



Sports safety & gender issues –gender specific disorders in sports

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Abstract

The sports arena is undergoing several changes which are hampering the righteous progression of the sports. The empowerment of women through sports has been contentious issues, since there have been several researches which indicate several challenges towards empowerment of women through physical activities. Gender specific disorders in sports are attracting the attention of the sports researchers as there have been several dimension to this issue. This paper focuses on gender specific disorders in sports & spotlights vehement analysis studies showcasing multi dimensional approach towards resolving it. Gender empowerment is closely attached with this strategy as there are issues related to physical well being of the women & mental stability.

Key words: Gender, disorders in sports, multi-dimensional approach, gender empowerment, comprehensive policy

Introduction

The empowerment of the women through sports has been hit by the fact that sports women being undergoing several physical sufferings of various magnitude. Opportunities for women's leadership and capacity building can be achieved through increasing their sports participation. Evidence from developing countries indicate that some sports programmes provide women and girls with opportunities to develop leadership skills it empowers them, it amplifies their self confidence level, & finally it boosts their self image. (The report of the gender inequality undermining India's progress ? women & child development ministry New Delhi India 2014).

1. Several research studies indicate that regular physical activity may decrease or slow down the onset of osteopenia in women.
2. Regular physical activity coupled with a calcium – rich diet can increase bone mineral density ,reducing the risk of developing bone disorders and fractures among older women.
3. Strong research evidence supports the role of regular exercise can play in controlling levels of fat, reducing the risk of lung and breast cancers in women .
4. Women's and girls' self- esteem and self empowerment - some research using the concept of self esteem suggests that women



- who participate in sport and physical activity in both developed and developing countries demonstrate higher self-esteem as well as improved self-perception, self worth, self efficiency .(The sports networker-gender equity in sports , 2014)
5. These improvements are associated with enhanced feeling of accomplishment, perceptions of improved physical appearance and commitment to exercise . Evidence from developing countries shows that involvement in organized sports activities helped to enhance a sense of self identity , self-empowerment and personal freedom (The sports networker-gender equity in sports , 2014).
 6. **Social inclusion and social integration of women and girls** - There is large amount of compelling evidence from both developed and developing countries reflecting the relationship between sport participation and social integration and social inclusion of women and girls.
 7. **Access to self opening up-** Access to safe spaces becomes increasingly confined restrictive, enclosed and domestic as girls in developing countries reach adolescence.
 8. **open access to social spaces-** Evidence from sport programmes shows that sport activities can allow women and girls access to safe social spaces in which they may exercise control and ownership.
 9. Evidence show that young women from different backgrounds could use sports as a platform to connect with one another , mentor each other , as well as widen camaraderie and build up relationships. Similar findings suggest that sport plays a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion and encouraging social interaction among young women and girl athletes.
 10. **Challenges and transforming gender norms** - the relationship between sport and gender refers to the transformative potential of sport to challenge or alter gender norms. 'Gender norms' refer to the responsibilities and privileges assigned to men and women. Sports can make a change in the very conceptualization of gender norms. (The report of the women's sports foundation pay inequity in athletics 2010).
 11. **achieving gender equality** - Although the participation among of women and girls in sport remains largely imbalanced when compared to participation among men and boys ,most researchers are in agreement that the consistent and continued participation of women girls in sports has had a major impact on achieving



- gender equality in certain contexts. (The report of the women's sports foundation pay inequity in athletics 2010).
12. **Supportive roles-** male counterparts have adopted a positive and supportive attitude towards their female counterparts participating in the sports programme. Participation in the sports programme has become synonymous with being aware of gendered roles and norms.(The report of the women's sports foundation pay inequity in athletics 2010).
 13. **Opportunities for women's and girls' leadership-** Opportunities for women's and girls' leadership and achievement Evidence from developing countries indicates that some sports programmes provide women and girls with opportunities to develop leadership skills.
- The challenges**
1. **Socio- economic considerations-** Gender disparity arises from the fact that women do not need physical activities because their male counterparts do not conceptualize women participation -there are societies which think females do not need physical fitness activities. In such contexts, it is important to establish the degree to which women and girls can access time and division of labour between men and women may prevent women and girls from participating in social activities outside the home, including sport. Till recently the majority of female sports were exclusive to the wealthier, affluent & upper class groups who had time to spare for such activities. For others it was not admissible to even think of such sporting activity. Even with large campaign towards empowerment of women through sporting, the lacuna of gender safety always figured least in the list.(The report of the gender inequality undermining India's progress ? women & child development ministry New Delhi India 2014).
 2. **Socio- cultural issues** -The socio- cultural context of established gender norms must be considered when conducting sport programmes that aim to address gender norms. It may be considered a provocation for women and girls in some contexts, to be seen in public, wearing sports attire that may not cover all parts of the body . Not behaving according to established gender norms determined by socio-cultural influences, can have significant negative consequences for those who deviate from these norms.
 - **Safety concerns** -Sport and physical activity deals primarily with the body and



“physicality”. adults or older children may hold a position of power in relation to their younger counterparts, especially when they are in the role of a coach or trainer. In this sense, children and young people are in a position of vulnerability. Codes of conduct for coaches and appropriate reporting systems are necessary to avoid incidents of possible abuse or exploitation. The lack of appropriate facilities e.g. with changing rooms, water and sanitation facilities, etc. and /sports equipment can deter women and girls from participating in sport activities. The risk of injury, especially towards women and girls, can be particularly restrictive.(The report of the foundation for sustainable development for women in sports 2010)

- 3. Material, infrastructural and technical issues** -Evidence from a sports programme in Bam, Iran shows that girls and women could only participate in sports and physical activity indoors, protected from public view. During the summer, activity were cancelled because it was not possible to open windows and doors while the female participants were playing. Experience shows that facilities that are close to residential areas, with appropriate lighting are more

likely to have greater sports participation of women and girls. Activities should also be scheduled at appropriate times. (The report of the gender inequality undermining India's progress ? women & child development ministry New Delhi India 2014

- 4. Material ,infrastructural and technical issue** - Sport is often perceived to express heterosexuality and male excellence. Experience shows that in most contexts, women who would like to be successful in sport competition have to demonstrate some 'typically male' attributes such as ambition, self -confidence ,aggressiveness and power. girls and women who 'trespass 'on these socially and culturally defined boundaries, are seen to challenge and perhaps transform well-protected gender norms. (Duncan Margaret – The gender bias in Televised sports 2013). For example, media coverage of sports remains biased towards male sport, with comparatively less attention paid to the accomplishments of female athletes. (Duncan Margaret – The gender bias in Televised sports 2013).
- 5.** Practical efforts to focus attention on the triumphs of women and girls in sport have shown to help other women



and girls perceive possibilities for developing themselves. (The report of the foundation for sustainable development for women in sports 2010)

Conclusion- Thus safety for women in sports is still an issue which is being tackled with great innovative inputs. But the whole gearing up of women players whether individual or group play needs to change with a focus on fairness. A complete change in outlook, payment, honors, attention towards greater accomplishments for women sports achievers needs to be chalked out meticulously. If women empowerment needs to take good shape, women should be brought out from their confined, restrictive atmosphere & sports can prove an important imperative in empowering women. Government spends lots of money on women empowerment & gender equity programs. Policy makers can think of this is an affirmative way.

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