

# Indian Sports: Contribution of Women.

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## Abstract

Sport is universal in nature. It does not differentiate with colour, caste or sex. Participating in sports not only helps to develop health but also the overall development. Women in Sport have been a topic almost ignored by most of nations that's why female sport participation was very less in recent past. . If we see the history, men used to participate in most of the sports and games, women were not allowed to take part in sports and games. They face many restrictions such as physical, mental, social, and religious. Later they also started taking active part in all sports events.

At present, sport for women is a fast growing factor in every developing country. Researcher studied this problem in different periods. Scenario of Rig-Vedic Period, Scenario of Post-Vedic Period (Upanishads, Puranic and Smriti Periods), Scenario of Medieval Period, Scenario of British Period, Scenario of Post-Independence Period. Descriptive method used for this study. Data were collected from different research articles, journals, magazines, research works published in reputed journals, internet and from different discussions.

In spite of many obstacles like Physical Obstacles, Physiological Obstacles, Psychological Obstacles, Social Obstacles, Religious Obstacles and Economic Obstacles, women from India proved themselves at various levels in various sports and games.

**Keywords:** Rig-Vedic Period, Upanishads, Puranic and Smriti, Medieval Period.

## Introduction

In almost every nation sport is an integral part of the culture. Sports always use to promote gender equity and empower girls and women. It is overlooked because sport is not across the world professed as a suitable or desirable recreation for girls and women. Women in Sport have been a topic almost ignored by most of nations that's why female sport participation was very less in recent past. It has been a relatively undeveloped area of research also. Sex role, stereotyping, male research partiality and the reward formation of the world have contributed to this neglect.

Sport is universal in nature. It does not differentiate with colour, caste or sex. Participating in sports not only helps to develop health but also the overall development. If we see the history, men used to participate in most of the sports and games, women were not allowed to take part in sports and games. They face many restrictions such as physical, mental, social, and religious. Later they also started taking active part in all sports events.

At present, sport for women is a fast growing factor in every developing country. However, despite of the promotional campaigns participation rates remain low in some countries. Several social and environmental factors affect participation. Gender, age, level of education, financial status is some of the variables identified that influence participation in sports. In some areas of India women are still seen as a burden. Women do not have any right to speak they tempt to do according to the wish of their parents and husbands. Women's participation in sport can create a substantial contribution to the development of the society. Women of India have a potential to do miracles in every field. Now days, women are questioning the rules set down for her by the society.

## Scenario of Rig-Vedic Period

In these period women enjoyed equal status with men. They were not isolated from men and freely participated in public life. They were allowed to learn Vedas and get weapon training. They were given education and had a voice in the selection of their husband. They called as Ardhangini (better-half).

## Scenario of Post-Vedic Period (Upanishads, Puranic and Smriti Periods)

The position enjoyed by women in Vedic period was gradually degraded in the Puranic and Smriti periods. Several drastic changes 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. Code of conduct, rigid restrictions made obligatory by caste system and joint family system were the main reasons for lowering of status in this period.

## Scenario of Medieval Period

Women in Sparta began to practice the same athletic exercises that men did, exhibiting the qualities of Spartan soldiers. Plato even supported women in sports by advocating running and sword-fighting for women.<sup>1</sup> The period of 11th century to 18th century witnessed further decay in the position of women due to the impact of different cultures. In this period, child marriage, parda system, sati and slavery were the main social practices affecting the position of women. Women education was almost banned.

## Scenario of British Period

Many institutions and programs still remain conservative and do not contribute to gender equity in sports.<sup>2</sup> During the period of British rule some considerable progress was achieved in eliminating inequalities between men and women in matters of education, employment, social and property rights. Sati, parda, child marriage, slavery, prohibition of widow remarriage was barred by British. Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Maharashi Karve, Justice Ranade, Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma Phule and others tried a lot for welfare of women in Indian society.

## Scenario of Post Independence Period

Government of India had taken many legal, social, economic and political steps to uplift the status of women in India after independence. The decades after independence have seen tremendous changes in the status and position of the women in Indian society.

## Scenario of Modern Period

Despite of a rise in women's participation in sports, a large disparity in participation rates between women and men remains.<sup>3</sup> The first Olympic Games in the modern era, in 1896 were not open for women, but since then the number of women who have participated in the Olympic Games have increased dramatically.<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1870, activities for women were recreational rather than sport-specific in nature. They were non-competitive, informal, rule-less; they emphasized physical activity rather than competition.<sup>5</sup> Sports for women before the 20th century placed more emphasis on fitness rather than the competitive aspects we now associate with all sports.<sup>6</sup>

The International Olympic Committee founder Pierre de Coubertin described women's sports "impractical, uninteresting, anaesthetic, and we are not afraid to add: incorrect".<sup>7</sup> However, the 6th IOC Congress in Paris 1914 decided that a woman's medal had formally the same weight as a man's in the official medal table. This left the decisions about women's participation to the individual international sports federations.<sup>8</sup> Women of modern India are a fruit of the efforts by social reformers before independence and post-independence period. She has equal rights and opportunities in every field. Sport is one of it. Women's involvement in sport can make a significant contribution to social life and traditional development.

## Objective

To know the status of women in India.

To know the status of Indian women in sports

To know the obstacles before Indian women to take part in sports.

## Method

Descriptive method used for this study. Data were collected from different research articles, journals, magazines, research works published in reputed journals, internet and from different discussions.

## Obstacles before Indian women to take part in sports

### Physical Obstacles

Physical obstacles refer to the morphological features adaptations. Failure in physical fitness parameters results in the reduction of sports performance.

