

2022

BREAKING BARRIERS FOR WOMEN IN SPORTS



A pilot study by



in association
with



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Foreword



Women's Sport in our country has taken deliberate strides towards betterment, with many stars shining over the past decades and more. And yet, there is always a feeling that more can be done at all levels to make it easier and safer for women to play sports and contribute more to the national sports ecosystem.

At Simply Sport Foundation, we have taken note of reports of gender-specific issues in Indian sports. These range from issues arising out of the very social fabric of India and/or problems embedded in the country's sporting ecosystem. This has, inevitably, led to sweeping generalizations and stereotypes in the mind space of everyone concerned. It is with the urge to spark scientific studies in this domain that the Simply Sport Foundation set about doing this research.

Thanks to the support of the Sports Authority of India, the field arm of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, we embarked on this project to understand the ground reality and throw light on the state of women's sports across the country. We have been able to attain our objective, thanks to the cooperation we have received from athletes, coaches, and the support staff.

Along the way, we learned that the answers to some crucial questions actually lie outside the existing sports ecosystem and are questions pertinent to the larger society itself. To really understand issues like reluctance to participate in sports, even of the recreational variety, and the large proportion of dropouts in female sports, intense and deep sociological research is needed.

While this is just a pilot study, we are hopeful that it will be a launchpad for a more scientific study on Women in Indian Sports. We are confident that the findings of our report will help accelerate the evolution of the sports ecosystem for women in India, both at the professional level & at the grassroots level.

The very fact that you are holding the Simply Sport Foundation's seminal research and are browsing it means a lot to us. We are sure you will find it of value and will chip in by spreading the word to make women's sports in India more invigorating and inspiring.

- ANKIT NAGORI

Founder-Simply Sport Foundation

Industry Speaks

"It is a great time to be a woman athlete, especially a cricketer. With the BCCI announcing a Women's IPL and the pay equity policy, we are actively moving in the right direction in my sport. However, we need more women coaches, support staff, and administrators in the sports ecosystem. More women's representation in decision-making roles will result in better policies for women athletes. I congratulate Simply Sport on starting the conversation around this topic and hope this kicks off a much-needed change in our sports ecosystem."



SMRITI MANDHANA
International Women Cricketer

"The findings of this report resonated with me. Most Indian women athletes come from rural India and have no financial backing. The report gives us actionable recommendations to engage rural girls in professional sports. The report also highlights how we need to think differently about training our male and female athletes. Making the menstrual cycle a vital part of a female athlete's training plan is essential. I congratulate the Simply Sport team on this effort and hope the report sparks a change."



NIKHATA ZAREEN
Boxing World Champion

"I congratulate Simply Sport on starting the much-needed conversation on women's participation in the sports ecosystem. I believe we need to train our female athletes through education, leadership training, communication, and skilling to give them the confidence to become part of the ecosystem after they retire in an effective way. A gendered lens is required to make policies like child-care or non-transfer policy in coaching and support staff roles to help women to continue these roles for longer terms. I believe women are capable of achieving anything they set their eyes on, if we can build an environment that puts their issues at the center of policy making. "



ANJU BOBBY GEORGE
Senior Vice President
Athletics Federation of India

Industry Speaks

"The numbers on the report were interesting to me, especially the number of adolescent girls that don't engage in physical activity. To a certain degree I believe it's because sports for girls aren't really encouraged. They are expected to behave and act a certain way, especially after they get their first period. The recommendations are great. Through media campaigns, our aim also should be to change the way women's sports are perceived. If people think it's boring, slow, and not interesting, that mindset needs to be changed by taking active actions to make it better all-round for young girls to take up sports and also for people to view it.



ASHWINI PONNAPPA
International Badminton Player

Women's sports need to be such that young girls and women can look at the sport as an opportunity to grow, and develop, and if they do well, then also earn a good living. It should be made important for every girl to take up some sort of sport. They need to be made aware of the difference being physically active by taking up a sport can make on their mental and physical well being. "

"A very honest study and agree with the findings of the report in its entirety with respect to the women in the Indian sporting ecosystem. If you see the cumulative performance of Indian women athletes in the last two Olympics (Rio & Tokyo) in terms of medals, it was better than the men despite having lower representation and support at all levels. This only goes to show that the Indian women's athletic potential is a power waiting to be unleashed on the world sporting landscape. Today, we are at an inflection point, and it will all depend upon how we take it forward from here. It all starts at the grassroots, where culturally the predefined gender roles in Indian society create barriers unbound for our girl child to take up sports as a career. Sports being a state subject, the onus lies on the state governments to take sports and physical activities right into the rural hinterlands, which is backed by the right policies, requisite funding and strong implementation.



CMDR. RAJESH RAJAGOPALAN
CEO ELMS Sports Foundation,
Ex CEO Target Olympic Podium
Scheme

Supporting women in sports would also be in line with UN sustainable development goals (SDG) pledged by all the members, where they emphasize good health and well-being, gender equality, and reducing inequalities. We have certainly started the journey but the road is long and arduous. The mantra is to create more women sporting heroes, which will motivate more and more Indian families to encourage their daughters to take up sports as a career."

Abbreviations

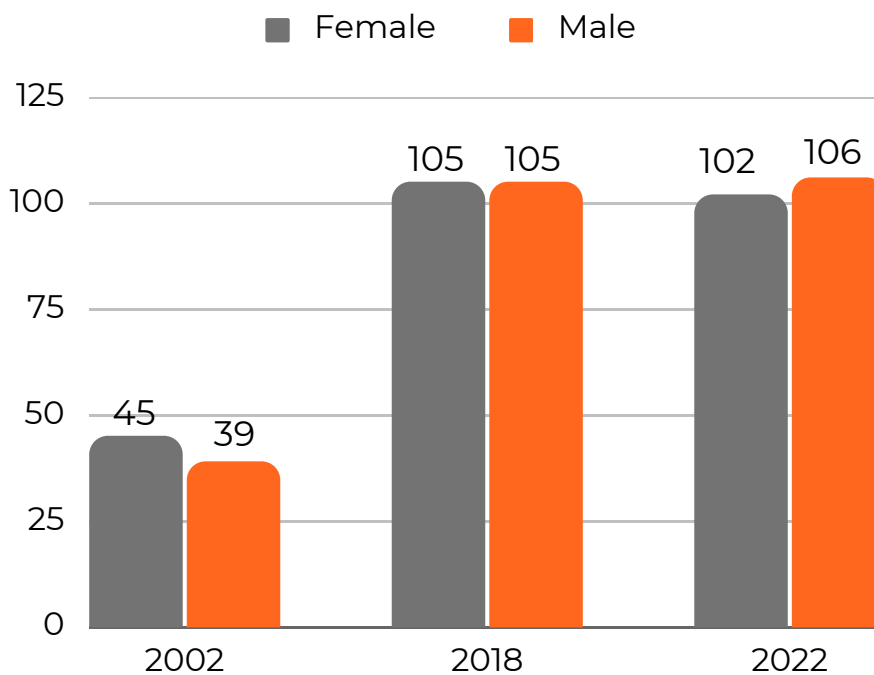
- CMAST: Chief Minister Akhannaba Sanaroisingi Tengbang
- CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
- CWG: Commonwealth Games
- IOA: India Olympics Association
- JSA: Japan Sports Agency
- MYAS: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- NCOE: National Centre for Excellence
- NGB: National Games Board
- NIS: National Institute of Sports
- NSA: National Sports Academy
- NSF: National Sports Federation
- NSNIS: Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports
- NTSC: National Talent Contest Scheme
- OPA: Out-of-pocket allowance
- RF: Reliance Foundation
- SAI: Sports Authority of India
- SPACE: Sports and Physical Aptitude Continuous Evaluation
- SPAT: Sports and Physical Aptitude Test
- SPEED: Sports and Physical Exercise Evaluation and Development
- STC: SAI Training Centre
- TOPS: Target Olympic Podium Scheme

Introduction

We all remember the movie Chak De India starring Shahrukh Khan, based on the legendary Indian women's hockey team's win at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. The CWG 2002 was noteworthy for women's representation in sports. The Women's hockey team brought home the Gold; Anju Bobby George won the historic bronze medal in the long jump while also setting a world record and of the total medals won, women brought home 32 medals of the total 69 medals.[1] The games were also commendable from a gender equality lens, with 45 female athletes (54%) comprising a contingent of 84 athletes.[2]

17-year-old Nilima Ghose became the first Indian woman to compete at the Olympic Games when she took part in the 100m sprint and 80m hurdles at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. India, though, had to wait till 2000 to have its first female medalist when Karnam Malleshwari won the bronze in weightlifting. When we look at the Olympics, India has had a total participation of only 257 women athletes compared to 1008 male athletes.[3] There has been a positive increase in the number of female athletes in the Olympics, with 54 female athletes representing India at the Tokyo Olympics, while the number was just four at the 1996 Atlanta Games. Although women's participation numbers have been lower than men's in our Olympics since independence, the percentage of women winning medals is higher (3.1%) than the men (2%) at the Olympics.

CWG FEMALE ATHLETE REPRESENTATION



[1] India Manchester 2002 | Commonwealth Games Federation

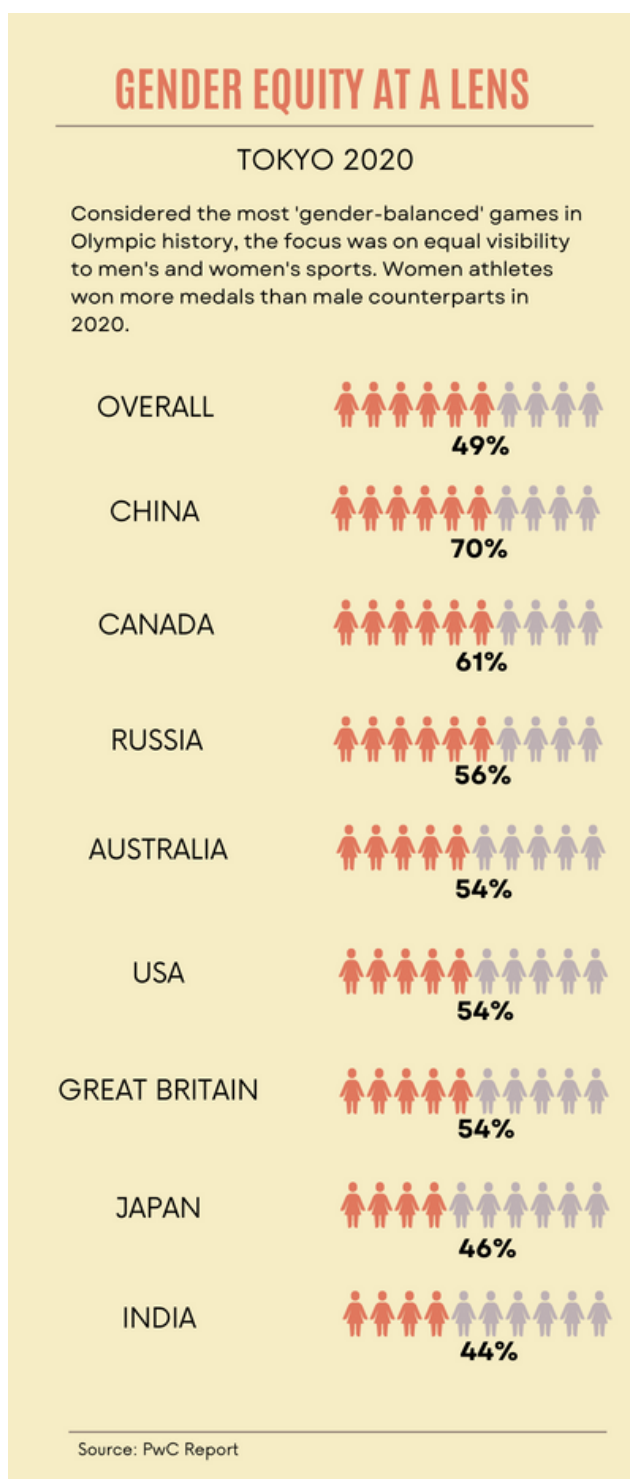
[2] CWC 2022: Full list of Indian athletes to feature at Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

[3] Indian Olympic Association

When we compare India's representation with the global representation of female athletes in Olympic editions, it has been relatively on par with the representation levels and also better in some editions.

Since the 1990s, although women have been claiming more space in the competitive sports arena, it isn't easy. If you stroll across Shivaji Park in Dadar, one of Mumbai's culturally significant public spaces, you will see hundreds of boys and men playing Football or cricket or, for that matter, some other sport. In contrast, you will rarely find a group of girls or women doing the same. This reality is in India's financial capital and an arguable modern city. A lot has changed over the years, yet much needs to change.

Young girls are especially discouraged from looking at sports as a career. One of the many reasons for this participation gap is the severe gender stereotyping about sports being a man's domain more than a woman given that females have 'weaker' bodies. This argument is further extended in sports like weightlifting, boxing, and wrestling in terms of these sports having an impact on women's appearance and childbearing abilities and the possibility of them appearing more 'masculine.' [4]

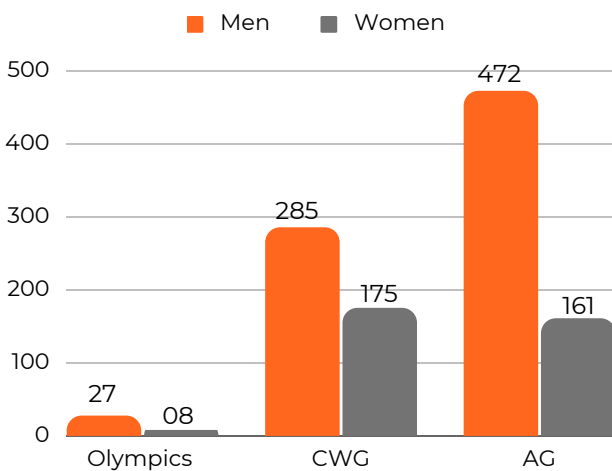


[4] National Commission of Women Report- Gender Issues in Sport, 2005

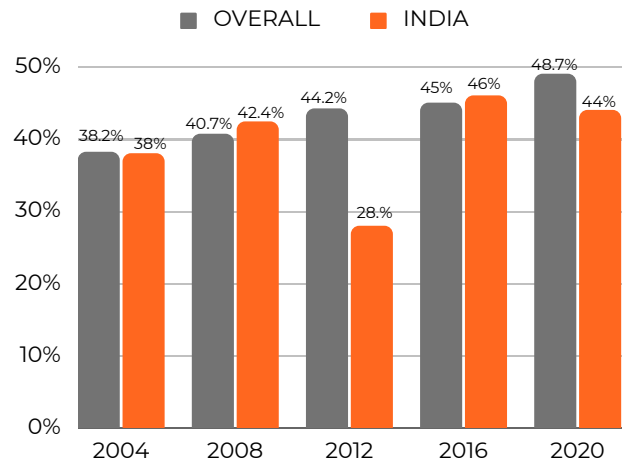
Thus, the societal stereotype of girls needing to look more feminine keeps females from participating in sports. It should be no surprise that the word 'sports person' in India predominantly invokes names like Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli. In a survey conducted by BBC, 50% of the respondents were unable to name even a single Indian sportswoman. [5]

Much like any other field, pay disparities between male and female athletes are rampant in sports across all levels. Consider the elite, Olympic level, for instance. A report suggests that while female athletes like Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal, and P V Sindhu earn between about INR 15 to 60 lakhs per day from endorsement, their male counterparts - particularly in cricket - such as Virat Kohli and M S Dhoni earn crores per day.[6] Further, 38% of the Indian population believes that women's sport is not as 'entertaining' as men's sport, even though most believe that Indian female athletes must receive equal pay as men.[7]

MEDAL WINNERS - OLY/CWG/AG (FEMALE ATHLETES)



GLOBAL VS INDIAN FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN OLYMPICS



Other socio-cultural factors equally plague their participation opportunities. Married women find it nearly impossible to juggle household work and childcare with leisure sports, let alone a professional sporting career. In middle and low-income households, a married woman's desire to play sports is met with disapproval and resistance from the husband and rest of the family regarding who will take over the woman's care duties.[8]

Similarly, the pressure to marry, have a family, and raise a child prompt several teenage girls to drop out of any sport they were pursuing. A United Nations Development Programme study shows, for instance, that only 4.4%, 0.8%, and 1% of women in urban, semi-urban, and rural areas, respectively, wanted to take up professional sports.[9]

[5] "What Do Indians Think About Women in Sports?" - BBC News 2020

[6] <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/tokyo-olympics-pay-gap-continues-to-hound-indian-players/2303660/>

[7] United States agrees equal pay for men and women in soccer <https://sportstar.thehindu.com › article38494481>

[8] <http://ncw.nic.in/content/study-gender-issues-sports-India-Bharatiya-Stree-shakti>

[9] Women and Sport in Asia/ Nair and Eapen 2021 -Women and Sport in Asia

In addition to discouraging women from playing sports, cultural norms and constraints limit how much girls and women may contribute to the nation's sporting achievements. Only 3% [10] of women in the country between the age of 15 and 49 are reportedly meeting healthy levels of physical active. While 76.3% [11] of adolescent girls aren't involved in sports or exercise. In addition, 42% of Indians claimed that women's sports are not as entertaining as men's. In the last two decades, the rise in prominence of female athletes has been significant in India's International sporting history. However, the overall participation in physical activity and an active lifestyle is still not up to the mark.

