

# NATIONAL SEMINAR ON EMPOWERING WOMEN, TRANSFORMING WOMEN, TRANSFORMING SOCIETIES: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE ON GROWTH AND GOVERNANCE

RESEARCH PAPER ON

Women Empowerment Through sports in India

Author: Ms. Mayuri Jagdishbhai Rathod

ADHOC Assistant Professor

Anand

**Abstract:** In a globalized world, national development depends upon equal participation of men and women in all fields, including sports. However, Indian society historically imposed rigid patriarchal norms that restricted women's mobility, education, and public participation. Practices such as female feticide, *dudh piti*, denial of education, and moral policing created structural barriers against women's empowerment. Sports, being a public and competitive arena, further reflected gender discrimination through stereotyping and social labelling.

This research examines women empowerment through sports from sociological, psychological, and constitutional perspectives. It analyzes how Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 of the Constitution of India provide legal safeguards for equality and dignity. The study also evaluates the role of policy instruments such as the National Sports Development Code, 2011 and institutional support by the Sports Authority of India.

Through doctrinal research and case law analysis, including landmark judgments like *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* and *Dutee Chand v. AFI & IAAF*, the paper highlights how law has played a transformative role in breaking societal barriers. The achievements of Indian women Olympians symbolize not only sporting success but constitutional equality and social change.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Sports Law, Equality, Olympic, Gender Justice, Constitutional Rights

## Introduction

In this Globalized world development drive a national's success yet in certain criteria societal barrier take a vital role 1st Societal Rules In every Yuga Female give exam for her purity and (1. Girl don't allow to born [Female Feticide] 2. If she Dudh Piti) 2nd Equality is came in Law only at 20s 3rd That Women are not allow to go out how can she play game with that short clothes "Labelling"

But further, those societal rules are breaking the movement in India's

Karnam Malleswari became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal, securing bronze in women's 69kg weightlifting at the 2000 Sydney Olympics with a total lift of 240kg.

And further women day by day get involved in many other sports also but at this time law play a vital role for safeguard purpose Under the Constitution Article 14,19,21 and other factor policy that specially make only for women safeguard and better and more women involvement government get for that special zone were create like National Sports Development code 2011, Injury compensation ,SAI for more sports development.

Literature review-

## **Historical aspect**

The full and complete Development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum Participation of women on equal term with men in all field

The world is dominated by the male community, whereas women occupy half the population of the world and work. 2/3 of the total work of the world is more hygienic than the men.

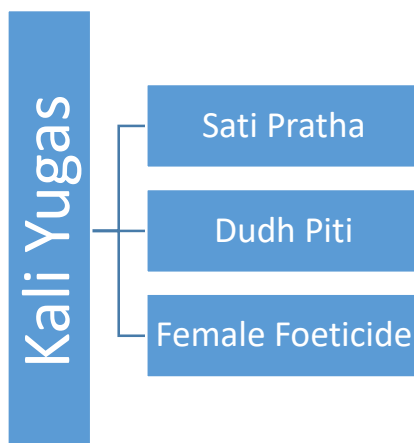
Gender Discrimination is a part of social problem in India

Those are Sex Ratio, Literacy, Health AND Nutrition ,Violence against the women(Every 15min one women molested and 29min a women fetus abortion )<sup>1</sup>

Everyone says women and men are equal to men; the superior manor claims equality.

To test their equality, we have to empower them.

That we all know the real scenario in the Treta Yugas, Dwapar Yugas, and Kali Yugas.



<sup>1</sup> Dr. Vikas Nandal ,Sociology for law student1st edition:2023pg.No309-310Historical Aspect

That women will never be able to take part in sports; they have to stay at home and raise children. They don't allow women to go outside and work. That's why parents don't allow them to be born.

(female feticide). If she gets born, then the next step should be (Dudh Piti), do not allow study, or even do not allow to remarry (Sati Pratha).

But the scenario after the 20s takes a great turn; now people support women in the sports zone. People slowly understand that women can do!!

