

Race and Gender: A Comparative Study of Indian and Black Sportswomen

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ABSTRACT: *The present study is an attempt to analyse the various forms of gender discriminations in sports among the International as well as National sportswomen. The history of women athletics goes back to ancient civilization; it is not a recent phenomenon. Women are occasionally forbidden from competing, which led them to create their own games. Sports have a universal appeal. It does not discriminate based on things like race, gender, caste, or color. Sports participation emphasizes both overall development and health. Men used to participate in most games, sports, and athletic events back in the day, but today's women face, any restrictions, including those are physical, mental, social, cultural, and more. Women have advanced significantly in many areas of life in the past century. Today, women can hold employment, own property, and play professional sports. Women in India are making every effort to hear in the male-dominated sports industry, even though you may not hear crowds for their goals or see media outlets devote all their primetime slots to covering their matches. We will trace how race and gender function in the society continue to be hampered by the absence of an intersectional perspective. The main aim of the research is to explore and analyze the critical situation, struggle, and psychological conditions of Indian and Black Sportswomen.*

KEYWORDS: athletics, sports industry, primetime, male-dominated, psychological

INTRODUCTION

There has been a significant trend toward gender equality throughout the 20th century. Even though this has improved possibilities for women, particularly in industrialized nations, there are still some developing nations where equality is still a long way off. For instance, compared to men, "the death rate for women and girls is significantly greater in South Asia and China".(Sen and Kalsen, 16).Even though we have developed the capacity to control robots to do our bidding in the twenty-first century, gender equality is one area where we have made very little progress.

Rant all we want; the truth is that even though society has made some advancements since the World,

Wars perhaps three inches the thought that a woman may be as powerful as a man still offends a lot of people. Women are forced to deal with the repercussions of increasing sexism every day, whether at work or even at home. Despite the fact that women are now supporting and demanding their social rights in both their virtual and physical realities, they still do not have the same level of respect or acknowledgment in the workplace as their arrogant male counterparts. In the majority of developing nations, friends and family congratulate new fathers of boys. A son provides security because he will inherit his father's assets and work to sustain the family. The response, on the other hand, is extremely different when a girl is born. The phrase "The servant of your household has been born" is used to welcome a family with a baby girl in several regions of India. The girl child is subjected to many forms of discrimination, abuse, and exploitation from conception till death not just in India but in many other countries as well. Women face a lot of discrimination in many areas for example discrimination in Education, Health opportunities, Economical opportunities and Political process opportunities. When it comes to the sports industry, this is especially true. It has been dominated and exclusively available to men for far too long, with their reasoning being that "women aren't really into sports that much anyhow. The gender prejudice that existed in international sports back then can be seen by taking a bird's-eye view of the historical Olympic movement. International sports have historically been rife with gender prejudice. Women were historically prohibited from participating in the ancient Olympics, along with slaves and other dishonored people. Even the ancient Olympics were off limits to women. Women were only allowed to host their own Hera-themed quadrennial sporting event. However, there weren't many competitions for female athletes at the Hera festival, which was smaller and less significant than the male ancient Olympics. The solemn and periodic elevation of male athleticism with internationalism as a base, loyalty as a means, art as its setting, and female adulation as recompense was how Pierre de Coubertin characterized his vision when he resurrected the Olympics in 1896. Naturally, involvement for women was once more denied. Tennis and golf were the two Olympic sports in 1900 where women were permitted to compete. But until the 1928 Olympics, women were not permitted to compete in Track & Field, the oldest Olympic sport, and even then, they were limited to eight events. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to restrict women's foot races to 200 meters after the 1928 Olympics, which is only about one-half of a lap around an ordinary track. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to only allow female athletes to compete in events that were "Particularly suitable to the sex" in 1954, thus establishing gender discrimination. Up until the 1960 Olympics, when the IOC eventually reintroduced the women's 800-meter race, the IOC's humiliating and constrictive track and field policies persisted. However, the IOC still forbade a woman from lighting the Olympic Cauldron. Even after this modest success for women in the 1960 Olympics, discrimination against them still exists. The world body for track and field contests, the Amateur Athletic Union ('AAU), suspended Katherine Switzer after she finished the 1967 Boston Marathon. Her gender was the