"Khelaga India toh Khilega India" - the mantra driving the transformation of sports in India indicates the importance of sports in the country's overall development. According to PWC's India Active report, [12] India may save \$0.94 to 1.7 billion annually by integrating sports into the curriculum. The report also indicates that young Indians who take up sports could see a 5-7% improvement in their earnings. In a country where female labor force participation is only 22%, exposure to sports and physical activity can boost productivity, self-confidence, and work ethics. [13]

LANDSCAPE IN NUMBERS

3%

women between the age 15-49 meet the healthy levels of physical activity in India

76.3%

Adolescent girls don't engage in physical activities

41.3%

of the Indian population are physically unfit.

60.3%

of urban Indian women are physically inactive

[10] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fit-india-movement-in-india-women-are-far-less-active-then-men-says-study/story-meJ0uS2iDzicLmVJNMugQK.html>

[11] <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/74-per-cent-of-indias-teenagers-physically-inactive-who/articleshow/72192306.cms/> <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/who-india-physical-activity-report-6131100/>

[12] India Active PWC Report- <https://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/research-insights/2019/india-active.pdf>

[13] Gender gap in employment jobs report. The Hindu

This trend is also seen in the entire sports ecosystem in the country. Even while the IOA has issued a guideline in 2019 to all NSFs involved to maintain gender equality in organizations, which came after the IOC directed all NOCs to adhere to gender equality, which requires a minimum of 30% female representation in its governing body, women in decision making bodies remain quite low. At the national federation level (NSF), as many as 8 NSFs do not have women representation in their governing bodies. Of the other NSFs, women constitute only 2-8% of the governing bodies.[14] This doesn't include Hockey India, which has the highest women representation, with 34% of the members as women. In the various committees across the apex body of our federations, 3% of the total composition is women. Only one NSF (Athletics Federation of India) has a former international-level sportsperson as its Senior Vice-President.

In a great move recently IOA has elected P.T.Usha as their president, and also the recently announced IOA athlete commission has a 50% representation of female athletes for the first time in history. These are much-needed changes being made and hopefully this will only help more women to be part of IOA's decision making bodies.

The number of female support staff (coaches, masseurs, fitness trainers, physiotherapists, etc.) also remains pretty low in the Indian sports industry. In the coach-to-staff composition at various facilities we surveyed female staff accounts for 22% of the facilities. In terms of coaches the ratio of females coaches to male coaches is, 1:3 in majority of the facilities.

The bleak representation of women in decision-making at the top and in the non-athlete ecosystem also translates to how policies and schemes are designed for female sportspersons. 21st-century India is moving towards having more women in leadership positions across all fields, and sports shouldn't be left behind. Indian women athletes have recently demonstrated incredible potential, talents, and growth despite the current systemic, infrastructural, and sociocultural obstacles. A conscious gender lens must be adopted to recognize the barriers and enablers facing women in sports to alter the narrative and increase women's participation even further.

[14] Governance of Sport in India- 2016

Literature Review

Indian women have been involved in competitive sports since the last quarter of the 19th Century and have given all of India much to cheer for. Opinions can be divided on whether or not India has inspired, encouraged, and supported the female population to take up sports, sports coaching, and sports administration.

Tennis player Kshama Row is said to be the first woman of Indian stock to win a National Championships crown. Track star Kamaljit Sandhu became the first Indian woman to win Asian Games gold in any discipline. And weightlifter Karnam Malleswari won the 1st Olympic Games medal in 2000.

Of India's 15 medals in the last three Olympic Games, seven have been won by women athletes in Badminton, Boxing, Weightlifting, and Wrestling. Badminton sensation PV Sindhu became only the second Indian athlete to win individual Olympic medals in successive editions.

Similarly, after Deepa Malik became the first Indian woman to get a Paralympic Games medal in 2016, rifle shooter Avani Lakhera carved her name as the first Indian woman to win Gold in the Tokyo Paralympic Games last year.

She won two of the three medals by Indian women in the Games, with para-table tennis athlete Bhavina Patel being the other medalist.

Many Indian women athletes have won World Championships medals or topped World rankings, not the least being Boxing legend MC Mary Kom. Fans will recall athletes from Badminton, Shooting, Weightlifting, Wrestling, Tennis, Squash, Archery, and Billiards in this growing list. Others like gymnast Dipa Karmakar have also blazed a trail of their own.

PT Usha, Anju Bobby George, Hima Das, and Dutee Chand have been at the forefront of track and field sport, causing Athletics Federation of India President Adille J. Sumariwalla to celebrate the 70 medals won by track and field athletes in the last five editions of the Asian Games, as many as 50 were won by women athletes. The Indian women's Cricket team and Hockey team have captured the attention of fans, too.



As for women in Indian sports administration, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Margaret Alva, and Uma Bharti have played critical roles in shaping the Government policy. The Department of Sports has had Sindhushree Khullar and incumbent Sujata Chaturvedi as Secretaries (Sports). Sports Authority of India also has Sindhushree Khullar and Neelam Kapoor among its Director-General.

AFS Talyarkhan refers to Miss Nanavati training as a Physical Instructress as far back as 1929 at the Junkera College of Physical Education in Denmark and Hilla Mistry securing a Fulbright Scholarship for Physical Education in 1958 as all-out attempts to produce, from within India, top-class coaches.

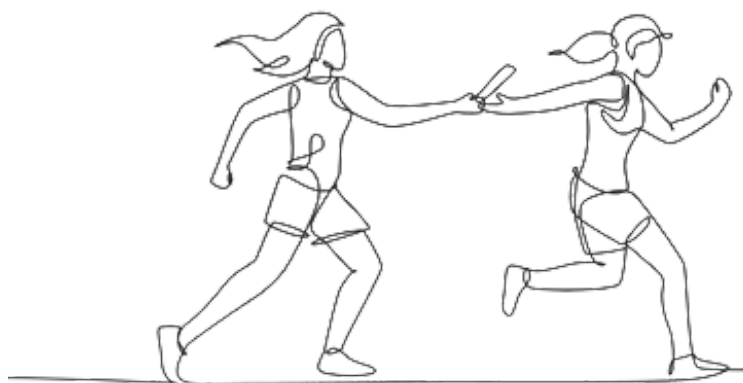
India has also seen the rise of female sports league owners like Nita Ambani and Vita Dani; IPL has had franchise owners like Juhi Chawla and Preity Zinta; Deepthi Bopaiah is CEO of Go Sports Foundation. And now, Emami East Bengal football announced Namrata Parekh as its CEO, making her the first female head of a football club in Kolkata.

Is this reason enough for optimism that things are changing for the better?

The predominant perception is that a combination of factors like social mores, patriarchy, chauvinism, inadequate facilities, the discouraging family setup, insecure environment, marriage, and motherhood has been a massive hurdle in the evolution of women's sports in India. It has led to the call 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao aur ab Beti Khilao.'

Do we have a detailed study of women's sports in India? Has a serious attempt been made to understand the changes being ushered in at all levels to encourage women to participate in a sporting activity as athletes, coaches & support staff as well as administrators? A survey of the research landscape suggests that the answer to such questions is resoundingly negative.

There is a fair bit of international research and literature available, but in the Indian context, it is virtually nonexistent. Most Indian research on online sites like academia.edu and researchgate.net are superficial, listing Indian sportswomen who have recently achieved success or their challenges.



Many decades ago, the renowned sports commentator and columnist AFS Talyarkhan joined the issue with poet laureate Sarojini Naidu after asking the Benares Hindu University girl students not to play like boys. In his column titled 'Why not, Mrs. Naidu?' [16]. He postulated that it was only sport responsible for bringing the Indian girl into the open, giving her freedom to dress, movement, and company.

Though it was published some years later, in 1959, [17] in a chapter on women's sport in India - Beauty and the Bowl - in his book, Portrait of Indian Sport, Anthony de Mello aired his disappointment with the contribution of the Indian woman to sport when contrasted against the great women in other walks of life like politics and medical science, the arts and the law.

"There are many reasons for this state of affairs. Foremost, perhaps, is one deeply rooted in tradition, a tradition of parental prejudice and a false sense of modesty. The Indian women, understandably, have been reluctant to wear the rather scanty attire of the modern sports field. The sporting progress of Indian women will inevitably be retarded as long as they fight shy of turning out in the proper kit," he wrote, making it sound as if it was the single biggest reason. [18]

The more westernized communities - the Anglo-Indians and the Parsis - were the first in which women came to the forefront in sports. These women were more advanced and athletic than those of other communities. So it was inevitable that they should monopolize the titles and trophies in lawn tennis, badminton, swimming, and track and field events.

"Nowhere was their supremacy more evident than in women's hockey," he wrote. "But today, women of all communities compete on equal terms on the sports field. Whatever we think of the standard reached, there is no denying that women's sport in modern India is truly national. This, at least, is progress."



[16] <https://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/consulting/rise-of-indian-women-towards-excellence-in-sports.pdf>

[17] Talyarkhan, AFS, Why Not, Mrs Naidu? On With The Game, The Bangalore Press, 1945, pp 22-26

[18] De Mello, Antony, Portrait of Indian Sport, PR Macmillan Limited, 1959, pp 314-322

[19] Women and Girls' Participation in Sports in Haryana State
<http://ignited.in/l/a/303622>

The National Commission of Women wrote a report on 'Gender issues in sport' and gave various findings and recommendations to build a gender-neutral sports eco-system for athletes in 2005.[19]

A study titled, 'Studying attitudes towards women and girls playing sports in India,' was carried out in rural and urban India in 2006 by the Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Sciences on the attitudes of parents, teachers, and coaches toward female participation in sport. The findings indicated that policies are needed at the local level to support and protect women's involvement in sports. In particular, efforts are required to remove misconceptions about women's participation in sports and the impact of sports on women's health. [20]

A report titled "Equal Hue: A way forward for the women in blue" was released in 2020 and gave several recommendations to increase the participation of women in cricket. Some of them included increasing all-women's teams at the club and academy level, making women's participation a key element of evaluating state associations, developing a women's cricket vertical with one person in charge of women's cricket operations; and empowering women in decision making roles in administration amongst others.[21]

If there is little scientific research on women's sports in India, there is less in coaching and support staff or the administration sector. Unlike the documentation of the journey of successful athletes by storytellers, there is nothing to trace the role of women as coaches and support staff or administrators.

A reading of the Women in the Olympic Movement Factsheet released in December 2021 by the International Olympic Committee reveals that only 11 percent of the accredited coaches in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016 were women. The same document also shows that, following the recommendation of the IOC Women in Sport Commission, the IOC Executive Board (EB) advised members of the Olympic Movement in December 2016 to set a minimum target of 30 percent for women's representation in their governing bodies by 2020.[22]

The Representation of Women in USA Sports [23] Sports Administrative, and Team Sports Leadership, a paper by Ezzeldin R Aly and Kathryn Breeze in the European Scientific Journal (February 2018 edition), concluded that there is less representation of women in team sports leadership (coaching). Suffice it to say that there is no such study done in India.

[19] <http://ncw.nic.in/sites/default/files/Gender%20Issue%20in%20Sports.pdf>

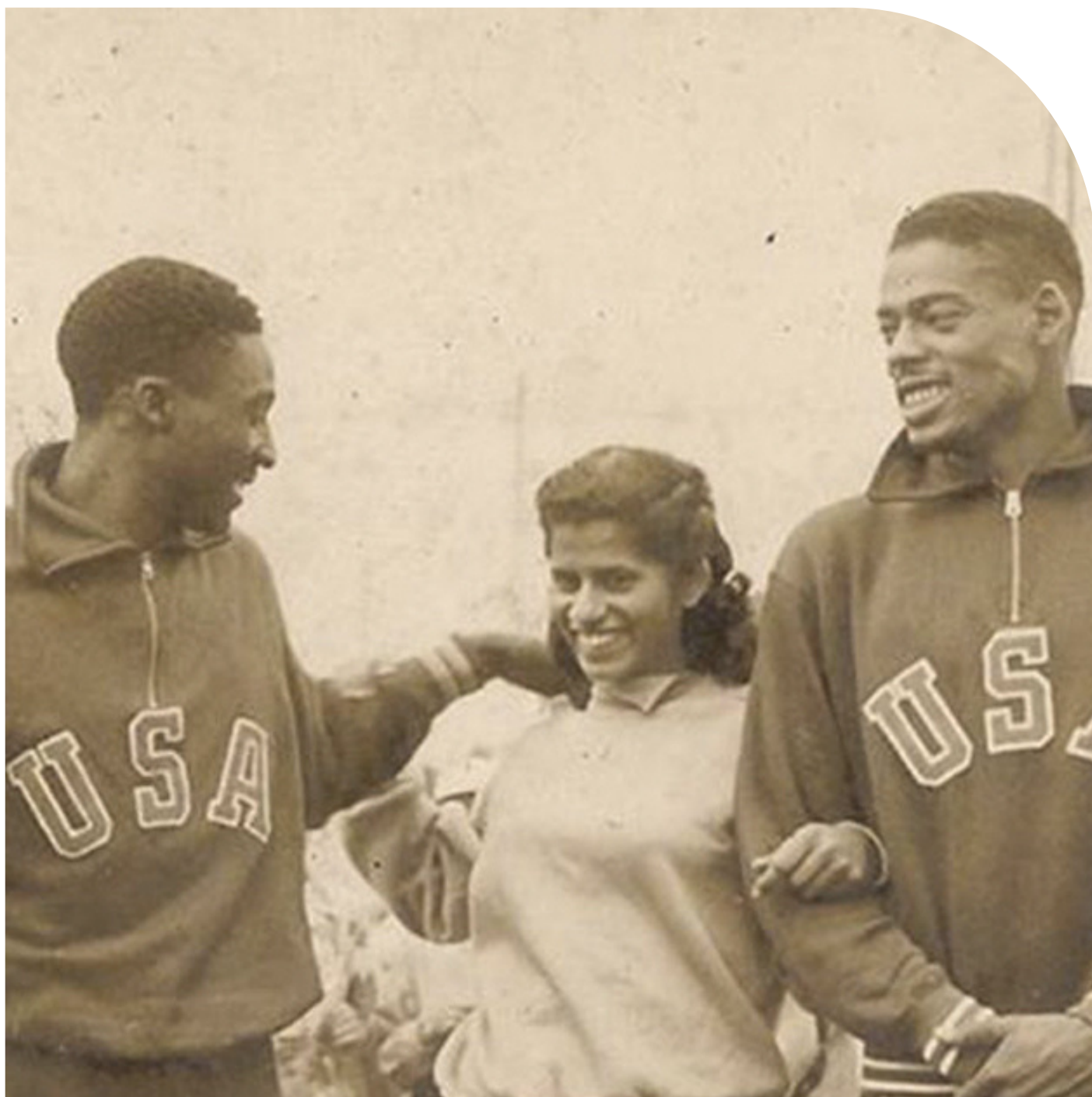
[20] Oglesby, Carole A., in collaboration with the International Working Group on Women and Sport, WomenSport International, the International Association of Physical Education for Women and Girls, and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (2006).