## **Sociological Aspect**

The same scenario happened in sports in the past with stereotype labelling and the broken glass theory

1Labelling Theory :The theories mentioned so far focused on deviance in terms of people and acts, and the process of learning deviance<sup>2</sup>-( 1<sup>st</sup> That women are no capable to play sports 2<sup>nd</sup> muscular look make people in doubt that she is a male because of her body poacher)

Those are term use for mental breakdown

2The Conflict Theory: Conflict theory argues that most societies have many group which have different ,often conflicting values. The strongest group in a Society have power and authority to define the values of weaker and subordinate <sup>3</sup>(in summary people create a women identity that women should work in certain way rather she is not allow to leave )

## **Psychological Aspect**

1Counterfactual Thinking in Action<sup>4</sup>

“WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN”

Such thoughts about what might have been are known in social psychology as counterfactual thinking and occur in a wide range of situations ,not just in once in which we experience disappointments(Even in men societal though process always work in this way<sup>5</sup> – if an athlete win the race but he didn't get gold he lose the match)

2Attractive Source are more effective (Beauty Sells- POLO SPORT Advertisement )in change attitudes are often more successful in the respect that seem intended to reach this goals (Walster &Festinger,1962)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Vikas Nandal ,Sociology for law student1st edition:2023pg.No587Labelling Theory

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Vikas Nandal ,Sociology for law student1st edition:2023pg.No588 The Conflict Theory

<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Baron Psychology 5<sup>th</sup> edition 2008,Pg No626

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Robert A. Baron Psychology 5th edition 2008,Pg No629

3Learned Helplessness :The Role of Individual Differences, Research on Learned helplessness seems to suggest that onset stems partly from our perceptions of control ;when we begin to believe that we have no control over our environment or our lives.<sup>7</sup>(Because of this societal attitude Female work according to their environment – Self surrender)

Because all those sociological and psychological factor female are not able to came out but later

## **Literature review**

- Dr. Vikas Nandal's Sociology for Law Students (1st ed., 2023) applies labelling theory to show how social stigma and gender norms marginalize women athletes, portraying them as outsiders unfit for competitive sports. This framework highlights institutional biases that reinforce exclusion, yet recent achievements by athletes like P.V. Sindhu and Mary Kom demonstrate label dismantling and empowerment. These shifts contribute to broader societal progress in gender equity within Indian sports law contexts.
- Robert A. Baron's Psychology (5th ed., 2008) details how repeated labelling—such as deeming girls "weak" or "unfeminine"-erodes self-esteem, triggers stereotype threat, and invokes self-fulfilling prophecies. Young girls internalize these messages, leading to performance anxiety, early withdrawal, and fear of rejection despite inherent talent. This perpetuates lower participation rates, aligning with labelling theory's role in shaping behaviour through societal expectations
- Dr. K.C. Joshi's The Constitutional Law of India (1st ed., 2011) elucidates Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(g), and 21 as pivotal safeguards. Article 14 guarantees equality before law, prohibiting arbitrary gender-based exclusion from sports infrastructure or opportunities. Article 15(1) bans discrimination on grounds of sex, while its Clause 3 empowers affirmative action like women-specific quotas in SAI schemes. Article 19(1)(g) protects the right to practice sports as a profession or occupation, free from patriarchal restrictions, and Article 21 ensures life with dignity, extending to safe training environments and psychological well-being for female athletes

## **Objective**

Object are following

- To examine historical and societal barriers that restricted women's participation in sports.
- To analyse the impact of sociological theories like Labelling Theory and Conflict Theory on women athletes.
- To study psychological challenges such as learned helplessness and counterfactual thinking faced by female sportspersons.

<sup>7</sup> Robert A. Baron Psychology 5th edition 2008,Pg No194

- To evaluate constitutional provisions under Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 in ensuring gender equality.
- To examine the role of policies such as the National Sports Development Code, 2011 and institutions like the Sports Authority of India in safeguarding women athletes.
- To analyse landmark judicial decisions that strengthened equality and dignity of women.
- To create societal awareness that sports require strength, discipline, and talent — not gender.

**Research Method** - Doctrinal legal research involves the systematic analysis of legal propositions through precedents and reasoning to reach valid conclusions.

Doctrinal research involves:

1. Analysis of constitutional provisions.
2. Study of statutory laws and sports policies.
3. Examination of judicial precedents.
4. Review of scholarly books and journals.