only factor in the suspension. Only the 1500 meters were run by women in the longest event at the 1980 Olympics. Women will continue to be denied equality in society at large if gender parity is not achieved on the playing field. Women are underrepresented in this sector due to gender discrimination, which has an adverse effect on sports in our society. Gender discrimination can take many different forms, and because it prevents society from utilizing the brilliance that women naturally possess, these social practices may have significant economic repercussions. In the last 100 years or so, women have fought for the same rights as men and have succeeded in changing the socially prescribed role of women. However, the majority of feminists now argue that more has to be done. The media heavily reinforces gender stereotypes and biases. Men received 75% of the front-page mentions and 2/3 of the front-page images in newspapers, for instance, in the middle of the 1990s. In its Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations division for the advancement of women noted that "continuing presentation of negative and degrading images of women in media communications -electronic, print, visual, and aural - must be altered. In the majority of nations, print and electronic media do not accurately portray women's different lives and contributions to society in the ever-evolving global environment. Additionally, media that is aggressive, humiliating, or pornographic has a negative impact on women and their engagement in society. Women have historically had a lower position than men, making gender equality a serious and ongoing issue, particularly in poorer nations. However, the size of the gender pay gap varies among cultures and historical periods.

Despite the fact that women have undoubtedly made great progress toward equality in recent years, our society still values women based solely on their physical attributes rather than their contributions to the mind or their talents. It is a well-known fact that many women can significantly less than men for performing similar jobs. What impact does the glaring gender disparity have on the female population of our country? The result of this is that the perception that women are less valuable than males in our culture is unwittingly maintained. Additionally, this directly contradicts the idea that we were all created equally. Numerous social contexts, including the workplace, the typical household, educational institutions, sports, and even our country's government, exhibit this gender divide. Our nation, or possibly the entire planet, is not a stranger to this imbalance between men and women. However, it is a problem that is rarely mentioned and needs to be thoroughly investigated. Through studies and conversations, this will raise awareness of the issue and surely help to close the gender pay gap.

Sports career: Problems for sportswomen

Being paid half as much as or less than their male counterparts is the first obstacle that female athletes must overcome. Whatever the discipline, there are glaring differences in the earnings of male and female players. Even with prizes, this holds true. Take football as an example. The prize money for the male FIFA World Cup champions would be approximately \$35-50 million, while the prize money for the female FIFA World Cup champions was approximately \$2

million (link to this article is here). Even at the lowest levels, the men's team receives nearly \$33 million more than the women's squad, so you don't need to be an expert mathematician to comprehend that. Since when does that represent justice? Representation comes in second. It is memorized in the biographies of the Indian cricket team's players. We are familiar with every member of their family as if they were our own, read every piece of gossip that is written about them, and are aware of the number of runs scored or wickets taken in each significant game. What about the women who work beside them? Do we even know when they play a match, let alone their names? Why don't they already have a name in the IPL? Society seeks to publicly criticize these wannabe athletes rather than addressing these important issues. One event that made headlines was the treatment meted out to Dutee Chand, who was scheduled to run the 100m at the Rio Olympics, becoming the first Indian woman to do so in 36 years. Sporting authorities tricked her into undergoing testing for hyper androgens last summer after receiving an anonymous tip. This condition occurs when a woman's body generates more testosterone than is permitted by IAAF regulations. She was not only prohibited from competing against other women in the Commonwealth Games, but her gender identification was also abruptly called into question. Her professional life was a disaster, and her personal life had devolved into a charade.

Dutee, however, declined to submit to therapy and instead challenged the IAAF rules before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland. On the field, just as in the streets, female athletes are objectified. Women are not seen as potential and talent-filled individuals, but rather as commodities displaying themselves for men's amusement by everyone from coaches to commentators to the audience. Even the most powerful individuals and well-known personalities are capable of exhibiting this level of sexism. For instance, Sepp Blatter proposed in 2004 that women play football in more "feminine clothes" to give the sport more "aesthetic appeal." "Let the women play in more feminine attire like they do in volleyball," he has argued. For instance, they might wear shorter, tighter shorts. Many prominent female athletes have expressed their displeasure at being watched by the public as soon as they become well-known. International badminton player and 14-time National Badminton Championship champion Jwala Gutta has discussed being stuck at this crossroads of "looks vs sport" on a number of public platforms, claiming that her success as a professional has frequently been based on the "way she looks" on and off the court. "I adore fashion, and I never leave the house in sloppy attire. But why is that a justification for saying I'm not paying attention to my game? I'm unable to train continuously. In an interview with "Open," Gutta said. She discusses how both admirers and detractors have clearly referred to her as "the hottest pin-up girl in sport" and have made fun of her "extended adolescence" online. Gutta only has one response to the numerous objectifying remarks made about her: "At some point, you have to stop caring about what is said about you." In addition to the fact that it appears unlikely for a female athlete in India to have a steady salary, there is also the unsettling issue of job security. Female athletes are occasionally forced to take on other jobs in order to supplement their income due to the limited financing that the teams