[21] https://drive.google.com/file/d/12z182boyotBUK-_MvzSP3icpNtvWvjKx/view

[22] Factsheet: Women in the Olympic Movement, 2021

[23] The Representation of Women in USA Sports, Sports Administrative, and Team Sports Leadership

To conclude, India is undoubtedly on the cusp of a breakthrough in global sport, having secured its best medal haul in the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020. Indeed, these are exciting times for women's sports in India as the nation seeks to make headway in the global arena. It is time for India to engage in more profound research on women's sports in India than has been done thus far. We hope the present study will spark a deeper study on women's sports in India, covering the entire gamut of sports - from athlete to coach, support staff to administration.



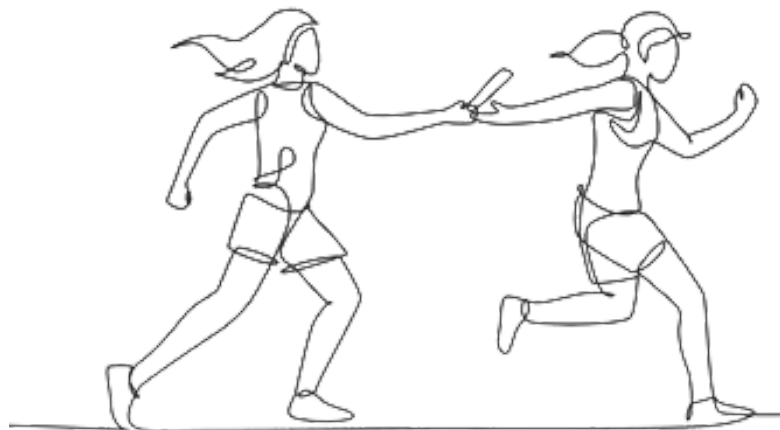
Study Methodology

Study settings:

The study was conducted across four states in India: Bihar, Haryana, Manipur, and Rajasthan. The four states were chosen as representatives of the states having the maximum participation in terms of participation numbers and medals won by women athletes (Haryana and Manipur), and minimum participation and medals won by women athletes (Bihar and Rajasthan) historically.

The study aimed to understand the barriers for women participating in the Indian ecosystem as athletes, coaches, administrative staff, and other support staff. To encourage more women to pursue sports as a career, the study proposes recommendations to strengthen the Indian ecosystem for women to enter sports.

A sample of 213 athletes from Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Manipur participated in the study. The athletes were surveyed for the primary data using a google form. 34 semi-structured interviews with coaches, administrators, and support staff were done to obtain a more comprehensive viewpoint.



Study approach:

The mixed methods study approach included both the quantitative and qualitative components.

The quantitative component: Primary data was collected from the athletes using a structured questionnaire on the general challenges they face to enter sports. Also, secondary research data was collected from SAI, federations' websites, participation numbers, and medal tally in National games, Commonwealth games, and Olympic games to analyze the athlete participation. At the same time, data from the surveyed facilities and secondary research was used to understand the coach, support staff, and administration women's ecosystem.

The qualitative component included semi-structured interviews with the key stakeholders like athletes, coaches, and administrative and support staff from various facilities.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to identify each category of participants for taking in-depth interviews.

The data was collected from March-September 2022 in various facilities across states.

The Simply Sport program team initially contacted potential participants from different stakeholder groups to explain the study's purpose. The study team then contacted those who agreed to participate in conducting their interviews.

All the interviews were conducted after taking participants in confidence and in a secluded separate room, thereby maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. This comforted the participants and ensured they could open up with the team without hesitation.

Few interviews were conducted online through virtual platforms considering the COVID situation in the country during the study. Written informed consent was obtained before the interview, and all the interviews with participants were audio recorded.

None of the potential participants who were approached refused to participate, and no repeat interviews were conducted. The discussions took an average of 30-40 minutes. The study team members who conducted the interviews had prior experience conducting in-depth interviews and were well-versed in English and Hindi.

Study tools and Data collection:

Quantitative tools:

All the domains in the quantitative tools were developed with the help of athletes, sports experts, and previous similar studies. The tools were developed in both Hindi and English language. The tools were pre-tested before administering them to the study participants. The tools are attached as Annexure 1 for reference. All primary data were collected directly through google forms. The form links were shared with the study participants via email or WhatsApp.

Qualitative Tools:

Separate semi-structured interview guides were developed for each stakeholder group to explore the perspectives of different stakeholders towards the sports ecosystem in India towards promoting women athletes' participation and the barriers faced by these young girls and women. The tools used to collect information are attached in Annexure 1.

These domains were decided based on consultation with sports personnel, sports experts, and available published literature. All tools were administered in English or Hindi, the primary mode of communication among the athletes, coaches, and administrative officials. Also, participants were free to express themselves in the language of their comfort, i.e., Hindi or English, or a combination of both.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data:

All primary data were collected directly through google forms, and the available electronic database was cleaned for inconsistencies. The descriptive analysis was done where various variables' proportional distribution was ascertained, and proportions were calculated to describe the categorical data (age groups, state representation, etc.).

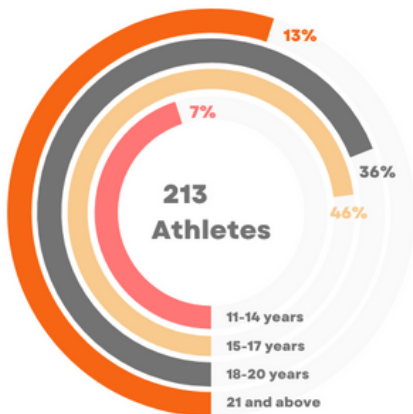
Appropriate significance tests were used to determine the statistical significance of the difference in proportions or means. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Data were analyzed using MS Excel and SPSS version 28.0.

Qualitative data :

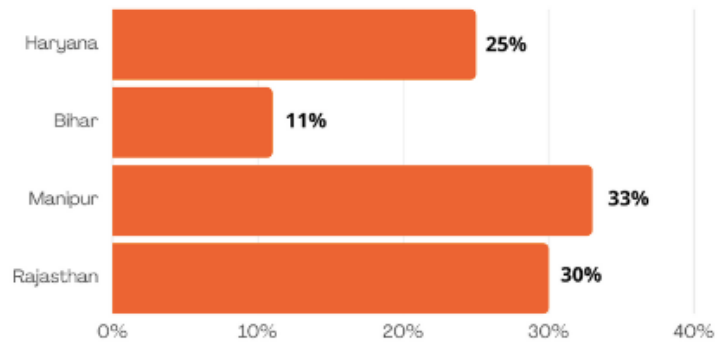
A hierarchical coding structure was developed based on the open, iterative coding of interview transcripts (to allow for the inclusion of emergent codes) and the pre-identified domains of interview guides. The two qualitative researchers coded random selections to check for reliability, inter-coder agreement, and appropriateness of the coding scheme. Finally, they used the established codes to illustrate the thematic categories that result for each category of the study participant.

Both theme saturation and a consensus between the two coders were achieved. Illustrative quotations linked to the participant category have been used in the results section.

AGE-WISE COMPOSITION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



COMPOSITION OF INTERVIEWEES



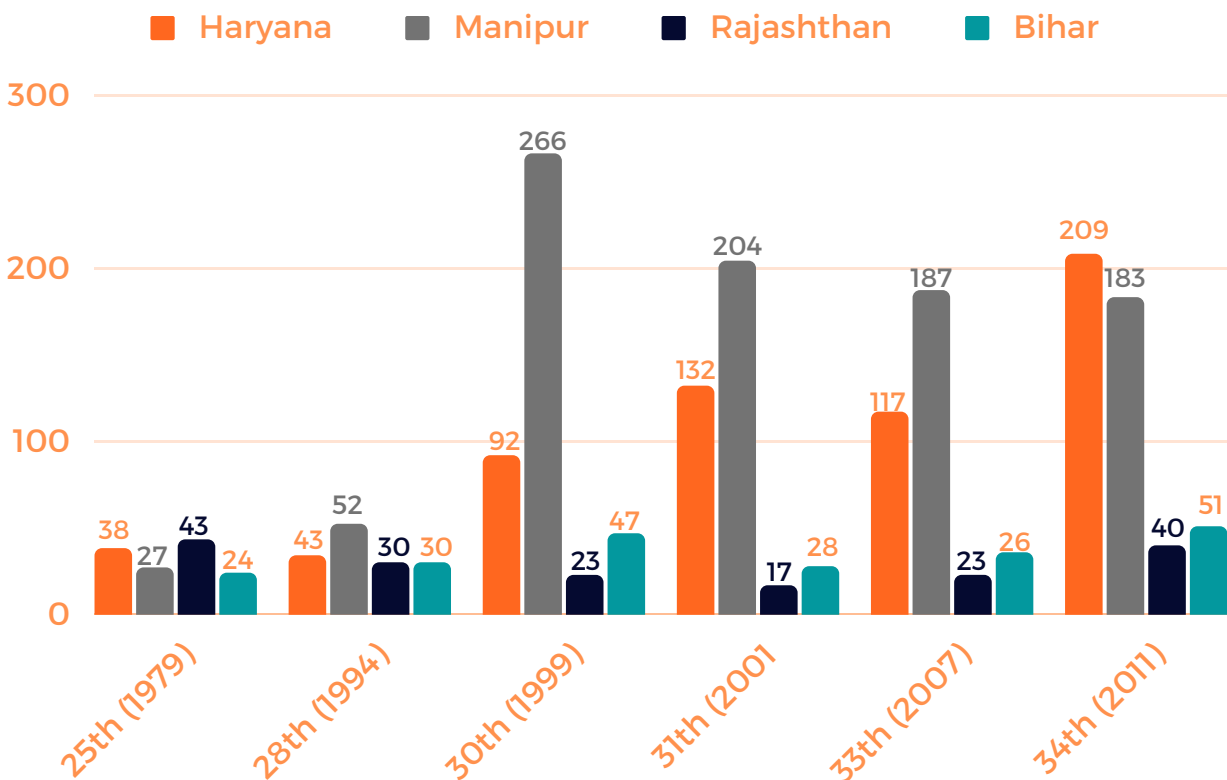
Context of the four states in the study

Sports is a state subject in India. Every state has its own body/council for promoting and developing sports in the respective state. State governments can take their initiatives and define budgets for sports. When we look at how states have performed regarding women athletes' representation, we can see that some states have stood out far better than others. Though overall, the number across states is deficient compared to the women population of the states or the number of men participating in elite sports. For the research study, we have channeled our focus toward four states - Haryana, Manipur, Rajasthan, and Bihar. Let's take a brief look at the 4 chosen states and their sports background.

1. Haryana

Haryana is ranked 21st area-wise and 18th in terms of population in India. The state has been a hotbed for sporting talent for India in recent years. The state has produced 51 athletes to represent in the Olympics, only behind Manipur and Maharashtra. Haryana had the highest athlete participation state-wise in the CWG 2022, with 39 athletes. Some popular sports in Haryana include boxing, wrestling, and hockey.

NATIONAL GAMES WOMEN PARTICIPATION



The state has done reasonably well when it comes to supporting and nurturing female athletes. Sakshi Malik, Geeta Phogat, Babita Kumari, and Vinesh Phogat are well-known athletes who have won laurels for the state.

In FY 2021-22, Haryana state allocated 18,891 crore INR [24] towards the education & sports budget, a considerable jump from the previous year. The state also promotes sports through various initiatives aimed at making the state a sports hub, including running play schemes, offering scholarship & cash rewards, and government job opportunities.[25]

2. Manipur

Manipur is a northeastern state ranked 23rd in terms of area and population in India. It has produced 52 athletes at the highest level for India and 2nd only to Maharashtra. 7 athletes in CWG 2022 represented Manipur. Boxing, Archery, Weightlifting, and football are some of the sports adopted in the state. Manipur's renowned female sports personalities include Lourembam Brojeshori Devi, Mary Kom, Kunjarani Devi, and Oinam Bembem Devi.

The state's estimated sports budget was INR 12,902 lakhs in FY 2021-22.[26] Manipur has the nation's first sports university - 'National Sports University' situated in Imphal. The state runs various sports promotion schemes, including tournaments, to boost sports. Chief Minister Akhannaba Sanaroisingi Tengbang' (CMAST) scheme aims to support active and retired athletes with job provision, cash rewards for medal winners, and also aid with equipment.

Special women-centric programs are run to encourage female participation through incentives, workshops, seminars, and the provision of self-defense training. The central government also boosts the state infrastructure, with Khelo India planning to establish 16 sports centers across 16 districts.

3. Rajasthan

Rajasthan ranks 1st in terms of area and 7th in terms of population. But considering the size and numbers, the state has been on the lower end of the table regarding sport participation. Only 5 athletes from the state have gone to represent the highest level for India. Rajasthan had 4 athletes representing at the CWG 2022. The state government is taking active steps to promote sports in the state with a focus on conducting tournaments and infrastructure development. 11 new stadia have been planned with a budget of INR 16.5 Cr in the latest budget proposed by the state government.[27] Various incentives have been announced to push for sports, including land allocation for sportspersons who have won medals for India from the state.

[24] <https://prsindia.org/budgets/states/haryana-budget-analysis-2022-#:~:text=Fiscal%20deficit%20for%202022%2D23,is%200.98%25%20of%20the%20GSDP.>

[25] <http://www.haryanasports.gov.in/>

[26] <https://www.cbgaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Manipur-Budget-at-a-Glance-2021-22.pdf>

[27] https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/rajasthan-cm-gehlot-approves-rs-16-5-crore-to-build-11-stadia-in-the-state-122071000128_1.html

4. Bihar

Bihar is the 3rd most populous state in the country. But the state has failed to produce a single athlete at the highest level in India. The state government allocates a sizable portion of the overall budget toward sports. INR 39351 cr [28] was earmarked for education, sports, arts, and culture in 2020-21. The state's push for sports has revolved around small initiatives such as the 'Come & Play' scheme, prize money, awards, and state government jobs. In a bid to push for Bihar athletes' representation in the 2028 Olympics, a two-day sports conclave was conducted recently in Patna.

A deeper comparative study and insights from the research conducted in the states are provided in the later sections of this report.



[28] <https://prindia.org/budgets/states/bihar-budget-analysis-2021-22>

Findings of the study

What are the barriers for women to play sports?