### **Research focus on female empowerment**

Female stand up for herself start earning getting a good job and now world wide we can see women empowerment start as mention following list of 8 women and Olympic medals

Best sports players we know Karnam Malleswari (Weightlifting) - Bronze, 2000 Sydney

Saina Nehwal (Badminton) - Bronze, 2012 London

Mary Kom (Boxing) - Bronze, 2012 London

PV Sindhu (Badminton) - Silver, 2016 Rio; Bronze, 2020 Tokyo

Sakshi Malik (Wrestling) - Bronze, 2016 Rio

Mirabai Chanu (Weightlifting) - Silver, 2020 Tokyo

Lovlina Borgohain (Boxing) - Bronze, 2020 Tokyo

Manu Bhaker (Shooting) - Bronze (10m air pistol) and Bronze (10m air pistol mixed team), 2024 Paris<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>women and Olympic medals <https://www.thehindu.com/data/malleswari-to-bhaker-indian-women-and-their-olympic-medals/article68457689>

## **Constitutional Right**

Article 14 -Equality Before a Law and Equal Protection of the law a Philosophical sense equality before law has many fact and one of them is absence of privileged person or class and the supremacy of law the second expression equal protection of the law concerns specific in force.<sup>9</sup>

of the Indian Constitution guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, serving as a powerful shield for women's empowerment in sports by prohibiting arbitrary gender-based exclusions from infrastructure, trials, or funding. emphasizes that this article mandates reasonable classification, enabling women-specific SAI initiatives like Khelo India.

Article 15(1) Talks about that the state not to discriminate against citizens of India on the ground only of religion race cast class sex place of birth or ant of them since the fundamental rights are generally available against the state , Inhibition of this clause dose not cover privet individual<sup>10</sup>

[prohibits state discrimination on grounds of sex, directly countering barriers to women's sports participation, while Clause 15(3) empowers affirmative action such as dedicated funding (e.g., SAI's ₹9.5 crore for women from 2020-23) and training centres. ]

Article 19(1)(g) protects the right to practice any profession or occupation, affirming sports as a legitimate career for women free from patriarchal curbs on mobility, attire, or public engagement.

Article 21 ensures the right to life and personal liberty with dignity, extending to harassment-free training environments, mental health support, and psychological resilience for female sportspersons.

## **Sports Authority of India<sup>11</sup> [ Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports]**

Provide Funding following Ratio

Ratio of 2020-23, SAI allocated ₹9.5 crore specifically for women's sports, at other hand Khelo India's Talent Search providing ₹6.28 lakh annually per athlete to 1,374 girls. The Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) further aids elite female athletes in archery and weightlifting, with regional hubs in Pune and Mumbai hosting events like yoga , kho-khoand many more .

These efforts enhance visibility, self-efficacy, and role models, countering stereotypes and reducing dropouts, as reflected in SAI's 2023-24 Annual Report on expanded grassroots access—though elite funding equity

<sup>9</sup> Dr.K.Joshi the constitutional law of India First Edition2011 Pg 126

<sup>10</sup> Dr.K.Joshi the constitutional law of India First Edition2011 Pg 131

<sup>11</sup> Sports Authority of India<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1845123&reg=3&lang=2C>

needs sustained focus. By 2023-24, thousands of girls benefited, aligning with broader empowerment goals in Indian sports.<sup>12</sup>

## **National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 and Women's Empowerment**

The **National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 (NSDCI)** provides clear rules for how sports organizations in India should function. It creates a proper system of governance for National Sports Federations (NSFs).<sup>13</sup>

The Code is issued by the Government of India and applies to all recognized sports bodies. It states that if a sports federation wants **government recognition, financial assistance, or other benefits**, it must follow the rules laid down in the Code.<sup>14</sup>

Main Aim of this NSDCI is following

- Transparency in administration[Conduct Transparency ]
- Accountability of office-bearers
- Fair and democratic elections
- Proper use of funds[If There Is transparency funding directly provide without any mischief ]
- Equal opportunity for athletes[Ground root issue will solve if above strategy work properly ]

women can break social and institutional barriers and achieve empowerment through equal opportunities, fair selection procedures, transparent governance, and increased participation in leadership roles within sports organizations

### **1. Equality and Non-Discrimination**

The Code requires fair selection procedures and prohibits arbitrary decisions. This helps ensure that women athletes are not discriminated against in team selection or training opportunities.<sup>15</sup>

### **2. Inclusive Governance**

The Code promotes democratic functioning of sports bodies.<sup>16</sup> This creates opportunities for women to participate in leadership and decision-making roles within federations.

### **3. Accountability and Transparency**

By imposing age limits, tenure limits, and financial accountability on officials, the Code reduces favoritism and corruption, which often affect women athletes.

