

Gender Studies in Sports Showcasing the Role of Media

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Abstract:

Sports is among the fastest-growing and developing sectors in India. In India, cricket rules, but with various leagues other sports are coming under the spotlight. Cricket is the dominant sport in India, but the country is slowly becoming a multi-sport nation as the world's most popular sport gains more and more fans This growth is largely supported by female and rural audiences for sports the increase in the number of observers. The players are so passionate that even people outside the cricket world recognize them. India who don't take after the game may have heard about them, presence of Cristiano Ronaldo on various social media platforms and huge followers from across the globe, And in this media is playing a huge role from twitter to TV commercials, whereas on other hand how many cricket followers can name playing 11 squads of Indian women cricket team. Football has boosted from past recent years, players like Sunil Chhetri, Subrata Pal are changing face of Indian football, but still most Indians are unaware of Aditi Chauhan. Does gender plays any role in sports specifically football and cricket? Or is just a perception. How both male and females are induced in sports and follow their favorite sport or favorite player. This study shows the current scenario of players and followers of football and cricket, difficulties, challenges, passion and emotions related to sports. Reviewing various research papers, articles including on Sports, women sports player and male sports player, and understanding media role with theoretical frame work it has been observed that media has huge role in communication, and Female sports players do face more difficulties than a male sports player, not that male sports players have an easy go, even they have to face many problems regarding infrastructure, coaching etc.

Keywords: Gender, sports player, male, female, media

Introduction :

Sports in India has witnessed lot of changes and development in recent years and have seen significant growth. Number of leagues, media consumption, viewership, third edition of the ISL in 2016 had a overall viewership of 224 million as compared to around 207 million in 2015 Disney Star, a major broadcaster, said about 430 million people watched the ICC Men's One-Day World Cup on television up to the 34th tournament, according to the company's announcement on Wednesday. Citing data from BARC, the tournament's official broadcaster, it also showed that the total time spent watching live broadcasts increased by 10 percent, to 243.6 billion minutes, compared to the 2019 edition ("430 Mn Viewers Tune in to Watch ICC Men's ODI World Cup in First 29 Days on TV: BARC Data",2023), still cricket dominates other sports in India, even women cricket team gained attention after ICC world cup 2017. Players are getting various opportunities to showcase their skills and talent with various leagues on the other hand fans and followers are increasing deliberately. Today Cristiano Ronaldo has 64.8M followers on Twitter, Number of female fans increasing for Virat Kohli? Sixes of Harmanpreet Kaur gained attention and plaudits Football in India received an unprecedented boost with the successful hosting of the FIFA U-17 World Cup. The 52 stadiums produced a total stadium attendance of 1,347,133, surpassing the 2011 Cricket World Cup's 1,229,826 attendance across the 49 matches in the subcontinent the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) reported TV the audience that attended the event exceeded 47 million. The Indian sports sector is undergoing a major transformation, driven by initiatives from the government, private sector and non-profit organizations. The

government is launching a flagship program to address issues such as infrastructure and training. Private sector as well as non-profit entities are also rising and contributing to this sector by organizing private leagues and tournaments, funding talented sports players, and getting involved in the grassroots level. As sports in India has shown a phenomenal growth and caught attention, still there are sports like football that are consider more masculine in nature due to aggression, physical stamina, etc. On other hand after huge success of Indian Women's Cricket team at ICC World Cup 2017, recognition towards women's cricket has increased. Media adds to devotion. The effectiveness of the media in transmitting sports gives fans continuous chances to help their groups.

The intersection of gender and sport has long been an object of study, with researchers examining how individuals of different genders influence participation, representation, and experiences in sport (Evans & Pfister, 2020; Baker et al., 2023) An important aspect of this discussion is the role of the media in expressing and shaping public understandings of gender in sports. This study will focus on, identifying what are the interest levels of males and females in their favorite sports, has it increased or decreased within time , why they follow a particular sports person and what role media plays into this.