Systemic hurdles

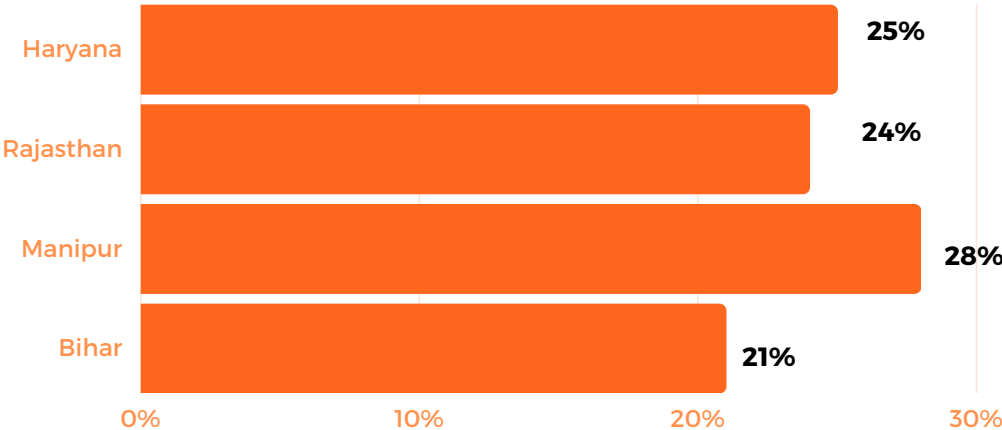
1. Availability of infrastructure and equipment:

The first step to sports involvement starts with access to sports facilities. Non-availability of infrastructure (courts/pools/fields) and equipment has been a serious challenge for athletes. The absence of such infrastructure not only hampers the quality of the practice but also results in low enrolment or early drop-out from certain sports. About 25% of athletes had no access to sports facilities, and 50% didn't have any sports equipment.

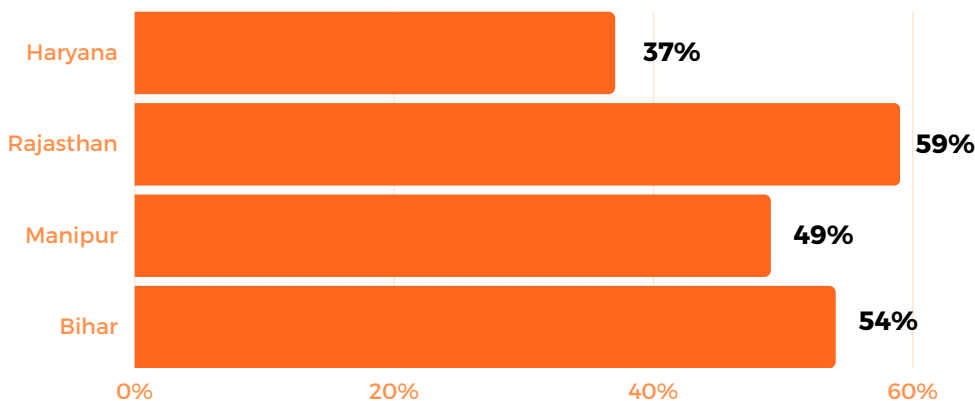
Among the states, athletes from Manipur reported the least availability of sports resources in infrastructure (28%) and Rajasthan in equipment (59%). Access to basic facilities like clean toilets, drinking water, and good lighting arrangements in stadiums, especially in the evening, have also been pointed out as a hindrance.

Equipment has been a serious challenge for athletes. The absence of such infrastructure not only hampers the quality of the practice but also results in low enrolment or early drop-out from certain sports.

Unavailability of stadium or playing arena across various states



Non availability of sports specific equipment across the states

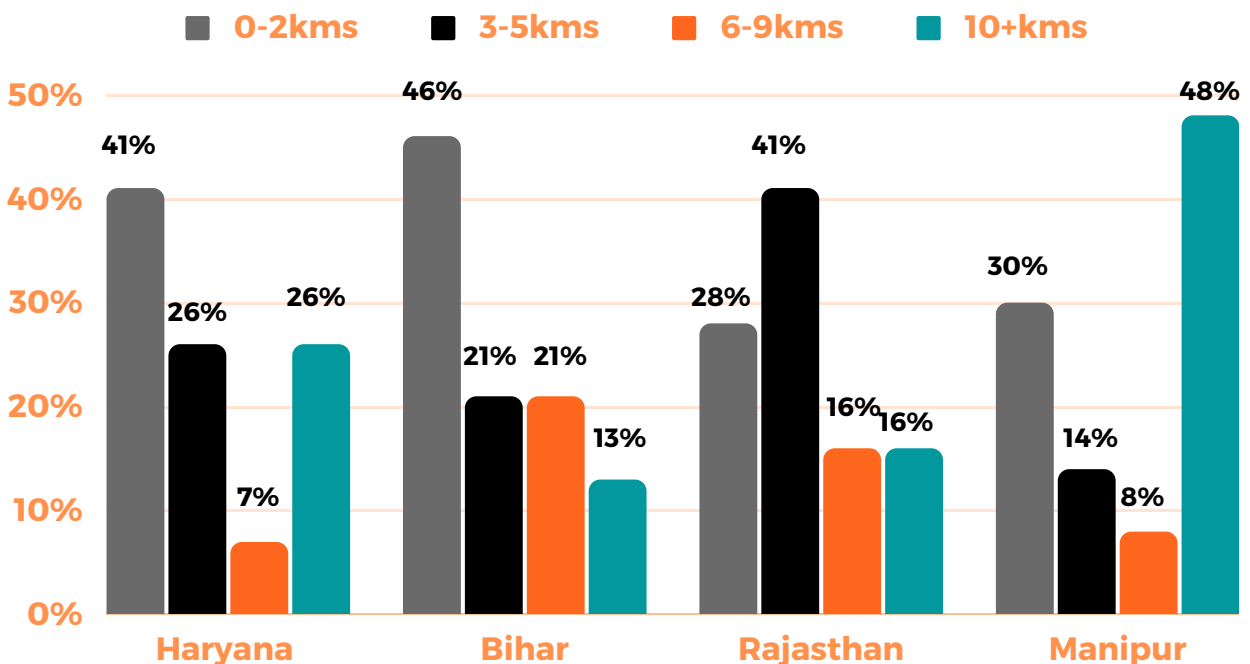


2. Access to sports facilities:

The lack of sports facilities close to their village or area of residence is a significant detriment for girls to engage in sports. Mr. Sanjeeva, a former Olympian, shared that having sports facilities in schools is one way to encourage girls to participate. In our study, 29% of the total athletes claimed they traveled more than 10 km to access a sports facility. When looking at states, 48% of athletes from Manipur reported traveling on an average 10kms to the nearest sports facility. Although there has been increased investment and construction of sporting facilities across India, there are still many limitations.



Distance of sports facility from residence



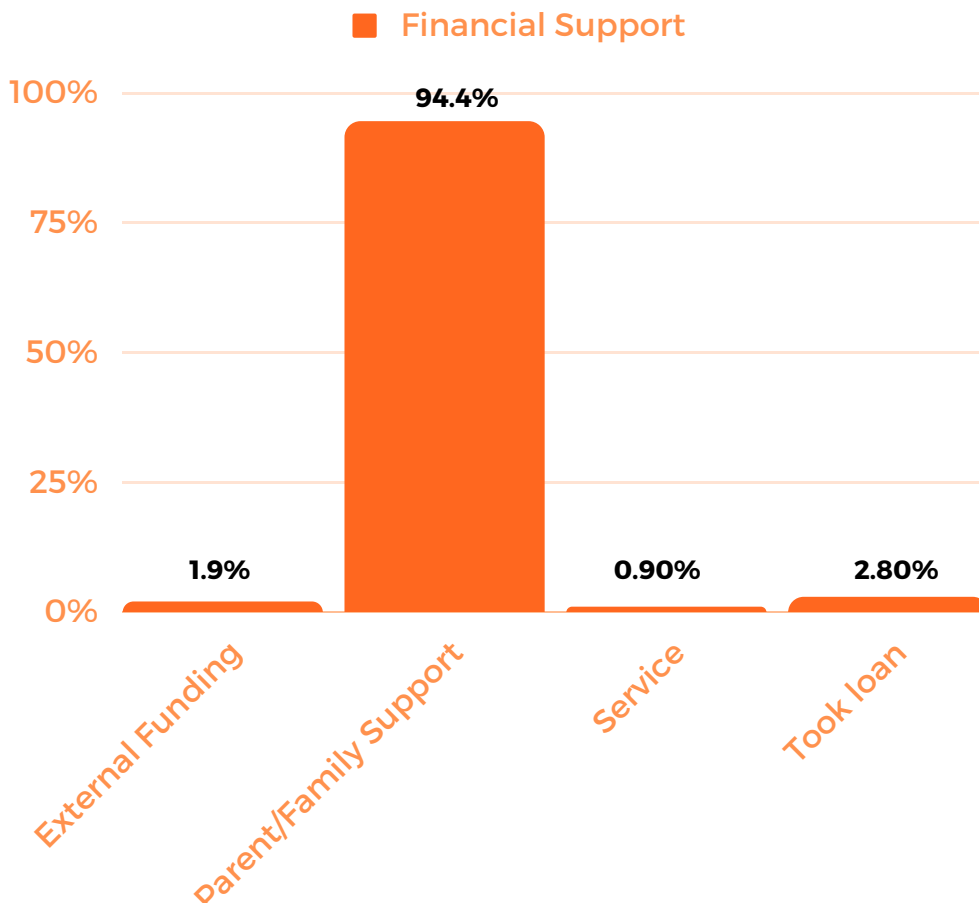
3. Access to information:

Providing information from reliable sources is essential for girls to make informed decisions regarding a career in sports and the possible support avenues. Informal sources of information are widely relied on by women; 39% of respondents claimed they received information regarding sports schemes from their own sports coaches, 26% received it from sources working in the government, 3% received it from friends and colleagues, and 8% received it from social media. In the absence of reliable sources and channels, information barriers may prevent athletes from availing of sports facilities and programs offered by public or private facilities/schemes.

4. Affordability for sports:

Financial support is one of the significant barriers, especially for girls from villages and low socio-economic status. 94% of the participants highlighted getting support from parents and families for continuing their sports training, which remains constant across all the study states. Fewer were able to avail of loans or external funding. Overall, analysis shows that finances largely remain a barrier to athletes from low socio-economic strata.

Affordability in sports for participants



5. Perception of sports and gender discrimination:

A patriarchal mindset in our society is a significant deterrent for girls trying to pursue sports. A defined set of gender roles and gendered perceptions that persist make sports a manly occupation for most parents in the family. Factors like early marriage, excessive focus on education, and prioritizing job security over sports excellence are some other factors that affect participation. As grassroots sports in the country don't have a set career pathway for athletes, most athletes and parents are not very confident about pursuing a career in sports. 11% of female participants have faced gender discrimination in their careers, while 15% have not given a clear answer. These proportions are substantial, considering that such issues damage the trust in the system and act as barriers for young girls and women aspiring for a career in sports.

6. Concerns around safety:

For women to step out of their homes and travel to locations to play makes them vulnerable to sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. Families also prohibit girls from playing sports for fear of being physically or mentally harassed. Coaches also reported that private centers do not mandate training of coaches with and about the POSCO act.

Awareness or information given to athletes about things around how to identify an assault and measures they can use to safeguard themselves will be very useful. Also, athletes can be made more aware of how they can report any assault and procedures to file a complaint, etc.

"Parents give preference to studies and marriage. If the child doesn't perform in studies, they are told to participate in sports at 21-22 years of age which is too old. Some girls play really well but their parents don't listen, even the educated ones. They want them to practice in the village only."

7. Coaching and training:

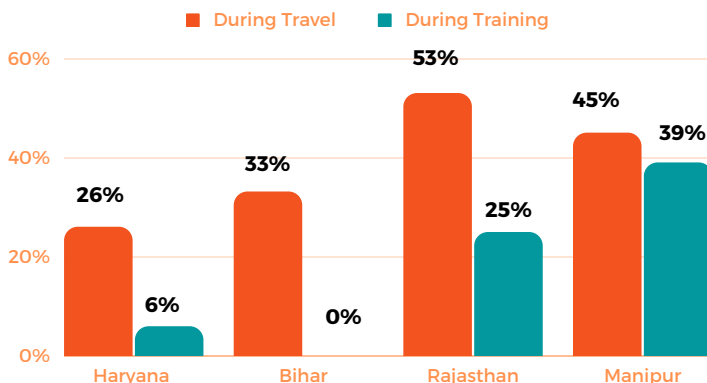
a) Preference for Female Coaches-

41.3% of women athletes preferred if a woman coach had accompanied them while traveling for the tournaments, and 22% chose women coaches for regular training for safety and comfort. When the state-wise data is explored, athletes from Manipur (45%, 39%) and Rajasthan (53%, 25%) preferred women coaches during their travel and regular training, respectively.

b) Training and involvement of menstrual cycles in athlete's plan

85% of the athletes reported that they all had similar training plans as boys, and there was no real difference in their training plans. In our interviews with coaches, most of them implied a similar perspective that their female athletes trained in similar ways as the boys. If there was a difference, it was only in the form of lesser weight lifted, or fewer repetitions, etc. This points out that more training is needed to help coaches build training plans that differentiate between male and female anatomy and the different requirements of their respective sport based on gender. Overtraining or unscientific training during a menstrual cycle can be a significant reason for injuries in athletes. Injuries can be a big demotivator in pursuing sports for female athletes.

