manchester who was too sad to show up to work after Manchester United lost 3-1 to Barcelona in the 2011 Champions League final, or the 43 year old Indian father of two who burst into tears when Pakistan dominated India with a 180 run win in the ICC champions trophy 2017. There are very few things in the world that can evoke as much emotion and passion in the people as sports.

Like all good things sports too has its own fair share of negative aspects. Practices such as Doping, Tampering and match fixing have plagued this noble component of our life. However the largest and most detrimental shortcoming of this field lies in its repeated failure since time immemorial to escalate the platform of women's sports to that of men's.

This paper discusses and deliberates on the struggles and grievances that women in ALMOST every sector of the sphere of

sports are facing today. It takes an in depth look into different sports, their respective bodies and federations which draft up the framework of rules to which all players and organizers much abide, sponsors who are in charge of the monetary support to different teams and franchises, the fans whose behavior and preferences can be studied to arrive to comprehensive conclusions about the game and isolated incidents or occasions which will further elucidate on the grim reality of gender based discrimination and bias in the field of sports both in our country India and all over the world.

"Believe me, the reward is not so great without the struggle." - Wilma G. Rudolph

Inspiring words that are forever etched in the world of sports and our hearts. This quote by Wilma Glodeon Rudolph, an American sprinter from Tennessee who won 3 gold medals and a bronze medal during the 1956 and 1960 Olympics and was heralded as the fastest female sprinter in the world during that time, captures the very essence of this paper where we dwell on the vast inequalities and injustices faced by women in the sphere of sports. Their struggle is against a mindset, the mindset of the very institution they belong to. Their struggle is against the stigma and dogma that haunts them and waters down their accolades and drags them down from attaining parity in regard to respect and relevance with their male counterpart in the world of sports.

Sports, in my opinion can be regarded as one of the greatest boons to modern societal cooperation and time utilization spanning over different groups. It is the zenith of



recreation on national, international and also local levels. It is also one of the highest forms of the manifestation of healthy competition and mutual motivation. Sports has always existed in our society. The old age rulers and princes too competed in games between kingdoms and over the centuries we have only seen the evolution of this concept. Today sport is so amazingly intertwined in our lives that we often don't even understand. Be it watching, participating or organizing, it has become an industry all together and has given rise to so many vivid concepts such as sports related businesses and vocations. It goes without saying that sport has an almost fascinating virtue of bringing together people from every corner of the world. Be it the young accountant in Manchester who was too sad to show upto work after Manchester United lost 3-1 to Barcelona in the 2011 Champions League final, or the 43 year old Indian father of two who burst into tears when Pakistan dominated India with a 180 run win in the ICC champions trophy 2017 or even the little 13 year old kid in Kingston, Jamaica who went absolutely ecstatic as Usain Bolt crossed the finish line at the Beijing Olympics 100m sprint and simultaneously created a new world record. There are very few things in the world that can evoke as much emotion and passion in the people as sports.

Like all good things sports too has it's own fair share of negative aspects. Practices such as Doping, Tampering and match fixing have plagued this noble component of our life. However the largest and most detrimental shortcoming of this field lies in it's repeated failure since time immemorial to escalate the platform of women's sports

to that of men's. It is unfortunate that all of us across the world are silent and almost seemingly willfully ignorant to the humongous gap between the significance associated with men's sports and that of women's.

Today, even though we can say that the situation of women's sports has improved tremendously, it is unfortunate that women had to struggle so much just to bring themselves on the same platform as men in the world of sports but what is even more unfortunate and shameful is that even today that parity has still not been reached. In almost every sport in every country it is evident that men's sports garner much higher viewership, planning and monetary funding.

This paper discusses and deliberates on the struggles and grievances that women in ALMOST every sector of the sphere of sports are facing today. It takes an in depth look into different sports, their respective bodies and federations which draft up the framework of rules to which all players and organizers much abide, sponsors who are in charge of the monetary support to different teams and franchises, the fans whose behavior and preferences can be studied to arrive to comprehensive conclusions about the game and isolated incidents or occasions which will further elucidate on the grim reality of gender based discrimination and bias in the field of sports both in our country India and all over the world.