Literature Review:

Gender:

Gender is socially formed and constructed and is ultimately a consequence of sociocultural influences throughout an individual's development (Schneider, Gruman & Coutts, 2005). Gender identities can be inspired by, and vary from society to society based on the ways members of society judge the role of females and males. Our gender identities may get impacted from the ethnicity of groups, or their historical and cultural background, family values and religion. Many –times individuals get confused or misuse the two terms gender and sex. The vast majority find it difficult to trust that gender is continually made and re-made out of human communication, out of social life, and is the surface and order of that social life. The term sex refers to the biological distinction of being male and female (Schneider, Gruman & Coutts, 2005). The idea of the social construction of gender sees society, not biological sex differences, as the basis for gender identity (Anderson, Logio & Taylor, 2005). Society builds our sexual orientation and sorts its individuals as comparable as it does with age, ethnicity, race, social class, and status. However, the arrangement as indicated by sexual orientation is another method for controlling individuals from the general public and to advance imbalances. There are clear natural and anthropological contrasts between the two genders however we can't utilize these distinctions to construe conclusions and give stereotyped models about gender.

Media:

Media is considered as one of the most influential factor in forming or changing views. People would immersed in, Magazines, Furthermore daily papers holding photographs also narratives about what it is to be like women or men, this is distinctly visible in sports.

Man-centric esteems which have truly been related with sport are consistently fortified by the media Athlete women live in two unmistakably isolate societies, the wearing society and their bigger culture where they should manage the persistent conflict between being a competitor and a lady. This is a vital idea inside sports and media setting since sports has generally been viewed fundamentally as a male region and one where the social esteems are reflected and now and again created.

The picture that has been anticipated in the media is the thing that specialists call "hegemonic femininity." This is the desire that ladies look and act like heterosexually "generally alluring" Caucasian women (Bordo, 1993; Krane.V,

2001; Krane et al., 2004; Wright and Clarke, 1999). Also the coverage that media gives to women as compared to men shows a clear difference. Not only sports but when it comes to sports person things change, the coverage and attention that was given to Virat Kohli's wedding as compared to Sunil Chhetri wedding clearly shows that how media works. Media frames can influence the attitudes and orientation states of mind youth have with respect to sports.

Theoretical Framework:

'Framing' is a Mass communication theory which is related to agenda setting, The framing hypothesis suggests that the media focuses attention on particular events and then places these events within a specific context of meaning framing can be defined as "a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed." (Entman, 1993). Framing is a critical subject since it can have a major impact and consequently, the idea of encircling extends to associations also. Simply it can be said that Media framing is an angle from which a story is been told, and how it is framed by media. The 'Priming' theory states that media pictures stimulate related thoughts in the minds of audience members, the procedure in which the media take care of a few issues and not others and along these lines modify the norms by which individuals assess. How information is communicated or should be communicated features priming. The theory suggests that individuals organize their perceptions of their environment into a set of cognitive skills, with some information more readily available at any given time than others (Kim, Scheufele, & Shanahan, 2002). Agenda-setting and priming models suggest that people form behaviors based on the most important considerations available when making decisions (Hastie & Park, 1986; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Sports:

India has an incredible custom of sports, and is significantly affected by the British presence in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Undoubtedly cricket is a favourite sport in India. The establishment of new leagues in football, cricket, and other sports is changing the substance of Indian sports. Players are getting a worldwide stage to exhibit their ability and fans are getting the chance to get more associated with their most loved games. One such league getting attention is Indian Super League (ISL), the third edition of ISL in 2016 recorded an audience of 224 million, up from about 207 million in 2015. The ISL 2016 finale had a viewership of 41 million, up 41% as compared to 2015. Female viewership for major leagues is between 35%-38%. Surprising numbers came up when the viewership of ICC Women's World Cup 2017 generated a massive hike of 156 Mn people watched the tournament. Indian men's ranks 2nd in the ICC ODI team ranking, whereas women's team ranks 4th. Indian men's football team ranks 105 worldwide in FIFA, whereas Indian women's football team ranks at 57. The sports industry in India has shown remarkable growth other than cricket also. With increasing sports there has been new gates have been opened for other related industries such as goods, management professionals, etc.