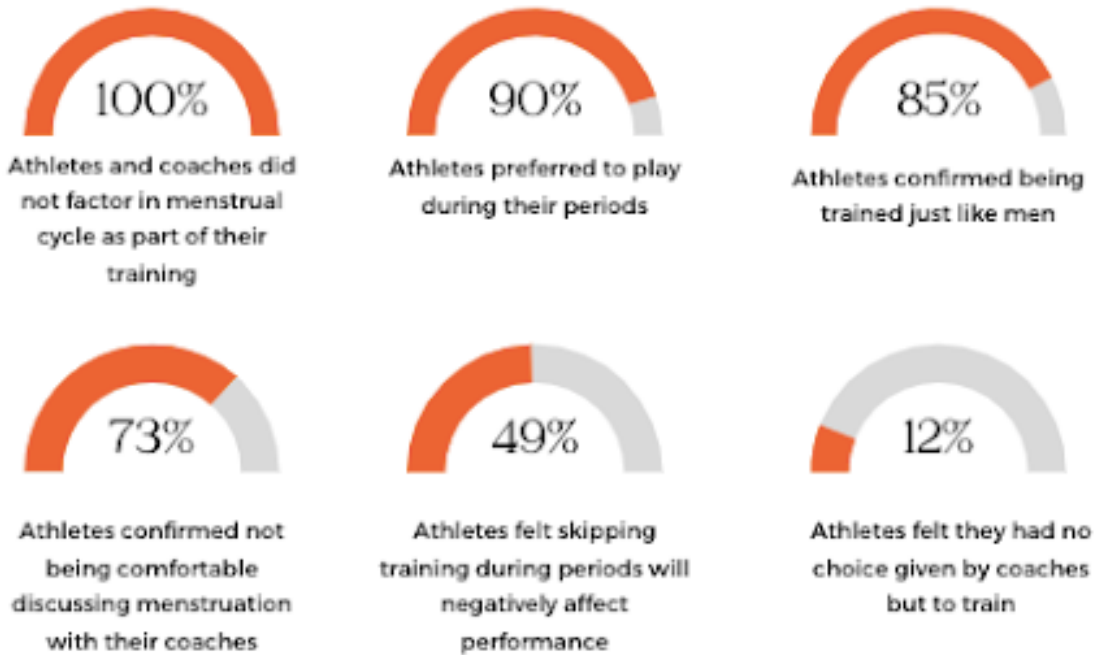
Preference for female coaches



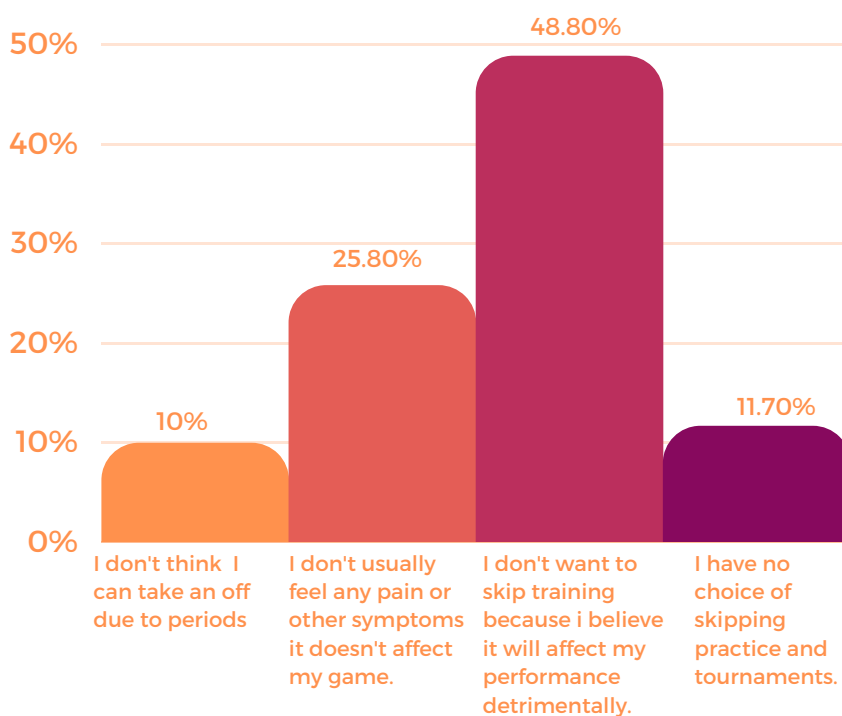
All coaches interviewed as part of the study reported not factoring in menstrual cycles in their plan for training. 73% of athletes said that they are not comfortable discussing menstruation with coaches. Almost 49% felt skipping training during periods would negatively affect their performance. 12% thought that they had no choice given by coaches but to train during their periods.



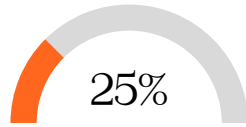
Survey data on menstruation



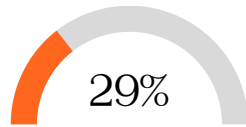
Reasons for practicing sports during periods



Survey data at a glance



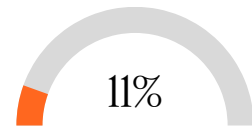
Athletes did not have access to sports facilities



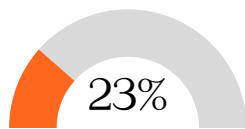
Athletes travelled over 10km to the nearest sports facilities



Athletes preferred only female coaches



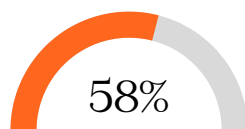
Athletes reported having faced gender based discrimination in sports



Athletes felt unsafe while playing sports



Athletes were satisfied with the quality of food at their facilities

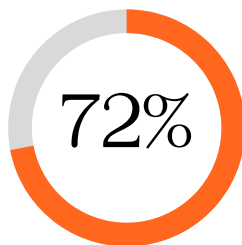


Athletes felt their performance improved after receiving professional training

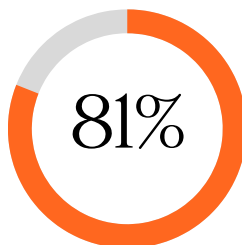


Athletes found out about sports schemes through informal sources

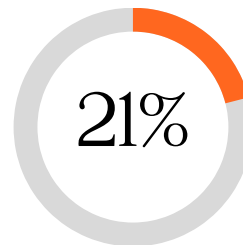
Haryana- Survey Data Overview



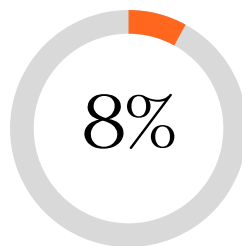
Athletes had access to sports facility



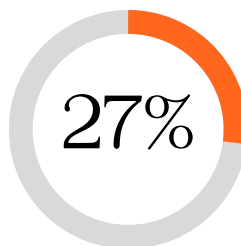
Athletes had access to equipment



Athletes travelled over 10kms to the nearest facility

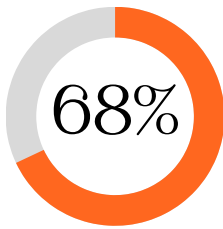


Athletes preferred only female coaches

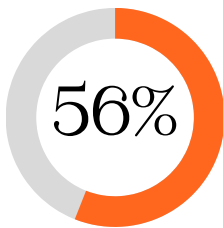


Athletes were part of residential schemes.

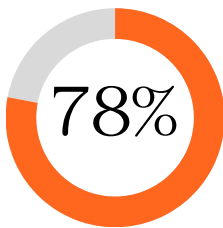
Manipur- Survey Data Overview



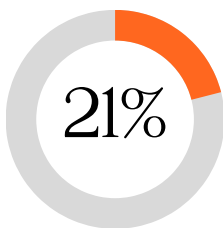
Athletes had access to sports facilities



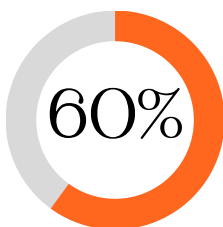
Athletes travelled over 10kms to access the nearest sports facilities



Athletes faced discrimination in sports



Athletes felt unsafe while travelling for tournaments



Athletes preferred female coaches

The low level of participation of athletes from Rajasthan and Bihar in the survey could be associated with low response rate.

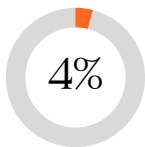
RAJASTHAN



Athletes didn't have access to sports facilities



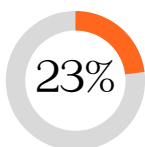
Athletes travelled for over 10kms to the nearest sports facility



Athletes faced discrimination in sports

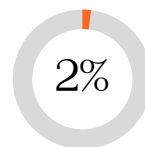


Athlete felt unsafe while travelling for tournaments

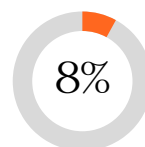


Athletes preferred female coaches but none of them expressed concern over safety.

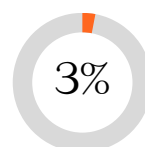
BIHAR



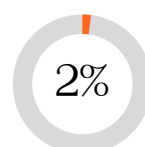
Athletes didn't have access to sports facilities



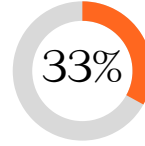
Athletes didn't have sports equipment to play



Athletes travelled for over 10kms to the nearest sports facility



Athletes considered leaving sports due to safety concerns.



Athletes preferred female coaches while traveling for tournaments

The study indicates that the scope of improvements of sports infrastructure and ecosystem is high and in the state of Bihar even with the limited resources, women felt safer and wanted to continue pursuing sports.



"If from my village a female wants to go the center, it is very far, so she would have to leave early in the morning in the dark at 5-5:30 am, 6 am training starts so parents don't send their girls in the dark because in the night also when you return its dark. This is the biggest problem because there is no facility only. Here is the most talent in villages, village females work in the fields, so their fitness level as compared to the females from cities is very different. This is the main problem, that the training facility is not there in the villages. Thus, there is no game there".



What are the challenges in scouting and talent identification for rural girls aged 8-14?

Lack of opportunities, awareness, and perceptions

The problem in rural India is mainly not finding the proper infrastructure, equipment, coaches, or role models to play or enter sports. Also, most rural India lives in poverty, leading to a hand-to-mouth existence, making pursuing sports a luxury. For the age group of 8-14, most of the decisions about the girl's career path are taken by parents. Administrators pointed out that parents in rural India are entirely unaware of sports opportunities for their children. They also struggle to find a career pathway for their girls, as there is no formal system in the country to enter sports.

Additionally, the perception of sports, especially when it comes to women playing them, is still largely negative in rural India. Even if they see talent in their girls, the parents cannot make financial contributions or the luxury of time to take their girls to practice even once a day.

Another concern for parents is that most sports in India don't pay players for them to survive just on sports. So, while the investment needs to be made today, the returns are neither guaranteed nor quick. Senior coaches pointed out that more investment needs to be made in grassroots sports in the country to change the many realities described above.



Role of schools and physical education

For most rural girls in India, the only real safe and possible exposure to sports or physical activity remains in the schools, most government schools. In India, our physical education system is grossly undervalued, and there is a severe shortage of physical education teachers in our government schools.

In the early years for sports talent to develop, simple things like running, catching, and jumping which are termed foundational skills for sports are hardly taught to young girls or the love for physical activity instilled in them. This is a lost opportunity for building rural women's talent in the country.

A solid physical education system could help create and recognize rural talent in the country. Finding systematic talent from rural India will be difficult until we cannot ensure mass youth participation in sports. Schools remain one of the most unutilized places to ensure mass participation for girls in sports.

Lack of tournaments and leagues for girls-

Senior administrators pointed out that girls, especially playing team sports, have the least opportunity to showcase or better their talent, mainly due to a lack of exposure and tournaments. Girls hardly get 2 tournaments in a year, which are also knockout events. The lack of exposure for girls to compete and showcase their talents is demotivating and makes identifying real talent even more difficult.

A more coherent and long-term approach to scouting talent is required-

Coaches and administrators also pointed out that talent identification should be an ongoing and long-term process and not an endeavor dependent on the performance during two days of selection trials or just one or two tournaments. An ecosystem where PET, community coaches, district sports officers, private academies, state sports departments, administrators and coaches work together to give opportunities and build long-term plans and checkpoints to identify and nurture rural talent, rather than work in silos will be the best way to enable talent identification in rural India.

Career insecurity and unsatisfactory remuneration:

A career in sports isn't very lucrative, especially to women, be it a coach or an administrative position. Women reported a difference in the salaries between male and female positions in the sports ecosystem. Most of the jobs, especially as coaches, are contractual, including transfers, and there is no defined career pathway for its conversion to a permanent job.

Community-led sports programs and encouraging a club culture-

Administrators pointed out that given the country's vast and culturally different nature, it is difficult for the government to reach every village. Community-led initiatives to encourage sports and local club culture is the best way to promote and expose young girls to sports. Manipur's sporting success has a lot to owe to how their communities and clubs ecosystem has encouraged a sports culture and women's participation like no other state in the country. Learning from these community-led models could help rural communities, especially girls, pick up sport young and develop talent.



"For conducting school games, districts are given 2-3 crores every year to conduct tournaments, however districts and organisers land up spending meager amounts to conduct events compromising the quality of the events.



What are the barriers for lack of women's participation in the sports ecosystem - as coaches, support staff, and administrators?

Lack of coaches and support staff in the country:

Irrespective of sports picking up in the country, the lack of coaches, sports scientists, and antiquated sports education in terms of coaching and sports science remains a massive gap in the ecosystem. Also, hiring experienced foreign coaches to lead our national teams seems to be a temporary solution to a permanent problem. Instead, more investment needs to be made in building home-grown coaches and support staff by empowering them with sports education and sports science infrastructure that is updated to the requirements of the sport as they present themselves today. For example, most of the certification courses conducted in India on sports coaching or physical education do not have a section on female physiology and menstruation awareness.

Lack of awareness about certifications and upskilling:

Many senior female coaches we spoke to have only held their first diplomas as coaches and some internal training provided by their facilities as a part of their own upskilling effort. This was also observed with the female administration staff. A lot of these stakeholders were in the system for almost 10 years. Our research also highlighted that coaches and support staff had minimal knowledge of sport specific recent certifications or courses offerings available in the educational domain (online or offline). While many identified that their knowledge was antiquated, more effort could be put in by them to upgrade themselves.

"Communication is the major gap in Manipur. They don't understand Hindi or English, and we don't know their language. Though we manage teaching of the skills part, I constantly feel a communication gap. Athletes turn to their Manipur (local) coach to talk personal issues"

Lack of priority given to sanitation in existing infrastructure:

Most of the sports infrastructure in the country is not well-equipped with drinking water and clean toilets. The non-availability of clean toilets directly impacts coaches' and athletes' performance.

Unclean toilets are a breeding ground for infections, and many women avoid using them, making them uncomfortable and affecting their performance. The absence of basic facilities like changing rooms in the practice area for women shows a lack of sensitivity towards gender-based issues like privacy.

A career in sports does not fit into societal gender norms:

Sports involve travel, transfers, working odd hours, and much time spent outside the confines of one's home. Coaches stated that women's role in a family is looked at from a patriarchal lens. Women are expected to cook, take care of the children, and maintain a stable and happy household. To be in a sport, unless they have a support system that supports a distinct lifestyle that sports demands, pursuing a career in it is very difficult. Some coaches pointed out that marriage and subsequent gender roles to be played are some of the significant obstacles to building a career in sports.

Also, some of them opined that a policy in government or private spaces that sanctions and mandates, 50% seats for women in either coaching or administrative positions, could help organisations make a conscious change in hiring. A lot of public and private places have the same mandates for athletes.

"There is less seriousness around women sports. They are given comparatively lesser exposure than male athletes. For team sports only one tournament happens in Bihar by the SGFI. That too knockout matches are conducted teams get only 1 maximum 2 matches to play. In Jammu (J&K), there are only friendly matches for women. This is a sad situation."

Lack of awareness of various roles available in sports amongst athletes:

Administrators pointed out that public and private academies have an excellent repository of athletes within its ecosystem. Aside from education of any kind, sports education is still not an integral part of the athletes ecosystem. This leads to losing out on the chance of creating the next team of coaches and sports scientists from the athletes as they leave professional sports. Raising athletes' awareness about avenues in sports and giving them role models in front of them that work as female coaches, support staff, or administrators could be a great way to help them navigate their paths in a meaningful way. Additionally, it also helps the ecosystem to build substantial human resources.

Currently, awareness of this amongst athletes is lacking. If India could invest more in sports schools and universities, where athletes can pursue sports and educate themselves in various aspects of sports coaching and management, that could be the best way to ensure a clear career pathway for female athletes to make their way into the professional sports ecosystem after their playing careers.

More opportunities to lead and training in leadership:

Among the respondents that we spoke to, most of the female coaches were working under the supervision of male senior coaches. Overall, in the sports ecosystem, we only have a handful of examples of chief coaches of male or female teams in India being women. Coaches claimed that giving these opportunities to lead from the front would be a game-changer.

"Diploma has a low ratio of male to female. A 60:40 ratio. The problem of female coaches is when they get married and take up a job somewhere else. This results as a problem because they cannot manage it and then they have to leave the job to stay with family. They don't apply also, so we don't get female numbers. So that's why the ratio is low. Transfers and all are rampant so then it becomes hard for females to branch out if they already have family staying in the city. They will not want to leave the city."

More funding and interventions are required to increase women's representation in coaching and administration:

Women reported that they should be more confident in raising their views or questions, while some said they feared feeling misunderstood or ignored by their counterparts. Administrators also pointed out that women have to develop leadership skills as they often second guess their views, which could be pertaining to the culture in their homes or the society they come from. This attitudinal shift is required from women if they want to make a valuable contribution.