<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 (Government of India).

<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> ibid

#### 4. **Athlete Protection and Welfare**

Sports federations are required to follow proper conduct and governance standards. Women athletes are also protected under laws such as the

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, which applies to sports institutions as workplaces.<sup>17</sup>

**National Sports Development Code of India, 2011** ensures that sports bodies function in a fair, transparent, and responsible manner. government recognition and funding to compliance with these rules, the Code indirectly strengthens women's participation, safety, and leadership in sports, thereby contributing to women's empowerment in India.

### **Conclusion**

Women empowerment through sports in India is a story of courage, change, and social progress. In the past, Indian society placed many restrictions on women. Girls were often denied education, freedom of movement, and equal opportunities. Harmful practices like female feticide and dudh piti showed how deeply gender discrimination existed. Society believed that women should stay at home, take care of the family, and avoid public activities. Sports, which require strength, public presence, and confidence, were considered suitable only for men. Girls who wanted to play games were criticized for their clothes, body shape, and physical strength. They were labelled as weak or “unfeminine.” These negative labels affected their confidence and discouraged many from participating.

Sociological ideas explain this situation clearly. Labelling theory shows how society gives negative names or tags to women athletes, which affects how they see themselves. Conflict theory explains that powerful groups in society create rules that benefit them and keep others in a weaker position. For a long time, men controlled sports institutions, opportunities, and decision-making. Because of this imbalance, women found it difficult to enter the sports field. Psychological factors also played a role. When girls repeatedly hear that they are weak or not capable, they may start believing it. This creates fear, low confidence, and sometimes a feeling that they have no control over their future. However, many strong women challenged these beliefs and proved that ability is not decided by gender.

Over time, change began to happen. Families slowly started supporting their daughters. Schools and colleges encouraged girls to participate in sports competitions. Media coverage of successful sportswomen inspired

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<sup>17</sup> ibid



young girls across the country. The success of women athletes created a powerful message that women are equally strong, disciplined, and talented. Sports became not just a game but a platform for social change.

The Indian Constitution provides equality to all citizens. It supports the idea that women and men should have equal opportunities in every field, including sports. It discourages discrimination and promotes dignity and fairness. These principles create a supportive environment for women athletes. Government policies and sports authorities have also taken steps to increase women's participation. Training centres, scholarships, financial assistance, and talent identification programs have helped many girls from rural and urban areas.

The **Sports Authority of India** has played an important role in promoting sports among women. Through schemes like Khelo India and other training programs, many young girls receive professional coaching and financial support. These initiatives help reduce dropout rates and increase participation at both national and international levels. Similarly, the **National Sports Development Code of India** ensures better management and transparency in sports organizations. Fair selection processes and proper governance reduce favoritism and create more equal opportunities for women.

The achievements of Indian women athletes clearly show this positive transformation. When **Karnam Malleswari** won a medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, she became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal. Her victory broke many stereotypes and inspired a generation. After her, many women brought pride to the nation. **Mary Kom** showed that even mothers can become world champions. **Saina Nehwal** and **P. V. Sindhu** proved India's strength in badminton. **Sakshi Malik** and **Mirabai Chanu** demonstrated determination and resilience. **Lovlina Borgohain** and **Manu Bhaker** continued this journey by winning medals at international events. Their success is not just about sports; it represents equality, confidence, and social acceptance.

Even though progress has been made, challenges still exist. In some rural areas, girls still face resistance from families and communities. Lack of infrastructure, safety concerns, and financial problems prevent many talented girls from pursuing sports. Media sometimes focuses more on appearance than performance, which can create pressure. Therefore, continuous awareness and support are necessary. Parents, teachers, sports institutions, and society must work together to encourage girls. Equal facilities, safe environments, and fair opportunities should be ensured everywhere.

In conclusion, women empowerment through sports in India reflects a journey from discrimination to recognition. Sports have become a strong platform where women prove their strength, talent, and independence. The support of constitutional values, government initiatives, and inspiring role models has helped break traditional barriers. When a woman steps onto the field, she challenges old beliefs and creates new possibilities. Her success encourages thousands of other girls to dream big. Empowerment through sports is not only about winning medals; it is about building confidence, equality, and respect in society. If India

continues to promote equal opportunities and remove remaining barriers, sports will remain a powerful tool for women's empowerment and national development.

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