



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HEALTH, EXERCISE AND SPORTS SCIENCES

**Gurpreet Kaur\***

\*Research Scholar  
(Ph.D.) Department of  
Physical Education –  
CT University, Feroze-  
pur Road, Sidhwan  
Khurd, Ludhiana,  
Punjab

## WHAT PREVENTS A WOMAN FROM BEING FREE IN SPORTS

### ABSTRACT

*This research aim is to look at the role of women throughout history. Indian society has been a traditional society, experiencing dramatic changes on all fronts, including social, psychological, and political issues. Women's status in India has traditionally been regarded as secondary. They were forced to live a prudish lifestyle and were not considered men. She was expected to stay within the family structure and only bear and rear children. Their domestic work was regarded as worthless. So, how come women are allowed to participate in sports? The Ministry of Sports (SAI) has several programs, but none specifically for women. Even some big-wigs treat women's sports events as nothing better than a 'tamasha,' and the funds are being utilized elsewhere.*

*Keywords - women, status, secondary, Vedas, sports.*

### INTRODUCTION

The holiest Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, including the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, and Saam Veda, provide evidence of women's status in ancient history. Each of these texts is very lengthy, with the Rig Veda being the most extensive and oldest. It's worth noting that the hymns found in these texts were written by various eminent sages and at various times. Some of the hymns in the Rig Veda had been composed by eminent women sages, proof that women during those times were quite learned, great thinkers, and of course, emancipated. The Vedas provide good and credible information about the social conditions during the Aryan civilization and women occupied in that ancient period. She was believed to be the incarnation of Shakti, and women's power even ruled the then society at the same time; in the Vedic period, the relationship between the sexes was characterized by reciprocity in which the rights and obligations of each sex were equivalence. They were looked upon as 'Sehdharmani' (wife). There are many passages in Rig Veda that throw light on the extent of freedom enjoyed by women. They attended fairs and festivals and were free to move about with their husbands or loved ones. They were allowed to attend Sabhas or assemblies of the learned ones in the company of their husbands or loved ones. "...like women at a gathering fair, the streams of oil look on with a gentle smile and recline to Agni. Degradation in their status came in the post-Vedic period. The historians place several reasons for this change. The most important social change that affected them was around approximately 500 B.C., with the Islamic invasion of Babur and the Mughal Empire, women's freedom and rights gradually worsened. Mughal s introduced Islam to India in a very cruel and ruthless manner. This had a devastating effect on the Hindu religion, Buddhism, and its symbols, temples, and written material. The great ancient universities of Nalanda and Taxila were, for example, plundered, burned, and destroyed by Mughal invaders. Although the reform movements such as



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HEALTH, EXERCISE AND SPORTS SCIENCES

Jainism allowed women to be admitted to religious orders, by and large, women in India had faced confinement and restrictions. Slowly the position of Indian women started to decline with the Muslim invasions in the country. 'Purdah' system made women confined to four walls of the house and their scarves. Their voice was smothered. They had very little part to play in the outside world. This 'Suffocation' made women dependent on the males. The Dependence of women on their husbands or other male relatives was a prominent feature of this period. Devoid of avenues of any education, having lost access to Stress Dhana or dowry, they virtually became the exploited class with disastrous results for themselves and the nation. Indian women were politically, socially, and economically inactive except for those engaged in farming and weaving. This inactivity, in a way, contributed to their subordinate men. Most of the women accepted meekly the idea that the proper place for them was their home. Denying a woman's basic human rights is virtually like cutting the wings of a bird that would like to fly high to the empyrean heights of performance and fulfillment. Denial of the right to education, free choice in marriage, inheritance and other property rights, the right to remarriage, the right to social mobility, and so on, has ultimately resulted in making the Indian woman a very unenviable entity devoid of, among other things, the highly necessary self-esteem which she always needs and deserves.

## METHOD

Keeping in view the nature of the study, the literature was collated from secondary sources, primarily from books, magazines, and the Internet.

Analysis an approach was adopted for critical examination of the information, refined through the class's group discussions, and analyzed to identify pointers towards women in general and sports in particular.