There are no specific programs currently focusing on increasing women coaches and leaders, building women communities, giving networking opportunities, mentorship, and raising awareness about the challenges women coaches and administrators face in getting into the sports ecosystem. Women administrators noted that women in India and especially in sports, don't have the same starting point in the country as men. Thus, extra efforts need to be made through policy initiatives to have a structured, timeline-based framework to increase their participation in other spectrums of sport than being an athlete.

"Administrators and coaches need to get more interaction with athlete's parents. We spend lot of time with athletes and we can convince their parents for continuing their daughters to play sports. but we have limited interaction with the parents. Women coach can act as a motivation for girls and their families to pursue sports as career."



Benchmarking

Benchmarking

The underrepresentation of females in sports participation has been heavily researched internationally. Literature suggests themes related to the lack of female participation in sports, including the ecosystems of the countries' coaches, physical education teachers, support staff, and sports administrators. We further investigated the barriers faced by women and girls in participation in sports in India by providing benchmark information from comparable countries such as the United Kingdom and Japan. The former was chosen as it enjoys advanced structures and frameworks to support women in sports with widely available data. Japan is a fellow Asian country that competes in the Asian games alongside India; this can give us direct comparisons. Both countries have reputable international success regarding women's sports, sound infrastructure, organized campaigns, and private and public funding that nurture the landscape of women's sports.

Benchmarking Methodology

This comprehensive review aims to compare and contrast the women's sports landscape of other countries with India. The research methodology of the benchmarking sections consists of collecting and analyzing secondary data about the different countries and their general ecosystems and specific landscapes regarding the sport. We identified and examined national campaigns, talent identification systems, and other factors that contribute to the landscape of women's sport in both the United Kingdom and Japan and what India can emulate from the cross-learnings.



Titles	England	Japan
Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less Media coverage and decreased commercial investment • No separate funds • Less representation at leadership positions in sports <p>Socio cultural issues and hesitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little commercial development and media coverage for women athletes • Minimal support post child birth • Centralized Sports facilities at Tokyo
Public private partnerships (PPP Model)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public funding is spent on developing grassroots and elite sport in both urban and rural areas • Private companies provide financial resources to design and implement national sport campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports promotion company certification system, certifies companies that promote sports within its employees including women • Maintenance of stadiums under PPP model and steps to increase the use of these stadiums to its capacity under mantra “Sport for everyone, anywhere, always”
Campaign by governing body	<p>Sports England launched ‘This Girl Can’ campaign in 2015.</p> <p>Three missions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) increase the number of girls and women taking part in sport and exercise, 2) change how girls and women feel and think about exercising and playing sport, and 3) change the opportunities available to women to become active. <p>Launched in three phases with budget of £10m (phase 1) £10.3m (Phase 2 and 3)</p>	<p>1. Sport for Tomorrow Campaign</p> <p>It was a strategic marketing campaign by the Japanese Sports Agency in 2020 to promote and enhance its competitiveness on an international level and share successful case studies of females in sports.</p> <p>Results: Campaign reached 12 million people in 25 different countries and JSA developed strategic relationships with the sports federations and ministries across the world.</p>

[29] Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation

[30] <https://www.statista.com/topics/6128/women-s-sports-participation-in-the-uk/#dossierKeyfigures>

[31] Sport England: Home | Uniting | The | Movement
<https://www.sportengland.org>

	<p>Phase 1: Social media campaign, website and phone application to counter societal judgements, addressing fears and supporting women interested in sports. Results: 2.8 million women aged 14-40 reported more activity after the campaign.</p>	<p>2. Female Athletes Development & Support Project It is designed to work on barriers and develop appropriate training environments for female junior and senior athletes involved in high performance sport</p>
	<p>Phase 2 Began in 2017 dedicated to enable long-term sustainable growth for girls and women participating in sport.</p> <p>Result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women aged 14-60 agreeing that 'people like me are doing sport and exercise' grew from 43% before we launched the campaign 48% after Phase Two (Nov 2017). - Brand awareness grew to 46% from 35%. - 29m views of campaign and 272 pieces of editorial coverage 	<p>In collaboration with the Japan Sport Association, the Japanese Olympic Committee, and local governments, various supports for a strong and sustainable development system for effective identification and development programs of talented athletes</p>
	<p>Phase 3: launched in October of 2018 to encourage women to overcome the social, cultural and economic barriers. Result: The gender gap reduced from 1.79m to 1.55m.</p>	<p>4. Extensive R&D to collect international trends and gain insight around multiple different policy reforms used by different governing bodies. Specific examples of strategies learned saw an increase in participation by hosting training for female leaders, hosting sports events at regional and national levels, supporting women empowerment,</p>

[32] This Girl Can

<https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk>

[33]<https://www.mext.go.jp/sports/en/index.htm>

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/programmes/2022/elevate>

<https://www.jpnsport.go.jp/corp/english/activities/tabid/393/default.aspx>

<p>Talent identification</p>	<p>Multiphase talent recruitment with first getting applications, conducting multiple physical tests and in-depth analysis. Outlining the athletes' pathway under Phase 2 and phase 3 included medical, function, psych screening.</p> <p>The selected ones are immersed in world class training with best of world's coaches and support teams. The progression rate of each athlete is also tracked.</p>	<p>It is developed on three type of models-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-sports, • target sports, and • transfer sports. <p>Lot of effort goes into the promotion of sports at the level of schools and colleges. These models are developed at both local and national level to provide opportunities and create pathways of excellence to various talented athletes for potential medals</p>
<p>Women in leadership roles</p>	<p>Female sports minister, Women leading the two sport governing bodies (Sport England and UK Sport), More women representative in the Sport Advisory Board.</p>	<p>Initiatives to get more women in administration in sports</p>
<p>Special provisions to elevate women</p>	<p>The Female Coaching Education Programme to address the current under-representation of female coaches</p>	<p>Women Elite Coach Development program For women athletes to take up the role of coach</p>
	<p>Separate Additional budgets for women sports</p>	<p>Workshops for gender equality and equity, initiatives to equalise ratio of female athletes and coaches</p>

What can India emulate?

The UK and Japan present examples of how resources can be optimally used to increase community sports coverage. The key lessons that India can emulate are:

1. Media campaigns: Design constantly evolving sports campaigns to address the socio-cultural and personal issues faced by various women stakeholders, advertise the schemes and avenues provided by public and private players for women, and interact with key women sportspersons to enhance the visibility of women's sports in India.

2. Public-Private partnerships: This is another way to sustain the financing of these campaigns for women in sports in India. The private sector can be incentivised to promote women's sports, such as tax relaxation, etc. The companies can be certified as sports-promoting companies with attached benefits.

3. Talent identification: Coordination between the private sector, sports agencies, federations, sports clubs, non-profit organizations and associations to scout talent, especially to give access to women in far-flung areas.

4. Road map and measurable parameters: Every strategy or policy point should have a holistically chalked-out road map for development. The measurable indicators should follow the strategies to implement them on the ground level effectively.

5. Women in leadership roles: The detailed analysis of the sports ecosystem of the two countries highlighted that women's presence in the leadership and administrative role act as a catalyst to motivate further women to adopt sports.

6. Special provisions for women: Separate funding, workshops, and a special program or course for developing women coaches can be started just as done by the UK and Japan.



• Recommendations •

1: Funding research for an India-wide study in women's sport

This pilot study should be looked at as just a starting point for a more extensive and detailed India-wide study. The India-wide study should involve para-athletes in addition to athletes, coaches, support staff, and administrators. A more comprehensive study will help us understand the challenges and opportunities for women to build a sports career in the country. The government and private corporations should invest in this research to help develop more informed policy initiatives and programs for women in sports.

2: Targeted, evidence-based investment

Increase investment in grassroots sports

To build a robust eco-system at the grassroots, more targeted investment in states where there is less spending on sports by central and state governments needs to be made in terms of building infrastructure, sports science facilities, supporting women athletes, etc. Private partners and CSR funding should look at avenues to help grassroots sports equally as elite sports. It is crucial to understand and recognize the current limitations to promote young girls and women. Private and public stakeholders should build evidence on areas where women are actively taking up sports and where they are lagging. It would be critical for public and the private sector to redirect their investments to states where women's representation continues to be low.

Incentivize infrastructure development in rural areas

The government can utilize the PPP model to enhance and speed-up infrastructure development in rural areas. Relaxations in policies regarding credit facilitation, taxation, and infrastructure management should be provided as incentives.

3: Safe transport facilities

For athlete respondents in this study, transportation was one of the critical challenges, especially for non-residential athletes. Many rural girl athletes don't have the privilege of getting dropped and picked up by their parents to practice their sports. The distance from their homes to the facility and odd hours of practice become a hurdle for them. Considering this building sports infrastructure in India should be looked at from a gendered lens, infrastructure planning should include providing safe transport facilities to increase consistent women participation. In addition, infrastructure management must consist of clean and hygienic facilities for women, which plays a significant role in their preparation and performance.

4: Education to athletes and coaches on menstruation and its impact on the sport

Curating workshops for athletes and coaches

Our research shows that there is hardly any conversation on menstruation in the grassroots sports ecosystem. Research suggests that menstruation affects an athlete's performance and general wellness. Also, recently, many top women athletes, including Vinesh Phogat and Jhulan Goswami, have spoken openly about how their menstrual cycle has adversely affected their performance.

It is crucial to create access to the right scientific information on this subject and make it relevant to coaches and athletes. This should be done through regular workshops in public and private academies across the country and should start at the grassroots level. The focus of these workshops should be breaking the taboo, explaining the science behind menstruation and performance, and giving essential tools that can help them track their cycles and make informed decisions about their training.



Inclusion of menstruation education in all academic wings of the government

Government certifications and diploma courses should include menstruation and provide coaches with tools to plan training around menstrual cycles. Currently, menstruation is not a part of the academic discourse. The aim should be to change this.

Funding research to better understand this phenomenon and its effect on Indian athletes

There has been only one research study in India done by Inspire Institute of Sports Science on this topic. However, we need a lot more investment and initiative to understand the phenomenon of menstruation and the performance of Indian women athletes. This research will help our coaches and athletes make more informed decisions about training and their long-term wellness.

5: Media Campaign

In India, only 38% of the population claimed to watch women's sports, in comparison to 66% viewership in Australia. There is significantly lower visibility of women's sports in the country. Hence, public and private sectors need to design campaigns that highlight the achievements of women athletes and create excitement about viewing women's sports. These campaigns could be run in phases starting with creating awareness, implementing programs, and then ensuring the women left out in the second phase are involved in the campaign. In the UK, the National Games Board (NGBs) is constantly designing and implementing mass campaigns to engage the population at large in women's sports. Each year there is an investment toward increasing the number of women participating in sports.

Additionally, NGBs such as SportEngland and UK Sport have organized plans for the short-term and long-term to continue supporting women in sports and keep the numbers increasing. There are extremely high levels of financial support to implement these campaigns. These financial resources come from both private and public sources.

[34] Battling period cramps, competing on empty stomach and a ...

<https://indianexpress.com> › Sports › Sport Others

[35] Research needed to help women athletes during menstrual ...

<https://indianexpress.com> › Sports › Cricket

[36] Indian women athletes show higher deficiencies and health risks

<https://indianexpress.com> › Sports › Sport Others

Until we improve the mass participation of women at the grassroots level, elite participation will always be low. Parents and the home environment play a significant role in encouraging women to take up sports. Parents often lack awareness, believing sports to be safe for women or a serious career option. Thus, we must design awareness campaigns and broadcast them through TV, Radio, and digital marketing. Even coaches need to be trained to engage and talk to parents of potential players and influence their mentality. Raising awareness of various avenues in sports other than being an athlete in terms of sports management, coaching, sports science, and administration should be a part of the campaign strategy.

6. Female coach mentoring programs

Developing a solid group of female coaches can be a game-changer in Indian sports. Sports Federations should run stand-alone programs for female coaches and incentivize former athletes and women to participate in the programs. For instance, in Japan, the Japan Sports Agency (JSA) is the central body for promoting sports in the country. The JSA commissioned a Female Athletes Development & Support Project, which aims to arrange and develop appropriate training environments for female junior and senior athletes involved in high-performance sports. The project looks at specific situations of individual athletes and identifies barriers they may experience regarding training facilities, coaching staff, and other optimal performance services. By investigating barriers at a personal level, the JSA can quickly and effectively solve problems that the female athlete may face.

Similarly, the JSA created a Women Elite Coach Development program, which helps female athletes pursue a career in coaching after they retire as an athlete, creating a sustainable method of female participation in sports. The experiences gained as an elite athlete competing on the world-class stage are valuable assets for a potential coaching career. With the concept of “elite athlete to elite coach,” the project aims to create a “Women Elite Coach Development Program,” attracting former female elite athletes to pursue a career in coaching. The public and private players in the eco-system should enable shadowing, mentoring, and networking with former and current female athletes/coaches who could help women.

7: Female leadership initiatives

Underrepresentation is a huge barrier for women to continue their sports careers after they retire from playing. Building schemes, leadership, and employment programs that support the career paths of female athletes could be remarkable. The government should formulate standardized programs and workshops that will build awareness on topics such as gender equality, build women communities, give networking opportunities with female corporate leaders, give opportunities to mingle with role models in the country, and raise awareness of the various roles available in sports, etc. to improve the participation of women as leaders in sports. The government needs to create councils and federations focusing solely on promoting sports for all age groups.

Forming Women Advisory Board Committees in our governing and decision making bodies to bring changes in women's sports ecosystem could be a very important step taken by the government. Also, a mandate of having at least 50% women in all our sports committees, including government, sports Federations, clubs, associations etc., is crucial to ensure that policies and initiatives have a women's perspective.

Appointing women leaders at the helm of the decision making bodies in the sports eco-system will be the first step to encouraging more women to look up to sports as a viable option to succeed. Giving opportunities to women in leadership positions in the corporate sector to network with sports administrative bodies and help them navigate through the system could be a great way to attract women talent, from diverse backgrounds into our administrative bodies. We should aim to achieve the 50% mark in all our NGBs by the end of the next five years.

Coach Mentoring

Mentoring is a process designed with the intention of helping a coach to improve their level of performance and understanding of the coaching process through guidance, encouragement, data and feedback. A coach mentoring programme is fundamentally about guided discovery learning both for the coach and the mentor.



CONFIDENCE

Each coach needs to work on developing and nurturing their own level of confidence because of its direct effect on athletes. Athletes will benefit when the coach helps them develop and nurture their confidence.



MOTIVATION

The needs and aspirations of individual athletes change as they grow, mature, gain experience and improve their range and level of capabilities in sport. A coach has to accommodate the challenges presented by this range of stages at which individuals may move from involvement and fun of sport participation to the competitive realm.

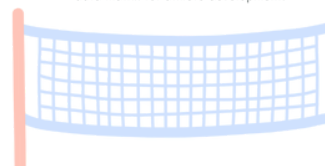


FEEDBACK

A coach needs to learn the art of providing constructive feedback to encourage athletes for better performance. Collective effectiveness and team building can be facilitated by continuous feedback.

DATA

The use of data can enhance decision making and performance support initiatives. A coach needs to use reliable data matrix for athlete development.



Source: Coach mentor programme, New Zealand

8: Funding and sponsorship

The government has been increasing sports allocation for the last few years, but building a public-private partnership to increase sports funding and sponsorship for just women could be explored. The government needs to fund more organizations and agencies supporting female athletes—whether the support is financial, medical, equipment, etc. A timeline to work on this would be as soon as possible since female athletes need assistance and financial support to excel in sports. There are many multiple initiatives to increase investment in sports.