### **AN IN DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF THE PREDICAMENT**

The reason the status quo when it comes to gender equality in the world of sports is so



crippled is because for over centuries ever since the advent of sports there has been such a strong attempt to keep women away from sports that the concept of bias towards the male in sports has now become an institutionalized concept almost next to impossible to do away with. Countries like England and America are regarded the torch bearers of sport in the modern world but however we find that even before sport was made a part of everyday life it was given a masculine connotation backed by religion. Over a century and half ago the Victorian Church and society viewed sport to be inseparable to the doctrine of muscular Christianity which was held as the polar opposite of femininity which connoted softness. In America too organizations like YMCA (Young Men Christian Association) attributed sport to the masculine young Christian male thus inhibiting the main principle this sport had set out to achieve: inclusion. It can be said without any doubt that the Olympics was the biggest revolution to ever grace the sporting world. Mass participation of young men from all over the world in a number of varied events, global recreational cooperation had reached it's zenith. However unfortunately if we study the history of the Olympics we will find how the very enterprising Mr Baron De Coubertin, Founder and president of the Olympic committee that organizes the mega sporting event every four years had tried his level best to keep women away from the games. So sexist was he in his thinking that he came out and said that women indulging in sports was "the most unaesthetic sight human eyes could contemplate." While these were the stories of the so called global powers who are seen as the champions of human rights and equality in other parts of

the world the situation was even more grim. Most countries in South America, Asia and Africa were already struggling with civil violence and disorder on home ground so for them the introduction of sports itself into the country was such a herculean task let alone inclusion of women too. It was after the early 1900's that women were slowly allowed to participate in some events. Over the years the numbers in regard to women's participation have greatly increased and now in the 2016 Rio Olympics we saw a women athletes were 45 percent of the total number. However it is important that we do not confuse the struggle for equal participation with that of equal interest from the viewers. The journey in terms of bringing parity between men and women in sports is still not over and the world has still a long way to go in that regard despite the mammoth achievements that have been made to bridge the gap. But it is also integral that we understand that while we can push for more reform we cannot forcefully change the interest of the viewers and alter their preferences. In many sports, men who by virtue of their genetic makeup are biologically able to exert more physical force and thus exhibit greater strength and durability are preferred by viewers. Which is precisely why more sponsors and brands are flocking to male dominated sports. This should not happen ideally, yet it cannot be stopped as in a liberal economic and democratic country such as ours we cannot prohibit corporations from pursuing ventures where they know they can make large amounts of money. Finally, when it comes to an in depth understanding of this sport it would be catastrophic if after perceiving the current gap in sports instead of working on the parity we let destructive ideas like



misogyny or misandry get the better of us. In this fight against age old mindsets that have prevented mass participation of women in sports we cannot allow a situation where the male athletes and female athletes believe that they are against each other. We cannot let there be any animosity between them because in this fight all our athletes, men and women unanimously are fighting on the same side, the side of justice which has been denied to the women of our country and this world for ages.

### **TITLE IX - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

Title IX is a federal law in the United States of America, which was created as part of the Education amendments of 1972. It is a legislation, which has evolved from the Title VII of the civil rights act of 1964. Title VII stated that no employer could discriminate against an employee based on religion, sex, race, colour or origin. Title IX broadens the horizons of that doctrine to educational programs that receive financial assistance from the federal government. Any individual who faces discrimination based on their gender in education programs that receive federal funding is protected under this law. Title IX states:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Title IX and Sex Discrimination.” Home, US Department of Education (ED), 15 Oct. 2015

Education institutions (receiving federal resources for their programs) are required by law to acknowledge and take immediate countermeasure actions to repair any complaints of hostile gender related discriminative environments. Failure to do so would result in the college or high school being cut off from their federal funding. Though Title IX is by nature a short statute, decisions from the Supreme court and aid from the United States Department of Education has given it an extensive scope that not only covers cases of discrimination, but also cases concerning sexual harassment and sexual violence.

One of the integral functions of Title IX is to ensure that funds are being fairly allocated between men’s and women’s programs. Naturally, The amount of funding and the allocation of resources depend on the number of students attending the particular high school or college. This is enforced by the Department of Education (DOE) and it’s Office of Civil rights (OCR).