## RESULTS

As we know, women first took part in the Olympics of 1900, with 22 women competing in only golf and tennis. Since that time, women's participation in the games has been slowly but steadily,

increasing but the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games were historically significant for female athletes. It was the first time that with the two exceptions like Republic of Nauru, St Kitts, and Nevis, that there were women in the teams of all the competing nations. There was a higher percentage of female Olympians than at any previous Summer Olympics, and for the first time, there were women competitors in every sport. Significantly, also for the first time, each of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries had at least one woman in its Olympic team, so women made up more than 44% of participants. 10,568 athletes (5,892 male / 4,676 female) competed. The U.S. women earned 58 medals in all, including 29 Gold, more than the U.S. men. Though the women in India were too liberated with the enactment of certain laws in consonance with the changing demands of the society, women have been given inheritance rights, but all those are still in the law books. The Mindset of the dominant male society is prejudicial to the interests of the woman. Despite the Legal and Constitutional rights of women, developmental planning and urbanization did not have a specific focus on the role of women in economic change. This gave uneven results for different categories of women in India. When we come to sports, the participation of women athletes still does not project a satisfactory image of women in India. There is no doubt, women like P.T. Usha, Sania Mirza, K. Malleswari, etc., in India have contributed a lot to the glory of India in Sports. They are certainly filling the void left by men. Still, they face the discriminatory temperament of society, largely influenced by social and psychological taboos. It is not alone back when Sania Mirza was made to feel low on a decree passed by many regarding her dress. No doubt women in sports are still a second.

There is no doubt that Indian parents are influenced by social and psychological pressure originating out of their inherited ego, religious and social ethos. They seem to be very much concerned with the safety of their female ward. It has happened in many cases that the parents hesitated to send their daughter out to participate in tournaments. The underlying reason is not the mere safety of their female ward. They feel that they would lose control over



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HEALTH, EXERCISE AND SPORTS SCIENCES

their daughter if she goes out to play. The Situation of finance and related arrangements for women's events also is not very encouraging. The Ministry of Sports or SAI has numerous schemes but none for women only. Even some big-wigs treat women's sports events as nothing better than a 'tama-sha,' and the funds are being utilized elsewhere. Women have potential at par with men, and they have contributed their share towards glory as well as the economy of the country. Still, they have been ranked below men with many gaps in between. The discouraging thing is that men are writing the fate of women, even in this democratic era. They are barring a few examples; after marriage, sports-women have to say goodbye to sports. They find it difficult to continue sports after marriage as the women have to perform the role assigned to them by society, which does not include sports. Society treats the sports activity of a woman as useless, and in the present circumstances, it is true. There is no incentive for her to continue sports. The matter determines consciousness. Economic compulsions can determine social, psychological as well as political concerns. The same logic prevails in the sports sector also. Lack of incentive particularly, economic interest, is one of the main reasons women are being made to take back seats.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social, psychological, and political issues are not the only responsible factors. The economy may also be governing all these issues. Financial equality is required to be meted out to women vis-a-vis men. The government may, at least, frame a policy for the recruitment of sports-women, with the incentive for continuation sports activity. Such measures will certainly have an impact on the attitude of society towards sportswomen. From here, the researcher has opened a new way to research to find out if women are liberated?

## REFERENCES

1. Benn T, Pfister G, Jawad H, eds. Muslim, Women, and Sport. Routledge. London2010.
2. Hargreaves J, Anderson E, eds. Handbook of Sport, Gender, and Sexuality. London, UK: Routledge (forthcoming).
3. Hargreaves J. Power, Privilege and Sportswomen on the Margins: A Research Story. In: Hobbs R, Wright R, eds. The Sage Handbook of Fieldwork. London, Usage Publications 2006.
4. Hargreaves J. Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports. Routledge, London 1994.
5. Hargreaves J. Women of Sport: The politics of difference and identity. Routledge, London 2000.
6. <http://www.london2012.com/athletes/> and the London organizing committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) website.
7. Olympic Solidarity oversees technical and financial assistance to NOCs and Continental Associations to develop sports programs. For more on the program, see [www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/commissions/solidarity/index\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/commissions/solidarity/index_uk.asp)
8. The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport. UK Sports Council, London 1994. Further reading