Many start-ups and CSR initiatives have actively started investing in sports for women as a model for social reform. The CSR funding for sports has been abysmally low in India, with 1.23% spending in FY-2020 from a 1.41% in FY-2019. The Reliance Foundation Young Champs program was launched in 2015 by Reliance Foundation (RF) to promote top football talents in the country between 12-16 years of age. However, the investments need to be more gender-focused to address issues specific to women.

Coaches in India also need to view females as having the ability to train and earn medals for the country through their grit and determination towards the sport instead of wondering about their age and biological clock and viewing it as a limitation as to when they will quit the game to either get married or have children. A healthy timeline to work towards these recommendations would be a time frame of 2 years which is until the next Olympics, which is in 2024.

9: Talent Identification and scouting

Creating a coherent ecosystem

Talent identification and scouting is a complex process that becomes even more difficult in a geographically diverse and massive country like India. The government agencies can't reach every part of the country and scout for talent. A more coherent system that includes state-level associations, school/ university physical education teachers, district sports officers, block officers, private academies, and non-profit organizations working in sports to become a part of the system will help reach more rural girl talent in the country.

Building and enabling local communities

A community-led model that involves parents, local clubs, and local stars to invest in their communities and help build mass participation and talent should be explored. Financial support and models can be created to empower communities and make them self-sufficient in running sports programs that could involve a hyper-localized form of scouting.

For example, when Imphal's youth was drowning in drugs and alcohol or violent revolutionary acts due to a lack of employment opportunities and cluelessness, the elders, especially the older women in their communities, immediately started taking steps to engage them in better activities. They realized nothing could be better than sports to get the youth to spend time productively and put their minds and bodies to good use. There are around 1000 registered sports clubs in Manipur. Each club is funded by volunteers, community donations, ex-athletes, and coaches. The clubs conduct various inter-club leagues in various sports, not just one. The community organizes an annual sports festival, and every village participates through its clubs. These club matches are organised for all age groups ranging from 10 yrs to 25yrs and for men and women. Also, all these games are serious in every form- some volunteers officiate matches, ex-athletes serve as chief guests and coaches, and there is an audience, a fully packed ground cheering and shouting for their clubs.

Using technology to reach rural girls and scout talent

Furthermore, using technology to reach rural talent could be another way to extract talent from rural spaces. In the UK, applications are sought innovatively by encouraging athletes to share their videos while training, playing, etc. The model is implemented in the UK in three phases. In the first stage, athletes from the general public or the sports world apply to UK Sport. At various training facilities across the UK, various generic physical and skill-based tests are available to check for aerobic fitness, upper and lower body strength, and sprints and jumps. The history of an athlete's training and competition is thoroughly examined. The athlete's suitability for a sport is then further evaluated by UK Sport in Phase 2, which also provides greater preparation for impending journeys.

If all goes according to plan, the athlete's journey is described. Phase 3 consists of several sessions, including functional movement screenings, physical examinations, performance lifestyle workshops, and psychological evaluations. Phases 1-3 is followed by the confirmation phase, where selected athletes spend 6-12 months completing their training. This could be an exciting way to build localized clusters of schools/ colleges/universities for facilitating talent camps. Incentive models can be designed for schools/ universities to produce good sports talent for SAI to coach further.

Give more opportunities to display talent

Lastly, more tournaments and leagues for various sports will give women more opportunities to showcase talent and learn from exposure. Recently we have already seen a surge in sports leagues for women, though a lot more of these leagues are required. Under the sports for women initiative, the government could explore partnerships with corporates and facilitate more investment in leagues for various sports built specifically for women.

Recommendation Summary

Recommendation	Description	Stakeholders	Timeline
Targeted, evidence-based investment	Identify states with low female participation, build evidence and increase investments to promote women	MYAS, SAI & federations, state governments, Public & private sport organisations	2023-2025
Funding research for an India wide study in women sport	A detailed India wide study required to build informed policy initiative and programs	SAI, MYAS, Public and private organisations	2022-2024
Talent Identification Schemes	<p>Build a more coherent and long- term process that involves all stakeholders in sports.</p> <p>Enable communities and facilitate community led, clubs based culture to build and identify talent.</p> <p>Create an open application process to expand the talent hunt across India. Liaison with Physical education teachers, District sports officers, block officers, private academies, non-profit organisations working in sports etc. by issuing a mandate to ensure participation from the girls in the decided age group to apply.</p>	Athletes	Conducted on an annual basis starting in 2024

<p>Education on menstrual health and performance</p>	<p>Conduct workshops and seminars in government and private academies across India.</p> <p>Making menstruation a mandatory subject in all government and accredited sports coaching and sports science courses in the country.</p> <p>Investing in research on this subject.</p>	<p>Athletes, MYAS,SAI, Private academies, coaches</p>	<p>2022-2025</p>
<p>Sport Campaigns</p>	<p>Create a national campaign specifically targeting women to increase their participation in physical activity. The campaign could be initiated in phases starting with 1) creating awareness, 2) implementing programs, and then 3) ensuring support and involvement for minority communities.</p>	<p>Athletes, MYAS, IOC</p>	<p>Initiate Phase 1 by 2025</p>
<p>Female Coaches Development Programs</p>	<p>Sport Federations should run stand-alone programs for female coaches to incentivise former athletes and women to continue their career in sport coaching. The programs can consist of shadowing, mentoring and networking with former and current female athletes/coaches, certification workshops, webinars, and events.</p>	<p>Female Coaches</p>	<p>Initiate Program by 2025.</p>

<p>Female Leadership Initiatives</p>	<p>Form a Women Advisory Board to ensure that all activities are undertaken as planned by the MYAS policy document.</p> <p>Mandating a 50% ratio of women representation in all our sports committees including SAI, Sports Federations, IOC, etc. is crucial to ensure that policies and initiatives made have a women perspective.</p> <p>Appointing women leaders at the helm of the MYAS and other NGBS will be a first step to encourage more women to look up to sports as a viable option to succeed.</p> <p>Giving opportunities to women serving in leadership positions in the corporate sector to network with sports administrative bodies and help them navigate through the system could be a great way to attract women talent from diverse backgrounds into our administrative bodies. Female Sport Business Administrators system could be a great way to attract women talent from diverse backgrounds into our administrative bodies.</p>	<p>Female Sport Business Administrators</p>	<p>Reach a 50:50 ratio by 2025.</p>
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Funding	Funding from government Schemes made for women's sports only Engage CSR and other private foundations for additional support	MYAS, NGBs, Private Sponsors	As soon as possible
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Conclusion

Limitations of the study

This study is limited in its reach as it has only covered four states and a sample representative of total participation in the state in their respective government funded facilities. Also, this study does not account for women para-athletes in its fold. A more extensive study that is India-wide needs to be conducted to form a deeper understanding of the underlying issues and problems impacting the participation of women in the sports ecosystem. An India-wide study will help us paint a more detailed picture and provide us with more solid recommendations.

Conclusion

The sports narrative in India is changing positively, and women have played a significant role in changing this narrative. The report shows that in terms of participation of women athletes, we have only seen growth in the last two decades. Our goal now should be to reach the 50% mark regarding athlete representation. Much work, though, is still required to get women into decision-making roles, such as coaches and support staff. While things can be improved at the policy level, financial investments, programmatic solutions that target women coaches and support staff, and infrastructure, the onus is also on the women in this country to take charge and claim their rightful place in the sports eco-system. Women have to inform, equip and upgrade themselves and play an active role in creating a more accessible, equitable, and sustainable sports ecosystem in the country.



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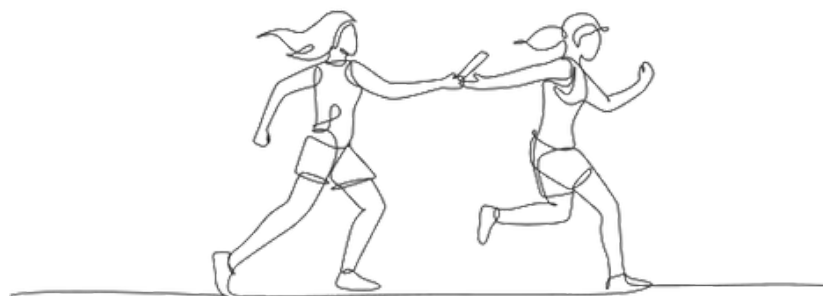
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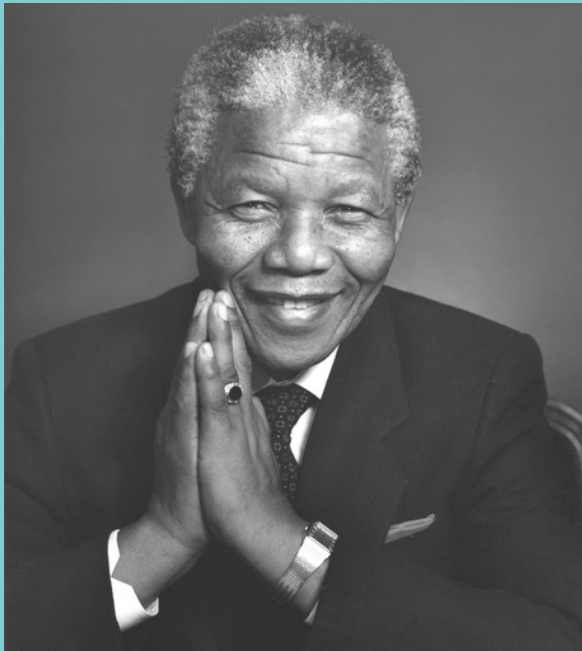
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"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand."

Nelson Mandela

Karnam Malleshwari



Karnam Malleshwari was the first Indian woman athlete to win an Olympic Medal at Sydney 2000, Games. She won the bronze medal for weightlifting, under the 64kg category.

P T Usha



Known as the "Queen of track and field", P T Usha is considered the pioneers of Indian women athletics. She dominated the tracks in the 1980s, winning 23 medals, of which 14 were gold.

Saina Nehwal



Saina Nehwal was the first Indian women shuttler to win an Olympic medal (bronze), in 2012 at London Games. She was ranked World No. 1 in 2015 and has 24 International titles to her name.

M C Mary Kom



Mary Kom is the first women boxer to have won an Olympic medal (bronze) in 2012. She is the only woman to win World Amateur Boxing Championship six times, the only female boxer to have won a medal in each one of the first seven World Championships, and the only boxer (male or female) to win eight World Championship medals.

Sakshi Malik



Sakshi Malik is an Indian freestyle wrestler, who won the bronze at the 2016 Summer Olympics, in the 58 kg category, becoming the first Indian female wrestler to win a medal at the Olympics. She also won the bronze at the 2018 CMG.

Jhulan Goswami



Jhulan Goswami is an all-round cricketing star and a former India national women's cricket team captain. She is widely considered as the best fast bowler in the Indian women's team and the highest wicket taker in Women's one day international cricket.

P V Sindhu



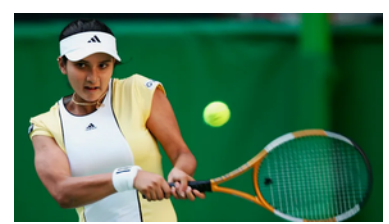
Sindhu is the first and only Indian to become the Badminton world champion and only the second individual athlete from India to win two consecutive medals at the Olympic Games, 2016 and 2020. The ace shuttler reached the 6th rank of the Badminton World Federation.

Apurvi Chandela



Apurvi Singh Chandela is an Indian Shooting player who competes in the 10 metre air rifle event. She won the gold medal in the 2019 ISSF World Cup in New Delhi. She won a gold medal at CWG 2014.

Sania Mirza



Sania Mirza was India's finest tennis player (male and female combined) a decade ago, and she was rated in the top 30 in Women's Singles. She has won six Grand Slams, including three in Mixed Doubles.

Deepika Kumari



Deepika is the first Indian archer (male and female) ever to be ranked number one in the world. She earned two gold medals and two silver medals (Women's team) in the World Championships in 2011 and 2015.

Dipa Karmakar



Dipa Karmakar is an Indian artist gymnast, who won a bronze at the 2014 CWG. She was the first Indian gymnast to represent India at the Olympics in 2016. She is one of the only five women who have successfully landed the Produnova, which is regarded as the most difficult vault of those currently being performed in women's gymnastics.

Dutee Chand



Dutee took part in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. She ran the 100 metres in 11.32 seconds to become the first Indian sprinter to win gold at the World Universiade in 2019. She is the reigning national champion in the 100 m event.

Bula Chowdhary



Bula is a former Indian national women's swimming champion. In 1984 she set a national 100m butterfly record and during the Seoul Asian Games in 1986, she created a record in 100m butterfly and another record in 200m butterfly.

Anju Bobby George



Anju is a retired Indian athlete who made history with a bronze medal in long jump at the 2003 World Championships in Athletics in Paris. She won gold medals at the CWG 2002, the Asian Games 2002 and 2006, the Asian Championships in 2005, and the South Asian Games in 2006.

The Phogat Sisters



The Phogat sisters are a household name in India, as the wrestling champions. At the CWG, three Phogat sisters, Geeta, Babita, and Vinesh, won gold medals in separate weight categories. Priyanka won a silver medal in the Asian Wrestling Championships.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank SAI for giving us access to it's administrators, coaches, support staff athletes in various centers, the team at University of East London and all the SSF interns, volunteers, mentors, and team for helping with this study.



Annexure 1

QUESTIONS FOR SURVEY: ATHLETES (TOTAL 21 questions including basic info)

BASIC INFORMATION PRE-SCHEME

1. Did you have the space(court, stadium, field, pool) to practice regularly before joining sports facility? YES/NO
2. Did you have adequate sport-specific equipment (e.g., spikes for athletics, non-marking shoes for Badminton) before joining the scheme? YES/NO
3. How far is the stadium/field/pool/court in which you train from your house?
 - 0-2km
 - 3-5km
 - 6-9km
 - 10+km
4. Where did you receive financial support for your sporting expenses before joining sports schemes? Parents/external sources/sponsorships/clubs/other

SPORTS FACILITY SCHEME SELECTION PROCESS

5. How did you know about the sports scheme?
 - Through my coach
 - Through my parents
 - Advertisements
 - Other- mention
6. Where was the selection conducted? Short answer

ROLE OF COACH

7. Would you be more comfortable if you had a female coach as opposed to a male coach ? YES/NO, WHY? Short answer
8. Do you think you are able to talk about your problems openly with your existing coach/es ? YES/NO, WHY? Short answer

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

9. Have you faced any gender discrimination in your career so far? YES/NO/maybe

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE

10. On a scale of 1-10 how much pressure do you put on yourself to perform well? rate from 1-10
11. Do you think people around you, (eg- coach, parents, peers) have very high expectations of you? YES/NO/maybe
12. Do you feel body conscious while playing your sport at tournaments or during training because of the clothes you have to wear?
YES/NO/maybe

MENSTRUATION

13. Do you train or play tournaments during your periods?
YES/NO
14. If 'yes' to the previous question, why?
15. Is your training identical to that of boys? YES/NO

I don't usually feel any pain or other symptoms; it doesn't affect my game
I have no choice of skipping practice and tournaments
I don't know how to tell my coach about my period and ask for leave
I don't want to skip training because I believe it will affect my performance detrimentally

SAFETY ISSUES

15. How safe do you feel in the training centre and accommodation area? scale rate from 1-10
16. How safe do you feel while travelling to and from training sessions and tournaments? scale rate from 1-10
17. have you considered leaving sport because of these safety issues? yes/no/maybe
18. On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable would you be if you were travelling for tournaments with your female coach? scale rate from 1-10

DIET AND NUTRITION

19. Do you have access to healthy foods and nutritional supplements that you require? YES/NO
20. on a scale of 1-10 till what level do you think performance is impacted by having access to proper nutritional requirements? scale rate from 1-10

EFFECTS OF COVID-19

21. Did the pandemic affect your performance in a positive or negative way? Positive/Negative

Questionnaires (Final) for Male Coaches (Question count - 13)

PROFILING

1) Please share your journey up until now.