The Office of Civil rights have created certain rules and regulations that define the way in which Title IX cases ought to be looked at.

According to the OCR, the following factors are required to be taken into account when comparing Men’s and women’s programs at an institution, while keeping Title IX guidelines<sup>2</sup> in mind:

<sup>2</sup>Legal, Inc. US. “USLegal.” Sports Law, [sportslaw.uslegal.com/title-ix-and-other-womens-issues/](http://sportslaw.uslegal.com/title-ix-and-other-womens-issues/).



- (1) Equipment and supplies
- (2) Scheduling of games and practice time
- (3) Travel and per diem allowances
- (4) Tutoring
- (5) Coaching
- (6) Locker rooms, practice, and competitive facilities
- (7) Medical and training facilities and services
- (8) Housing and dining facilities and services
- (9) Publicity
- (10) Support services
- (11) Recruitment of student-athletes

These regulations work towards ensuring that educational institutions provide equal opportunities to all their students. It is designed to prevent gender discrimination in every way possible. It has greatly improved female participation in sports in the U.S. The penalty of losing federal funding has almost guaranteed equality in sporting programs throughout the educational landscape. Though it is important to note that no such penalty has ever actually been handed out.

The biggest case involving Title IX was in October 2000, when a federal Jury ruled that Duke University had discriminated against female place kicker Heather Sue Mercer.

Mercer was an all-state kicker at Yorktown Heights High School in New York and tried out for the Duke University team upon enrolling in the fall of 1994.

She didn't make the team in 1994 but was given a position as a manager instead.

In the spring of 1995 however, she participated in an annual spring intra squad scrimmage, called the Blue-White game. She was selected for this game after impressing seniors during her participation in conditioning drills with the football team. Mercer was undeniably the star of the match, as she kicked a 28-yard field goal to win the game for her side.

Thereafter, a number of events took place to confirm Mercer's place on the team.

She was personally told of this news by assistant coach, Fred Chatham and this was further confirmed to the media by the Duke head coach, Fred Goldsmith.

Duke's sports information director, Mike Cragg also asked Mercer to take part in interviews with various news outlets. Mercer attended regular first team practice and was officially listed as a member of the football team on the roster filed with the NCAA. She was also pictured in the varsity yearbook.

However, she did not play a single game in the 1995 season. On top of which, she was not allowed to dress for games or even sit on the sidelines. She participated in conditioning training the following year, but that was when Mercer complained about alleged discriminatory comments and treatment by the head coach, Fred Goldsmith.



In addition to not being allowed to sit on the sidelines. Mercer was not permitted to attend summer camp and was given fewer opportunities than other walk on kickers.

Goldsmith was alleged to have made discriminatory comments towards Mercer, where he stated that she would be better off participating in beauty pageants and implied that she should sit in the stands with her boyfriend and not on the touchline.

In 1997, Mercer filed suit against Duke, claiming that the coaches had cut her from the team solely based on her gender. This violated Title IX of the 1972 Education's amendment. Under Title IX, Duke was not required to let Mercer try out for the team, but once she had tried out, they had to treat her the same as any other player in the squad. Duke tried to argue that Mercer was not given opportunities because she wasn't good enough on a sporting level. This was quite evidently not the case though and in October 2000, Duke had to pay Heather Sue Mercer 2 million dollars in punitive damages.

Title IX has been a remarkable success and is providing women with so many more opportunities in the field of sports. It has paved the way for various fantastic careers and given fruition to many a dream. Equal participation in sports is slowly becoming a part of life and society in the United States. Before Title IX's inception in 1972, only 1 in 27 girls played varsity sports. Today, that figure is 1 in 2.5. There are almost 2.8 million girls playing high school sports with hopes of obtaining scholarships for colleges. The number of women playing at collegiate level has increased from 32,000 to 150,000.

Athletic scholarships for women were non-existent before 1972, but just 20 years later in 1992 there were close to 10,000 athletic scholarships given out to women. These scholarships have not simply aided women's sports but also women's education as a whole. Before 1972, women earned a meager 7% of all law degrees in the country. By 1997 however, the number had risen to 44%. Similarly, 41% of medical degrees were earned by women, a considerable increase from before Title IX took effect, when it was only 9%.