- Limbs heaviness
- Abdomen heaviness
- Pelvic heaviness
- Inappropriate posture and Flat foot

### Physiological Obstacles

Physiological obstacles refer to the organ functions. If there is any dysfunction of the organs it results in reduction of sports performance.

- Low RBC and Haemoglobin level
- Weak heart
- Weak lungs
- Disorder of endocrine system and Menstrual disorders
- High fat percentage

### Psychological Obstacles

Psychological obstacles include the behavioural process. Failure in behavioural process results in poor sports performance.

- High level anxiety and aggression
- Less self confidence
- Lack of motivation and interest
- Low self-esteem

### Social Obstacles

Social obstacles refer to the behaviour during training and competition. The relationship with coaches, referees, teammates, opponents and other officials are not good during competition, it affects the performance and ultimately the participation also.

- Safety of women. (ragging, traffic pull & raping }
- Unsafe transportation.
- Lack of support and encouragement from the family.

- Myths like girls should not play sports.

## **Religious Obstacles**

Some religion is very strict to women and afraid of blame by society to them for going beyond the boundaries of their religion. This might be the main cause that most of the women are not able to show their talent in sports.

## **Economic Obstacles**

Whenever the family is in financial problem and they have to choose either the need of a son or a daughter, the main person always prefer the need of a son. Economic Obstacles are considered most important factor that hold back the women participation in sports. In India we don't have the sponsoring authority for women teams which results in the non-availability of coaches, expert trainers and insufficient infrastructure.

## **Top 20 Female Sports Stars in India**

### **1. Saina Nehwal**

Saina Nehwal is also known as the golden girl of Indian badminton. She won a bronze medal at the Olympics.

### **2. MC Mary Kom**

MC Mary Kom is also known as the "Million Rupee Baby" in India. She is the first lady boxer to win the bronze medal at the London Olympics for India.

### **3. PV Sindhu**

PV Sindhu is the rising star in the world of badminton. She has already carved a niche for herself in the world of sports after her performance in the London 2012 Olympics.

### **4. Bula Choudhury**

Bula Choudhury is a swimming champion, the first woman to cross all the seven seas, and recipient of the prestigious Arjuna Award and Padma Shri.

### **5. Mithali Raj**

Captain of Indian Women's cricket team for ODI and Tests, She received the Arjuna Award and in 2015, she was awarded Padma Shri.

### **6. Geeta Phogat**

Geeta Phogat is an Indian freestyle wrestler who won India's first gold medal in wrestling at Commonwealth Games (2010).

### **7. Sania Mirza**

Sania Mirza was India's No. 1 tennis player as per Women's Tennis Association. She made Indians proud and played some terrific shots that helped her win against former world No.1 tennis player, Martina Hingis.

### **8. Deepika Kumari**

Deepika Kumari, an ace archer, has a rating of World No. 2. This superstar won a gold medal at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in the category of women's individual recurve event.

### **9. Tanya Sachdeva**

Tanya Sachdev is an Indian chess player who holds International Master and Woman Grandmaster titles.

## 10. Dipika Pallikal

Dipika Pallikal is the first squash player from India to have reached to the top 20 positions in the WSA ratings.

## 11. Anjali Bhagwat

Anjali Bhagwat is a professional shooter. In 2002, she became world's number one in 10m Air Rifle. In 2003, she won the World Cup Final in Milan and is the only Indian to win ISSF Champion's trophy in Air Rifle. Anjali Bhagwat was awarded by Arjuna Award (2000) and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna (2003).

## 12. Nameirakpam Kunjarani Devi

Kunjarani Devi is a weightlifter from Imphal, Manipur. She has won numerous gold and silver medals in 44, 46, and 48 kg weightlifting categories. She was awarded Arjuna Award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, and Padma Shri.

## 13. P.T Usha

P.T Usha was an Indian sprinter and was known as queen of Indian track and field. She became the first Indian woman to reach the final of an Olympic event.

## 14. Karnam Malleswari

Karnam Malleswari represented India in Weightlifting and won a bronze medal in 2000 Olympics.

## 15. Hima Das

First Indian female athlete to win Gold Medal in I.A.A.A.F. World U-20 Athletics Championship.

## 16. Navjot Kaur

First Indian woman wrestler to win an Asian Gold Medal.

## 17. Maneka Batra

Manika Batra won three gold medals at the 2016 South Asian Games.

## 18. Zoolan Gosvami

Indian Fast Bowler who created many records in international cricket.

## 19. Rahi Sarnobat

Indian rifle shooter who won an Asian Gold Medal.

## 20. Akanksha Singh

Akanksha Singh is the captain of India Women's National Basketball Team. In 2010, Akanksha Singh was recognized as the Most Valuable Player in Professional Basketball League.

## Discussion

As we all know that the Indian Constitution has granted equal rights to all women. Indian women can do anything and everything which she can dream. Still above mentioned obstacles are not allowing us to produce good quality sports women. As some of Indian women had marked examples before us and are role models for the present & coming generations

## Conclusions

Participation in sports helps women in much aspect and keeps them fit and healthy. It enhances their cognitive abilities, endurance which will help them to keep working all the time. It keeps them away from stress, obesity, hypertension, diabetes; hormone dysfunction, unable to accomplish the day-to-day activities prone to injury such as the osteoporosis condition. It also makes them the producer and servers to the society. Sports participation should encourage right from schools, colleges and in universities. Government should conduct maximum sports events for women sports participation. It is a duty of every citizen to see that women can also participate in sports and live a better and healthy life.

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