- How did you become a coach?
- Why did you become a coach?
- When did you start coaching?
- What sport do you coach in?

FEMALE VS MALE TRAINING

2) How has your experience been with training female athletes?

- Good. Why so? If not that great. Why so?

3) What is the difference between training a female and a male athlete? - Why do you think this difference exists?

- What strategies do you use to tackle these differences?
- Do you think periods in particular have an effect on performance? Do you plan training regimes around menstrual cycles?

4) How many female athletes train at your centre?

- Is this a good number?
- If not, how can we make it better in terms of their participation?
- What do you think are the reasons for these low numbers?
- How can we make it easier for girls to participate in our sports schemes?

RELATIONSHIP WITH ATHLETES

5) How important do you think it is to have a strong personal relationship with your athletes?

- As a male coach, are you able to bond well with female athletes? Why or why not?
- What language do you usually speak to your athletes (lingua franca)?
- What do you do to adapt to situations where they don't understand the lingua franca?
- Do you think not knowing the lingua franca affects their performance? Society,

CULTURE, PARENTS

6) How important is the role of parents in girls playing sports?

- Have you interacted with the athletes' parents? Do you think building rapport with the parents of the athletes is necessary? Yes/no, why?
- What do you think are their main concerns and why?
- Do you think they have the wrong mindset? How can we help change their mindset?
- What encourages parents to let girls play?

7) What are the cultural differences you observe between athletes hailing from rural and urban areas?

FEMALE COACHES

8) How many female coaches are there at your centre?

- Is this a good number?
- If not, what do you think are the reasons for these less numbers? How can we make it better in terms of their participation as coaches?
- What is your assessment of their knowledge of the sport and coaching skills?

9) In terms of female coaches, do you believe only athletes can make good coaches?

10) Does Sports facilities have a maternity policy in place? If yes, details?

TALENT IDENTIFICATION

11) What is your opinion about the talent identification schemes currently going on in the country?

- Why do you say so?
- Do you think we are reaching rural girls through these schemes?
- If yes, how? If not, how can we better reach our girls in the rural area?
- How can we make TI better in India?
- How many female coaches are part of the selection trial team? Approximately how many female coaches come to the trials?

12) Do you think that identification should be done going to villages and schools to conduct trials? If yes, why?

- Do you believe that the role of school infrastructure and good PE teachers makes a difference to the quality and age of athletes recruited by sports centers?
- How do you think this quality in general can be improved?
- Are you in touch with any school PE teacher in order to understand the capacity and talent of athletes who train in professional centers?

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE/LESSONS

13) In terms of female coaches/athletes in the international arena, what has been your experience and what are some of the things that we can adapt here in India?

- Why and how should we adapt your recommendations?
- What makes them better than us in terms of women participation in sports?

Female Coaches (Question count - 16)

PROFILING

1) Please share your journey up until now.

- How did you become a coach at the current facility ?
- Why did you opt to become a coach at the current sports facility?
- When did you start coaching?
- What sport do you coach in?

FEMALE VS MALE TRAINING

2) How has your experience been with training female athletes?

- Good. Why so? If not that great. Why so?

3) What is the difference between training a female and a male athlete? - Why do you think this difference exists?

- What strategies do you use to tackle these differences?
- Do you think periods in particular have an effect on performance? Do you plan training regimes around menstrual cycles?

4) How many female athletes train at your centre?

- Is this a good number?
- If not, what do you think are the reasons for these less numbers? How can we make it better in terms of their participation at the sports centers schemes in general?
- Do you think providing education during sports training at centers will ensure more girls joining and playing sports longer?

SOCIETY, CULTURE, PARENTS

5) How important is the role of parents in girls playing sports?

- Have you interacted with the athletes' parents?
- Do you think building rapport with the parents of the athletes is necessary? Yes/no, why?
- What do you think are their main concerns and why?
- Do you think they have the wrong mindset? How can we help change their mindset?
- What encourages parents to let girls play?

6) What are the cultural differences you observe between athletes hailing from rural and urban areas?

FEMALE COACHES

7) How many female coaches are there at your centre?

- Is this a good number?
- If not, how can we make it better in terms of their participation as coaches? - What do you think are the reasons for these less numbers?
- What is your assessment of their knowledge of the sport and coaching skills?

8) In terms of female coaches, do you believe only athletes can make good coaches?

POLICIES

9) Does the current sports facility you work have any female-centric policies in place to help coaches or athletes perform better and participate in better numbers?

- If yes, what are they?
- If not, what kind of policies do you think will help with increasing participation and performance especially for women?

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN COACHES

10) How supportive are your male counterparts (athletes/coaches/administration) in the sports facility you work? If yes/no, why do you say so?

TALENT IDENTIFICATION

11) What is your opinion about the talent identification schemes currently going on in the country?

- Why do you say so?
- Do you think we are reaching rural girls through these schemes?
- If yes, how? If not, how can we better reach our girls in rural area?
- -How can we make TI better in sports training facilities?
- -How many female coaches are part of the selection trial team? Approximately how many female coaches come to the officially organised selection trials?

12) Do you think that premier sport institutes should be going to villages and schools to conduct trials? If yes, why?

-Do you believe that the role of school infrastructure and good PE teachers makes a difference to the quality and age of athletes recruited at sports centers? - How do you think this quality, in general, can be improved?

- Are you in touch with any school PE teacher in order to understand the capacity and talent of athletes training in premier sports facilities?

13) The earlier the athletes start training in top sports facilities, the better. What age do girls and boys generally appear for trials? Any gender disparity in this regard? Is this in any way related to the (lack of) sports facilities and teachers in schools?

SAFETY

14) Do you think women and girls in sports facilities feel safe?

- If yes, why? If not, why?

- Do you think we should make it safer for our women athletes and coaches on campus? How?

RELATIONSHIP WITH ATHLETES

15) How important do you think it is to have a strong personal relationship with your athletes?

- As a female coach, are you able to bond well with female athletes? Why or why not? Do you think they bond as well with male coaches?

- What language do you usually speak to your athletes (lingua franca)?

- What do you do to adapt to situations where they don't understand the lingua franca?

- Do you think not knowing the lingua franca affects their performance?

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE/LESSONS

16) In terms of female coaches/athletes in the international arena, what has been your experience and what are some of the things that we can adapt here in India?

- Why and how should we adapt your recommendations?

- What makes them better than us in terms of women participation in sports?

TIC

(Question count - 6)

PROFILING

1) Can you tell us little bit about yourself

- Where are you from originally?

- Your journey in sports and the current facility you work with

- Your education, qualifications and experience

- Responsibility as a Talent Identification person

- Sports scouted for talents

SELECTION PROCESS

2) What are the major parameters considered for selection of male & female athletes?

- Male vs female criteria

3) How is the talent identification process implemented?

- How often is it conducted?

- How is it different in rural areas?

- What kind of participation levels do you observe in the female category? Especially in rural areas

AWARENESS OF SPORTS BASED FACILITIES

(4) What do the athletes from rural areas feel about coming and staying in the center? - Expectations from athletes

- Expectations from parents. Are parents consulted?

(5) What is the general perception about the sport center from athletes? - Motivation to come and join the such sports facilities

- Awareness level of both parents and athletes

- What are the good points

- What are the negative points

(6) Are the athletes and their parents given a clear roadmap on their future as sportspersons?

- What are the benefits offered / assurances

- Contract details

Administrators (Question count - 17)

PROFILING

(1) Can you tell us little bit about yourself

- Where are you from originally?

- Your journey with Sports and current facility you work at

- Your education, qualifications and experience

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES

(2) Can you provide us with the day-to-day tasks as an administrator? - Do you interact with athletes on a regular basis?

- If yes, is it in a group or in individual

- If not, why?

- Any challenges that you face?

- If nothing, then what's going well according to him/her

(3) What's the hierarchy/ organisational structure at the center?

- Breakup of male and female administrators at the center?

- If females are lesser compared to males, what's the reason according to you for lesser female participation in such jobs?

- If females outnumber males, understand what are reasons or measures undertaken to see higher participation

- Are you comfortable working with the opposite gender/same gender? If not, why so?

CENTER PRACTICES / POLICIES

(4) What are some of the best practices put in place at the center?

- Are they followed by athletes & coaches obediently? If not, why?

(5) Are there any specific practices in place for females?

- Any special schemes or processes in place for male and female athletes? Timings, rules, etc.

- If there is any difference in the rules, why so?

- Are there sexual harassment workshops at your sports facility? If yes, what is their effectiveness and frequency?

- Does the sports facility have a maternity policy in place? Details?

- Do you think sports facilities could provide daycare centres or some kind of child support services for the women in its ecosystem? Should it provide these services?

(6) What's the process for the intake of male and female athletes at the center? - Is there any gender quota allocated based on the availability of coaches and infrastructure provision? If yes, why is it being followed?

- Do you think providing education at the sports facility will encourage more girls to join sports and play?

(7) Similarly, how are the coaches appointed in place at the center? - Is there any gender quota while appointing? If yes, why is it being followed - Ratio of coaches to athletes

- Do female coaches also train male athletes and vice versa?

- In the admin, how many of them are women, and also how many are former athletes (for all four states)? What is the relationship between the admin and coaches like?

- In terms of female coaches, do you believe only athletes can make good coaches?

- How has awareness been made to date for job opportunities for females? - What's the dropout/exit rate with respect to coaches and support staff? - Is transfer linked to performance? If yes, are the coaches provided with

adequate support and training to help them show results? Are there KRAs in place against which performance is measured?

- Do you think sports facilities should have different policies in place in terms of transfers for women working in the ecosystem?

INFRASTRUCTURE / SECURITY

(8) Do male athletes feel comfortable being coached by female coaches? - Have you come across any instance of any disagreement

- How was it handled

(9) How is communication with the athletes handled?

- Regular and important communication

- What are some of the barriers/challenges faced by administration in this area?

- Do they speak to the athletes' parents on a regular basis?

- Are there regular interactions/feedback meetings for athletes with their parents to guide them?

- Is there any feedback system in place for athletes and coaches at the center? - If yes, how are concerns/flags raised recorded or treated? Actions taken? If not, why?

- How is the sports facility helping trainees in not just sports but also the overall development of the trainee to help them prepare for other walks of life? How many of them have gone on to take up jobs in sports - coaches, admins, scouts, etc.

(10) What is the connection between the state and government-funded sports facilities when it comes to sports and things related to it? Do they run in parallel or work in coordination?

- What is the current state of affairs in terms of sports quota jobs? What are the qualification criteria? How many of these jobs are given to women?

(11) Who are some of the best athletes who have passed out of the 4 centers? Does sports centers utilize their story enough to motivate athletes and their parents (success stories)

(12) Imphal is distinctly more progressive than the centers in the south - in terms of clothing, perception of girls, female agency, lesser press to marry early, and lesser pay gap between men and women. Given such differences, do you think government-funded sports facilities must make region/state-specific policies? Is this feasible? What are your thoughts on this?



INFRASTRUCTURE / SECURITY

(13) Can you give us some insights on the campus infrastructure in place for athletes? - Do you think the infrastructure is sufficient?

- If not, what can be improved?
- Does the administration have a model center or look/visit at other better world class facilities to help bring the center in par?
- How often is the infrastructure upgraded?
- What is the data showing in terms of sports infrastructure in your state and the location of their stadiums?

(14) Do you see or come across dropouts happening in the athletes or coaches? - If yes, in which age category and gender do you see more dropouts happening?

- And any possible reasons identified for the same or how according to you can the dropouts be reduced?

(15) Does the administration give special attention to the needs of female athletes? - What measures are taken to keep the campus secure

- What measures are taken to keep the campus (stay) clean

(16) As a premier government-funded sports centre, what can be done by you to improve sports at the school level, especially for girls?

- Do you think that sports centers should be going to villages and schools to conduct trials? If yes, why?
- What exactly is the procedure to grant outside sports facilities permission to conduct trials in school? Is it feasible on the ground?
- Do you believe that the role of school infrastructure and good PE teachers makes a difference in the quality and age of athletes recruited by sports training centers? How do you think this quality in general, can be improved?

TRAINING

(17) Is the staff provided/encouraged with periodic training or upskilling to help them learn, be updated and grow?

- If yes, how often?
- What kind of training
- Rewards in place if any



About Simply Sport Foundation

Simply Sport Foundation (SSF) was founded in 2020 in Bangalore. SSF focuses on sports policy research, and grassroots development. women's participation in sports and use of technology in sport. The foundation believes that sports can be an effective tool for the development of the nation. We realize the great potential that women athletes in India have, and want everyone else to realize it.

The Team



ANKIT NAGORI

Ankit Nagori is the founder of Curefoods, a food tech startup based out of Bangalore. Previously he was the co-founder of cult.fit and Chief business officer at Flipkart. He is passionate about sports and is an avid follower of cricket.



ADITI MUTATKAR

Aditi Mutatkar is a silver medalist in mixed team events at the Commonwealth Games 2010. She achieved a career-best world ranking of 27 in 2008. Aditi has completed her masters in Public Administration from University of Texas and holds a graduate certificate in Public policy from Takshashila Institution.



DARSHAN N K

Darshan is a sports management professional with more than 7 years of experience in the field of sports. He has completed his master's in sports management from Coventry University.

SIMPLY SPORT PROPOSAL TO SAI

ABOUT SIMPLY SPORT FOUNDATION

Simply Sport Foundation was started in 2020 by our founder, Ankit Nagori. The foundation, through its various athlete-oriented programs and initiatives, is strongly working towards supporting and improving the grassroots sports ecosystem in India to help athletes succeed in sports and life. The initiatives are broadly categorized into four aspects:

1. Athlete Initiatives
2. Sport community-based initiatives
3. Women in Sport
4. Sports Science program

Menstruation and Sport Program

Under the Women in Sport initiative, one of the key programs at Simply Sport is Menstruation and Sport. We have learned that menstruation plays a major role in the lives of women, and even more so in female athletes. However, it is a topic that remains undiscussed not only in society but also between players and coaches.

More than half of adolescent girls are unaware of the changes in their bodies with the onset of their first period. 1 in 4 girls does not attend school because of menstruation. Thus, this phenomenon prevails in sports as well. It is crucial for all female athletes and their coaches to understand menstruation, and its impact on performance, gain knowledge of how to tackle it, and most importantly talk about it freely.

To address this issue, Simply Sport Foundation has joined hands with various subject matter experts and developed a unique, sports-specific curriculum on menstruation and SSF conducts workshops across all ages and sports, across India.

We are proud to have impacted 500+ athletes in a short span of 5 months through this program.



SSF Report Findings based on the study conducted with SAI on menstruation

85% of the athletes reported that they all had similar training plans as boys, and there was no real difference in their training plans. In our interviews with coaches, most of them implied a similar perspective that their female athletes trained in similar ways as the boys. If there was a difference, it was only in the form of lesser weight lifted, fewer repetitions, etc. This points out that more training is needed to help coaches build training plans that differentiate between male and female anatomy and the different requirements of their respective sports based on gender. Overtraining or unscientific training during a menstrual cycle can be a significant reason for injuries in athletes. Injuries can be a big demotivator in pursuing sports for female athletes.

All coaches interviewed as part of the study reported not factoring in menstrual cycles in their plan for training. 73% of athletes said that they are not comfortable discussing menstruation with coaches. Almost 49% felt skipping training during periods would negatively affect their performance. 12 % thought that they had no choice given by coaches but to train during their periods.