Due to Title IX, a system has been created whereby women have been given a much greater chance to flourish at a sporting level. The number and quality of female athletes in the United States has improved dramatically. However, gender discrimination is still a very real issue and continues to limit women to some extent even at an intercollegiate level. They are still not afforded the same amount of opportunities that men are. In his essay on Title IX laws and intercollegiate athletics, Michael Lancaster states "Although women in division I colleges are 53 percent of the student body, they receive only 41 percent of the opportunities to play sports, 36 percent of overall athletic operating budgets, and 32 percent of the dollars spent to recruit new athletes."<sup>3</sup>

In 2005, the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education estimated that men receive \$133 million more per year than women in athletic scholarships.

<sup>3</sup>Lancaster, Michael. "Athletic Scholarships." Title IX And Its Effect On College Athletic Programs., [www.athleticscholarships.net/title-ix-college-athletics-3.htm](http://www.athleticscholarships.net/title-ix-college-athletics-3.htm).



## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The subject of inequality of opportunities, funding and wages stems from the developmental stage, but rises upwards and is just as abundant at a professional level. An example of this is the recent stand off between the United States Soccer Federation (The ruling body) and the Women's national football team.

The US Women's National Team (USWNT) has been the most successful football team in the female game, winning three Worldcup titles and four gold medals since they joined the Olympic games in 1996. Their 5-2 win over Japan in the 2015 worldcup final was the most viewed football match by an English-speaking audience ever. With close to 25 million people tuning in to watch captain Carli Lloyd score a hat trick and subsequently lift the famous trophy. That is a remarkable feat and is testament to the efforts and commitment to improve the quality and number of female athletes in the country.

It is also a stark contrast to the relative failure that the men's team have had in international competitions. The team has appeared in the Worldcup 10 times, and their greatest success was to finish in 3<sup>rd</sup> place all the way back at the first worldcup finals in Uruguay in 1930.

However, the men earn a lot more than their female counterparts at a club level and the same goes for the international stage. It is argued that the comparisons between the two wages are more complicated than people think, as the payment processes are different. The men are paid through a bonus system, while the women are paid through a

salary system. This essentially means that the men are paid purely on appearances for the national team. The women are paid regardless of whether they play or not, as they are earning a salary from their contract.

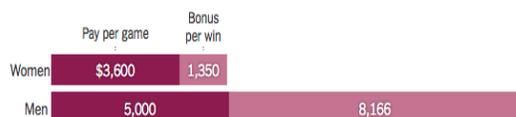
This may initially seem fair, however the compensations received by the two sets of players are very different. It is quite evident, with all their recent success that the women have significantly outperformed the men at every level. Thus, based on merit they must deserve to be compensated with a lot more than the men's team.

According to the Guardian, Tim Howard (The men's team goalkeeper) was paid slightly more than Hope Solo (Women's team goalkeeper) for playing 8 games in a calendar year compared to Solo's 23. These numbers are related to just the friendlies that are played by the two national teams every year. Though the women receive a high base salary of 72,000 US dollars, the only bonuses they receive are for winning friendlies. The women receive a bonus of 1,350 dollars for winning a friendly, but no bonuses are handed out for a loss or a draw.

On the other hand, the men receive high bonuses for appearances (Which essentially makes up their base salary) and much greater bonuses (17,625 dollars) for winning matches. They also receive a bonus of 5,000 dollars for a football match that they lose.



Pay per player for each exhibition game



Yearly pay for 20 games



The New York Times | Source: Federal complaint submitted to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Note: The men's bonus is an average based on a possible bonus range of \$6,250 to \$17,625 per win.

In International competitions, these discrepancies are even greater. Each player on the men's team received almost 50,000 dollars for making the 2014 World cup squad, while the women only received 15,000 in 2015. When the standing of each team in the game is taken into consideration, the difference in these numbers are staggering.