and organizations receive for their training and equipment. They are unable to give their training and sport their full attention as a result, and this compels them to drop out of the race altogether more often than not. After winning the 400m hurdles event at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, Ashwini Akkunji, known as India's golden girl, said that "every day in a female athlete's life is a hurdle race of sorts." This is especially true if the athlete is from a village. We stay in hostels for years and have little chance of dating or getting married outside of the sporting community. I've only touched on a small portion of the numerous difficulties female athletes deal with on a daily basis in the sports world; as a third party, I may not have been able to give them justice. We'll never know what it's like to compete and win on the field without putting ourselves in their running shoes. Women are rising and making significant history despite all of these obstacles thanks to their perseverance in getting there. Although it is naive to assume that this conditioning and circumstance can be changed overnight, I do hope that this will cause enough individuals to reflect and perhaps, just perhaps, they will be the pro-changers we have long been searching for.

There are a lot of examples throughout the world which represent the real situation and struggle of a sportsperson for example Mary Kom, Naomi Osaka, Marcus Rashford, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Daren Sammy, Hima Das, Mirabai Chanu etc. Many Sportswomen and others persons tried to express the hardships and discriminations through Interviews, movies, articles, videos, documentaries, autobiographies and biographies. The researcher wants to critical analysis of the selected works from the perspective of Race and Gender.

In spite of many efforts by the government, sports and voluntary organizations, the participation and overall performance of women in sports has always been generally low. One of the reasons might be due to the gender discrimination existing in this field. *Golden Girl: The Autobiography of P.T Usha (1987)* by Lokesh Sharma and P T Usha. This work is an autobiography of P.T. Usha. She is known for her stellar performance at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. She won 200m, 400m, 400m hurdles at the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul. She is known as Payyoli Express. She also won five gold medals in the 1985 Asian Games in Jakarta. She received the Arjuna Award in 1983 and Padma Shri in 1985. *Unbreakable (2013)* by Dina Serto and Mary Kom born to parents who were landless agricultural laborers in the state of Manipur in Northeast India, Mary Kom's story is one of relentless struggle and unflagging passion for boxing. A childhood of hard labour prepared her body for the sport as well as any fitness training might have. Her own will and aggression carried her through the minefield of politics that any sport in India is. Nimble of foot and pulling no punches, the boxing ring was her domain. M.C. Mary Kom is not yet ready to call it a day, but here she tells her story so far, no holds barred - her tough childhood, her rebellions and how she held her own in the male world of boxing. It's all packed into this inspiring, exhilarating tale of a woman who faced impossible odds in a man's world - - and won. *Queen of The Court (2009)* by Daniel Paisner and Serena Williams One of the biggest stars in tennis, Serena Williams has captured every major title. From growing up in the tough neighborhood of Compton, California,

to being trained by her father on courts littered with broken glass and drug paraphernalia, to becoming the top women's player in the world, Serena has proven to be an inspiration to her legions of fans. Her accomplishments have not been won without struggle. She's applied the same strength and determination that helped her to become a champion to her successful pursuits in philanthropy, fashion, television, and film. In this compelling and poignant memoir, Serena takes an empowering look at her extraordinary life and what is still to come. *My Greatest Save: The Brave, Barrier-Breaking Journey of a World Champion Goalkeeper (2022)* by Briana Scurry and Wayne R Coffey.

Briana Scurry was a pioneer on the US Women's National Team. She won gold in Atlanta in 1996, the first time women's soccer was ever played in the Olympics. She was a key part of the fabled "99ers," making an epic save in the decisive penalty kick shootout in the final. Scurry captured her second Olympic gold in 2004, cementing her status as one of the premier players in the world. She was the only Black player on the team, and she was also the first player to be openly gay. It was a singularly amazing ride, one that Scurry handled with her trademark generosity and class qualities that made her one of the most popular players ever to wear a US jersey. But Scurry's storybook career ended in 2010 when a knee to the head left her with severe head trauma. She was labeled "temporarily totally disabled," and the reality was even worse. She spiraled into depression, debt, and endured such pain that she closed out her closest friends and soccer soulmates. She pawned her gold medals. She walked to the edge of a waterfall and contemplated suicide. It seemed like the only way out until Scurry made her greatest save of all. A memoir of startling candor, *My Greatest Save* is a story of triumph, tragedy, and redemption from a woman who has broken through barriers her entire life.

