

**Women Sports in India: Challenges and Remedies****Dr. Swami Nitesh Ramling**Head, Department of Physical Education and Sports,  
Dayanand College of Arts, Latur.**Abstract:**

*The status of women in modern India is a sort of irony the women have left the secured domain of their home and are now in the battlefield of life, fully armoured with their enthusiasm, talent and quench for their status. They had proven themselves that they can walk shoulder to shoulder with men. But in India they are yet to get their dues. The sex ratio of India shows that the Indian generation is still discriminatory against women's to make their place in the work sector or in the field of sports. There are so many problems faced by Indian women in day today life as compared to the other women of European countries. These problems have become the part and parcel of life of Indian women and some of them have accepted them as their fortune. While in addition to these problems Kashmiri girls face another constraint i.e. religious constraint. But the time has changed and the Indian women are proving their worth and mark their name in the top list of world Scholars, Scientists, Doctors and Sports Champions.*

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Sport is a universal in nature. It does not discriminate on colour, caste, creed, sex or race and so on. Participation in sports not only focuses on health but also the overall development. Earlier day's men used to participate in most of the games, sports and athletics, women faces many constraints such as physical, mental, family, social, cultural, religious and so on later they also started active participation in all events. The women witnessed different status during different ages which is given as below. It is generally recognized on the basis of the instances depicted in religious texts (e.g., Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata and other Dharmasastras) that in ancient India, especially in Rig-Vedic period, women enjoyed equal status with men. They had an honourable place in the society. They were not isolated from men and freely participated in public life. They attended great assemblies and state occasions. They studied the Vedas and composed hymns. They also distinguished themselves in science and learning at their times. They were considered intellectual companies of their husbands, as the friends and loving a all rights and regularly participated in religious ceremonies. In fact, the performance of religious ceremonies was considered invalid

without wife joining her husband as she was regarded as Ardhangini (better-half).

The position enjoyed by women in Vedic period deteriorated in post-Vedic period. It was gradually degraded in the Puranic and Smriti periods. The description of position before BC 300 shows that she enjoyed a fairly high status, though not to the extent that she enjoyed in Vedic period. It appears that several drastic changes that took place in the Indian society from about BC 300 to the beginning of the Christian era led to the restriction of freedom of women. Imposition of Brahminical rules and code of conduct, rigid restrictions imposed by caste system and joint family system were the main reasons for lowering of status in this period. A daughter began to be regarded as curse. They were denied the right of inheritance and ownership of property. Prepuberty marriages came to be practiced. She was forbidden to offer sacrifices and prayers and undertake pilgrimages. The widow was asked to devote herself to an ascetic life at home and marriage became an irrevocable union as far as the wife was concerned.

The period between 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed further deterioration in the position of women due to the impact of Muslim culture. In

this period, female infanticide, child marriage, purdah system, sati and slavery were the main social practices affecting the position of women. The birth of a female child began to be regarded as curse, a bad luck. They were almost confined to the doors of their homes. There was further curbing of freedom of women in matters of education, mate selection, public appearances, etc. Purdah system came to be rigorously followed. Women education was almost banned. More and more feeling of conservatism increased about women. She not only continued to hold low status in and outside home rather her position worsened in this period.

During the period of British rule of about 200 years (early 18th century to the first half of 20th century) some substantial progress was achieved in eliminating inequalities between men and women in matters of education, employment, social and property rights and so forth. Sati, purdah, female infanticide, child marriage, inheritance, slavery, prohibition of widow remarriage and the lack of women's rights in different fields were some of the problems which attracted the attention of British Raj. Though the British rulers initially decided not to interfere with the traditional social fabric of Indian people (Hindus) and as such they took no steps to bring any change in the status of women in India. It is only in the latter half of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century that they took some steps to abolish or change some social customs through legislative measures. For such measures incentive was provided to them by some social reformers, such as Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekanand, Maharashi Karve, Justice Ranade, Mahatma Gandhi and others.

In addition to the measures to uplift the status of women in India initiated by Britishers, many vigorous steps (legal, social, economic and political) have been taken by Government of India after independence by removing the hurdles put in their way by traditional past. The efforts of the social reformers and their movements launched in

the pre-independence period also bore fruits. The Indian National Movement also led to the liberation of Indian women. The leaders of the national movement realized that the liberation of the country from the bondage of imperialism was impossible without the active participation of women who constituted half of the population of the country. Most of the social reformers and thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries were influenced by the tenets of the liberal philosophy of the West, which emphasized the principle of contract rather than status, a rational outlook of life and problems, freedom of speech, criticism of authority, questioning of accepted dogmas and finally the recognition of the value of the individual and insistence on the rights of man as opposed to his duties. They also got push from Upanishads and other scriptures. The decades after independence have seen tremendous changes in the status and position of the women in Indian society. The Constitution of India has laid down as a fundamental right the equality of sexes.

As women were supposed to be gift by god and in some areas of India are still considered to be curse by some sections of society their birth was taken as a burden. Women In particular, women in sport leadership can shape personality towards women's capabilities as leaders, especially in traditional male domains. Women's involvement in sport can make a significant contribution to social life and tradition development. In all this procedure women do not have any say they have to do according to the wish of their husbands even if she does not want to abort she have any choice. With the help of these social reformers women of India slowly started recognizing her true potential.

The Indian Constitution has conferred equal rights to all women. Indian women can master anything and everything which she can dream off. But still due to the above mentioned constraints we are not able to produce more good quality sports women. As some of Indian women like M.C. Mary Kom, Sania Mirza, Sania Nehwal etc. had marked examples before us and are role models for the present & coming generations we

should inculcate such talent in our women so that we can have such women in every corner of India. Physical Education can help to increase self confidence by gaining women opportunities to play new skills, engage in positive relationships, acquire achievements, and engage in volunteer service and can serve the nation in a better way.

**Conclusions:**

Participation in sports helps women in many diverse aspects and keeps them fit and healthy besides it enhances their cognitive abilities, their endurance which will help them to keep working all day long. Because of the above discussed constraints as barriers the women face present day non communicable diseases such as stress, obesity, hypertension, diabetes; hormone dysfunction leads to inactivity, unable to accomplish the day-to-day activities prone to injury such as the osteoporosis condition. Hence, they are the producer, maker and servers to the society, these constraints should be eliminated for the betterment of women health. Campaign for all women sports participation should be encouraged in school, colleges and in universities. Government should conduct the awareness programme for women sports participation and for their encouragement. And in those states where religion is becoming a constraint should come up with some alternatives so that their women can also participate in sports and live a better and healthy life.

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