World cup bonuses per player



The New York Times | Source: Federal complaint submitted to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

championships. (The men) get paid more to just show up than we get paid to win major championships.”<sup>4</sup>

-Hope Solo (NY TIMES)

After their success in the 2015 worldcup, the Women's national team filed a suit with the Equal Employment Opportunity commission against the U.S Soccer Federation. This suit accused the Federation of wage discrimination. Several members of the team also voiced their concerns about the fact that the federation did not give them the same treatment when aspects such as match venues, playing surfaces, travel and stay were taken into account.

There is evidence in this claim as can be seen in the following table. The women are paid a smaller daily allowance by the federation as compared to the men's. They are paid 50\$ as compared to the men's 60\$ at domestic venues and only 62.5\$ dollars as compared to the 75\$ paid to the men at international venues. This, out of all the other discrepancies is possibly the most infuriating. It is a trivial amount and is hard to comprehend why the allowance is not exactly the same for both teams.

“The numbers speak for themselves. We are the best in the world, have three World Cup championships, four Olympic

<sup>4</sup>Das, Andrew. “Top Female Players Accuse U.S. Soccer of Wage Discrimination.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 31 Mar. 2016,



Per diem for traveling



The New York Times | Source: Federal complaint submitted to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

While the discrepancy in wages is so obviously misguided, the United States soccer federation has tried to justify it through various claims.

They have claimed that the discrepancy in pay is not as large as made out to be in the complaint. Although as seen previously, no difference in pay, however small it may be, can possibly be justified on the basis of merit.

US Soccer also claims that the fundamental reason for any discrepancy is the fact that the men’s team brings in a lot more revenue than the women’s. According to the New York Times, the revenue brought in through ticket sales is almost double for the men. Additionally, a large amount of the US Soccer Federation’s funding comes from the international governing body FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association). The monetary inconsistencies start from the top. In 2015, the US men’s team was given 9 million dollars for their round of 16 exit from the competition. The

women’s team was only awarded 2 million for being crowned champions.

In their effort to force an improved agreement with the U.S Soccer federation, the women went public with their complaint. They felt the need for the fans to understand and support their cause. Initially though, as the debate was simply about equal pay, US Soccer sued the team union in early 2016. The lawsuit brought against the team union, was brought about in order to enforce the terms of the existing agreement between the federation and its star players. This agreement had expired in 2012, but was to be continued with certain modifications that had been agreed with the player’s representatives in 2013. The New York times reported at the time “U.S. Soccer said in the court filing that it ‘reluctantly’ brought the action against the union representing the women’s team after the executive director of the union, Richard Nichols, threatened to repudiate the agreement and its no-strike clause in a negotiating session in New York.”<sup>5</sup>

After a long drawn out process, months of negotiations came to and in 2017 when the players and federation finally agreed on a new contract that runs until 2021. The result of all those sleepless nights and determination of the players and their representatives was finally announced by the

<sup>5</sup>Das, Andrew. “U.S. Soccer Sues Union Representing the Women's National Team.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 3 Feb. 2016,



U.S Soccer federation on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The joint statement from U.S Soccer and the U.S Women’s National Team Players Association read:

"We are pleased to announce that U.S. Soccer and the U.S. Women's National Team Players Association have ratified a new collective bargaining agreement which will continue to build the women's program in the U.S, grow the game of soccer worldwide, and improve the professional lives of players on and off the field. We are proud of the hard work and commitment to thoughtful dialogue reflected through this process, and look forward to strengthening our partnership moving forward. The agreement carries through the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup and 2020 Olympics."<sup>6</sup>

This new contract is seen as a massive victory for women’s football and the larger world of women’s sport. The efforts of staff players such as Carli Lloyd, Hope Solo and Alex Morgan was supported by their growing fan base and a large section of the public.