The elimination of gender discrimination in sports must be deliberate and carried out in diverse ways constantly and everywhere, rather than waiting for officials and society's good graces to act. We have a severe issue with gender discrimination in sports, and it has a negative overall impact on how well female athletes perform at the national and international levels. In India, only the more literate states like Kerala, Punjab, Haryana, and Gujrat, among others, provide more provisions for women's involvement in sports than many other states. Previous research in this area have shown that in these states, parents, society, and the sports authorities all support female athletes' active engagement in a variety of sports.

A professional athlete is mostly the product of their society. The phrase "when you grow up you can be whatever you want to be" is widely used in developed nations like the United States and the United Kingdom. They are taught to think that girls can be just as brilliant, successful, and athletic as boys almost everywhere they go. However, the message is just the contrary when it comes to emerging nations. They will be constantly reminded of the things that they are not permitted to do starting on the day they are born. This mindset also has a negative impact on the

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involvement and performance of women in sports and games. India has made comparatively few international sporting triumphs when compared to other Asian and European nations.

In India, discrimination against women and girls is a pervasive problem that leads to thousands of individual tragedies and diminishes the potential that the entire nation may have had. According to studies, women's advancement is directly related to how society views women.

Tragically, women in India are the least able to protect themselves from the trauma of gender discrimination, and at the same time, the new generation of girls represents the most promising one with plenty of sporting opportunities and talent. The only thing these young women need now is encouragement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to comprehend the factors underlying the influence of gendered discrimination on female sports participants, this review of the literature highlights key findings from recent academic papers, industry reports, and industry reports from the sports, business, and governance sectors from both domestic and international perspectives. Csizma's (1988) states that the appropriateness/acceptability of men and women participating in 68 different sports was the subject of an American study that polled college students. The findings demonstrated that sex-typed and segregated sports' perceived masculinity or femininity, but not perceived sport complexity, were connected to how acceptable they were for men and women. Since Metheny's research in 1965, which first looked into social gender discrimination in sport and the ensuing gender segregation of sport, research has been done on the gender-typing of sports. Which sports female athletes play is impacted by discrimination in sports. Studies have shown that certain sports are stigmatized as being more appropriate for female athletes in "feminine" sports and less so in "masculine" sports, which are implicitly and explicitly considered as inappropriate for female athletes. (Wittig and Schurr, pp. 63).

In order to investigate the significance of feminine and masculine qualities in sport, a second Scandinavian study from Norway used a questionnaire on adolescent female sports players and males. One of the outcomes was the divergence in the importance accorded to physical attractiveness in accordance with traditional western notions of feminine beauty. Girls who participated in athletics placed a high priority on having thin, attractive, and feminine bodies, whereas boys placed a high value on strength, endurance, and masculinity, which the authors argue is consistent with gender discrimination in broader society. (Marsh and Skaalvik, pp. 219)

CONCLUSION

In a research of male and female athletes' attitudes toward and engagement in sports revealed that gender neutral sports attracted the highest rates of participation, with rates in sports seen as gender specialized much lower. According to the survey, more female athletes participated in "masculine" sports than male athletes did in "feminine" activities. This might be due to the variety of sports the study's participants were able to participate in, or it might be because girls are less stigmatized for participating in 'cross-gender' activities than boys. Women who play sports are stereotyped for doing so, especially if they play an activity that is seen as being "masculine." The "common notion" of female athletes who engage in traditionally masculine sports is that they are lesbian. (Schmalz and Kerstetter, pp. 561).

In addition to the general stereotypes that are directed at women who participate in sports, female athletes also experience additional, explicitly gender-normative, sport-based prejudice. Generally speaking, the world of sport is viewed as being "masculine." Female athletes' interactions with all sports are impacted by gender discrimination in sports, which is pervasive, historically rooted, and still present now. According to Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympics, "No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks," certain shocks cannot be sustained by a sportswoman's body. This is stated in the UN report on Gender Equality in Sport from 2007. Up until the present, these discriminations have persisted. The disparity in how men's and women's sports are presented in the media and the disproportionate attention given to men's sports results in a cycle of prejudice in sports that affects women athletes. Participating in a historically and primarily male-dominated sport as a female athlete might help dispel gender stereotypes about women in society, empower female athletes, and alter how boys view girls' potential. (UNITED NATIONS Division for the Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2007).

Chalabaev and Sarrazin examine the development and impact of sex discrimination during adolescence on the importance that adolescents place on sport and their levels of competence by surveying 714 French male and female athletes over the course of three waves. According to their findings, sex discrimination was generally favorable to one's sex at the start of adolescence but pro-male by the time both boys and girls were participating in sports. They discovered that sex prejudice "related to sport" becomes more pronounced during adolescence. (Chalabaev and Sarrazin, pp. 212-215).

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