According to the New York Times, “The agreement includes a sizable increase in base pay for the players — more than 30 percent, initially — and improved match bonuses that could double some of their incomes, to \$200,000 to \$300,000 in any given year, and even more in a year that

<sup>6</sup>USSoccer. “U.S. Soccer and U.S. WNT PA Finalize CBA Through 2021.” U.S. Soccer, USSoccer, 5 Apr. 2017

includes a World Cup or Olympic campaign. Yet while the women’s players can claim significant gains, including on noneconomic issues like travel and working conditions, the new deal does not guarantee them equal pay with the men’s national team, which the women had made the cornerstone of their campaign for much of the past year. For the union, that reality — a consequence of the teams’ different pay structures and a eight-figure gap in FIFA bonus payouts to U.S. Soccer for the men’s and women’s World Cup — was balanced by progress elsewhere. It is those changes, including control of some licensing and marketing rights, which the union views as an opening to test the team’s value on the open market, that the players and their lawyers feel could pay off in future negotiations.”<sup>7</sup>

**INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Sonal Mehta, a rower from Krita Prabhodini , one of the better sports academies in our country , was asked about her practice regime and coaching sessions. Her answer explains the gender inequality and backwardness prevalent all over the country in a nutshell. She spoke about how they were made to practice for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening, but they had no coach. The river they rowed in, was not meant for rowing and most of all the only coach they had previously was the college principal, who knew nothing about

<sup>7</sup>Das, Andrew. “Long Days, Google Docs and Anonymous Surveys: How the U.S. Soccer Team Forged a Deal.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 5 Apr. 2017



rowing. Later on, they decided to bring on a proper coach who besides being highly biased towards the male athletes would also look down upon the female rowers and behave aggressively with them, which was a set back on their confidence. When one of the girls was selected for an International Camp, he did not send her because her behaviour was not according to his liking and her attitude was not up to the mark. "Politics is a part and parcel of sport" is all they are told and hence nobody stands up.

It is no wonder then that we ask ourselves – why do we have only one Sania Mirza, one Saina Nehwal, or one PT Usha? The answer lies in the deplorable condition of the women in the Sports Industry.<sup>8</sup> It cannot be denied that the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen an exponential growth in the female participation under various fields and in the most recent Olympics, it was the women from our country who really showed their vigour and proved that sport is not something that must be associated exclusively with men but deep down the condition is deplorable and will remain so until there is a change, a change so vast that the entire outlook of sport and women both are changed, because until this happens women will always be considered as the fragile beings who are to mend the man when he comes home and look after his needs.

It is essential to look at the grass root level and ponder about the various problems faced by the young women of this country who want to make a career in sports and can't make it. The primary problem faced where

most women bow out is that they are not allowed to pursue their dream. Before participating in a 400m hurdles race a woman has to jump and conquer so many social hurdles and while jumping these hurdles she is so burdened and tired that the battle ends even before it starts. The notion that men and women have different bodies and different purposes is an age old principle which is the basis of the argument that women are not meant to be seen in the field, but in the kitchen. In a country like India, where women are not given primary education and basic rights, opportunity in sport is highly far fetched.

Traditionally masculinity and manhood is synonymous to athleticism or sporty behaviour and that is the norm which must change. The few sports where women have made a mark is the ones where they have been given a chance due to their "flexibility" and "tenderness" like gymnastics. Hence an athlete would never be associated with a woman until recently but even then a lot of progress is required. Since childhood if a girl is subject to dolls and cooking like in our country, and if by chance she takes to sports she is termed an 'outcast' or a 'tomboy', she would never continue with the sport. Social acceptance is of great significance and to fit in sport is sacrificed by a huge amount of women. India is a country where the norm is the only way that must be followed and due to this families put pressure on their daughters and sisters to give up their passion and get involved in household work or they would remain unmarried, especially if it is a lower income family, it becomes really difficult for them to even imagine such a situation. Again this is a mentality which must progress, the

<sup>8</sup>July 13,2012. Leena Kundnani ,Naaree.com



people must evolve and elevate the woman's status. To curb these issues the discriminatory practices must be tackled as soon as they are witnessed with the help of professionals. There must also be a suitable and supportive work climate to make women feel comfortable if not privileged. Education is primary when it comes to the social issues and only the educated will see how equality and justice function.

These were some of the psychological and social reasons for women to hesitate entering the field of sport but even the few that take up this end up struggling to make a living. After thorough research the authors have come up with numerous reasons for this disparity.

### Coaching and Practice

“A good coach can change a game, a great coach can change a life”, but there is nobody who wrote about what no coach can do. That is exactly what the women on India face day in and day out. Without a coach there is no fitness regime, there are no practice sessions, there is no technical development and there is skill enhancement. How can a woman become a professional without a coach and without practice. Having the right guidance in any field is essential but for some reason the men receive this guidance where as the women are required to imbibe it by themselves or by examining the men. In some facilities they do have coaches, but they are neither good nor great. They are usually sexist, homophobic and misogynists. The inexperienced coaches to gain a little time are given the women's team which is again very unfair. Women feel a lot more comfortable having female coaches but unfortunately there are very few women in

this field as well. Politics and favoritism plays a major part as well but the worst issue faced by them under their coaches is sexual harassment. During Asian Games 2014, gymnastics coach Manoj Rana and gymnast Chandan Pathak were booked for allegedly sexually harassing a female gymnast at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. The 29-year-old woman gymnast alleged that the duo made vulgar and indecent remarks about her clothes. While the SAI launched a probe, Manoj Rana and gymnast Chandan Pathak, flew to Incheon for the 17th Asian Games. No news reports appeared after this.<sup>9</sup> This is just one of the many incidents reported with no action taken as the coaches ultimately use their power and clout to get away.

### Travelling Arrangements

Travelling is something that cannot be helped because sports are played all over the world and it is their duty to make it to every competition no matter where in the world it is held but for some reason the budget allotted for the men is so much higher as compared to the women for no reason at all. Many teams have reported the male team getting first class tickets where as their female counterparts flying in the economy class. At the semi professional level travelling arrangements must be made by the athletes themselves and thus families are not ready to spend the money required for the female child. They must travel to distant locations in trains without reservations as the various sports bodies are not ready to utilize funds on the 'weaker sex'. Sport is

<sup>9</sup>14<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, Adrija Bose, [http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/12/14/7-times-indian-sportswomen-reported-of-facing-sexual-harassment\\_a\\_21627488/](http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/12/14/7-times-indian-sportswomen-reported-of-facing-sexual-harassment_a_21627488/)



an expensive hobby but as a career it is even more expensive.<sup>10</sup>

### Media & Representation

Women are made to face the barrels of buoyant sexism on a daily basis, be it at work or even at home. This is especially the case when it comes to the sports industry. The media seems to cover only the juicy details about the personal lives of female athletes where as they should be criticized on their sporting abilities and talent. Jwala gutta , an International Badminton player has time and again spoken about how her professional success is based on how she looks on and off the field. “I love fashion and I don’t step out dressed shabbily. But why is that a basis for accusing me of not being focused on my game? I can’t train 24×7, can I?” said a distraught Jwala after being accused by the media on several occasions about her looks and personal life.<sup>11</sup> Media coverage is extremely poor when it comes to women’s sports and no International women’s events are shown on television screens in India. Although times are improving and the women’s cricket world cup was covered at length, there is still a long way to go. To understand how media interprets female athletes , the perfect example is the Sports Illustrated magazine which has over time proved that women in sport can only be judged by their bodies or looks and their skill on the field is of no importance. So far, there have only been 10

Sports Illustrated covers featuring women, while there have been 75 men on the covers. Out of the 10 covers that have women on them, 10% feature a female that has no connection to athletics.<sup>12</sup> The media makes the female athletes look weak and dependent on the male athletes. This is gross misrepresentation and should be stopped immediately because understanding the problem of gender inequality is the key as often , there is subtle sexism or inequality prevalent and journalists fail to realize it. Recently, Mithali Raj, captain of the Indian women’s cricket team was asked who her favourite men’s cricketer was in the Indian team. “Do you ask the same question to a male cricketer? Do you ask them who their favourite female cricketer is?” was her brilliant response. She had just played a game of cricket where in she brilliantly showcased her talent and won the game but the media seemed to be more interested in trivial gossip. Such a question had never been asked when it came to any Men’s cricketer which shows how women are represented in society and how they must always be inferior and sidelined.

### Sports Bureaucracy

Sports Awards are prestigious trophies not only tangibly but something that acts as a mental goal for many athletes to achieve and conquer in their careers. It is a great honour to receive the Khel Ratna or the Arjuna award for ones contribution to the country but unfortunately even Sports bureaucracy is not free of gender inequality and injustice.

<sup>10</sup>Gender issues in sports ,  
<http://ncw.nic.in/pdfreports/Gender%20Issue%20in%20Sports.pdf>

<sup>11</sup>12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 , Sanjana Ray ,  
<https://yourstory.com/2016/09/challenges-female-athletes-face/>

<sup>12</sup>19<sup>th</sup> November 2015 , Amanda Christy ,  
<https://create.piktochart.com/output/9481436-gender-inequality-in-sports-media>



Just over one-fourth of Arjuna awards have gone to women. Dronacharya awards, which are meant to recognize quality coaches, are even more biased. Less than one in 25 of them have gone to a woman.<sup>13</sup> The reason there is such an imbalance is not because of the talent gap but because of sports administration and bureaucracy. There are very limited awards in the first place and even then they are all prejudiced and handed over to the men. It is the sports federations that recommend the winner of these awards and most sports federations are highly male dominated. Due to this domination, female athletes are not given opportunities in various sports and hence up getting fewer chances to win an award. women have suffered setbacks in the ranks of coaching and sport administration in women's program. Of course, it is possible for men to do a good job in these positions, but unless girls and young women see women in positions of authority and power in their programs, they will be reluctant to define sports and sport participation as important in their own futures.<sup>14</sup> The composition of the bureaucracy must change and only once that happens will this partiality vanish and awards as well as medals will be won.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

<sup>13</sup>14<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Dipti Jain,  
<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/gFXCC5dLy0yT3ZsRRVwxUK/Indias-sports-awards-have-a-palpable-gender-bias.html>

<sup>14</sup>Gender issues in sports ,  
<http://ncw.nic.in/pdfreports/Gender%20Issue%20in%20Sports.pdf>

The authors of this paper have dug deep and tackled every aspect of discrimination faced by the women in this country with regard to sport and their participation in it. After our study we found various issues that are hampering progress in this field and it is also our duty to find solutions to these obstacles and help implement them. First and foremost we must help implement more policies and draft a committee to look into more participation and growth in the women's sports industry. The Sports Authority of India was set up with an intention to broad base sports and in this regard they should take up including women's sports in this policy. In 1975, the government had started a national festival which had women's sports at the district and state levels and helped nurture a lot of talent, but this has subsequently decline and hence should be revived. Budget Allocation is desperately needed because all the problems have germinated due to shortage of funds. There are a high amount of funds to pay the male cricketers a handsome salary but there is no improvement in the condition of the female athletes. They are paid meagre salaries and given basic government jobs which are barely enough to maintain a normal lifestyle. At the same time sports facilities must be improved with the funds so that the talent can be developed in a systematic way.

We also need to focus on the grass root level so that in the future more women can participate and achieve gender equality , with relation to all sports. There has been progress which is evident in the Olympics , where now , there are certain events like synchronized swimming that has only women participants and in the 2016



Olympics more women participated than in previous sporting event. Education is also another key area which should be looked into and sports should be a compulsory addition in the curriculum of every school. There should also be special attention paid to get more female coaches and official who could hold high positions and influence the way the sporting authorities work. At the same time athletes also feels comfortable and get inspired by imminent personalities.

Selection procedures and processes should be kept in check by all the sporting authorities. They must be made accountable and answerable for each decision made with regard to allocation of the funds because in the recent past there has been great mismanagement of funds. In fact a special body or cell should be introduced which would look into the development of women's sport and check for gender injustice at every level. The media must play a vital role in promoting women's sports by televising and telecasting at every point. There must be positive publicity and coverage given to sporting abilities and every achievement should be acclaimed highly so that there is a push for more women to enter this field.

Women should be made to train and practice not only with regard to their sport but also in their responsibility towards development of women's participation in sport. Ex- players should take it up to improve the future and get involved as coaches or officials in the various sports bodies. Like the Title IX has worked wonders in America , India too must implement a law which would not only improve the condition of the women but

elevate the sport to a whole new level. We need to applaud our sportswomen just the way we idolize our cricketers. Only then will we see many more Sania Mirzas and P.T Ushas.

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