Sports Players:

Mithali Raj well known face of Indian women's Cricket has 430K follower on and approx. 494K likes on the Facebook Page. Twitter Virat Kohli is one of the best players in the Indian Cricket team and ranks in top 3 when it comes to social media, Kohli has more than 21 Mn followers on Twitter, 36 Mn likes on Facebook page, and from TV news reports to social media it all poured when he got married. Incredible social-media presence of Cristiano Ronaldo is known by every football fan with approx. 300Mn follower counts across Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Fans just follow their favourite where ever possible, know their records, diet, and whole routine.

Expectancy-value and lifestyle theories are used to examine the immediate and long-term effects of early family socialization on women's continued sports participation The study focuses on women's attraction they are the

preservationists in sports and related events. Parents are likely to encourage and support activities they consider important and where they believe their child will succeed. Parental influence is strongest when a child is young but may attenuate during adolescence when teachers, coaches, and peers are more influential. Parental involvement has long-term effects on socialization and shapes women's life experiences. Role modeling has a profound effect on participants' experiences in sports, leading to more frequent talk of encouragement and support than pressure.

The Brighton Declaration, developed by the International Working Group on Women and Sport, focuses on improving the participation and representation of women in sport worldwide. Sport NI is a signatory to this declaration. Focus on adolescence as an important time. Boys and girls exercise at a similar rate (85-90%) in primary school, but girls drop out of sport earlier than boys after primary school. The low participation rate of women in sports is complex and factors such as policy, funding, media representation, employment opportunities, and access to sport programs have elite, grassroots and a systematic reviews are also not conducted to show that high female dropout rates continue into early adulthood. Participation declines equally in both sexes after age 21, but women tend to be higher than men in their late thirties. This improvement is due to lifestyle variables such as work commitments, school or dropping out of college, family commitments, and moving for work or education rather than test pressures.

A Player or athlete invests heavily to come on the topmost level and these investments include physical, social, and financial levels and are done during a long time.

Players tell the progression of their career by pointing to specific times or situations. Moments and situations are called "transitions" (Wylleman, 2002). Players in organized

sports get very much exposed to these transitions, the most interesting transition is the transition from junior to senior sports, mainly 2 types of transitions are seen: Normative and non-normative. It is interesting to see how players cope up with these transitions at various levels. A successful transition occurs when an athlete rapidly acquires or reacquires all the necessary resources to overcome barriers to change and overcome the challenges of transition. There are factors that affect athletes in transition, which are divided into 3 categories i.e. Demands, Barriers and Resources.

Objectives :

- To see how sports is perceived by both the genders
- To identify the role of media

Research Methodology:

The qualitative approach method was chosen for this research because it allows the respondents to speak in-depth and in their own words. This approach explores specific experiences and attempts to describe and explore meanings through text, narrative, or visually based stories, resulting in unique themes for participants. These questions at this depth are necessary to capture a rich range of personal experiences and understand their meaning.

To get accurate and concise results the respondents will be:

- Cricketers

- Footballers
- Sports fanatic
- Cricket followers
- Football followers
- ☐ Age Group: 20 to 30
- ☐ Gender: Male and Female
- ☐ Target Population: Sports players/Followers
- ☐ Sample Size: 20
- Research Method: Qualitative
- Research Instrument: In-Depth Interviews
- Sampling Procedure: Purposive sampling is a non-probability method that requires a deliberate selection of participants. Individuals were selected because they have unique research-related characteristics that highlight aspects of their lives relevant to the research.
- Discussion Guide: For in-depth interviews, it was kept under consideration to dig deeper into the choices and interests of males as well as females, since gender is one of the main determining factors. The selection of sports were given an equal weightage into the discussion guide for unbiased opinions. The interviews also included visual cues in the form of advertisements for better recall and association.

Data Analysis:

CRICKET	FOOTBALL
Positives and negatives	Positives and negatives
Cricket-centric/cricket crazy nation	Options to make football as career are very less
IPL and money involved in sport	Still don't have proper coaching and less support as compared to cricket

Now parents allow to pursue cricket as an career option	Have potential and lot of work needs to be done
Female cricket is growing and been recognized	New opportunities can been see now due to ISL and other grass root programs
Amount of money that Indian male cricketers earn is huge	Female football should be targeted and needs a lot of support
Lot of competition, reference, money	There is a huge gap between men and women football team, in terms of support ,there are no separate leagues for women and even there is a pay gap

INSIGHTS:

Male perspective	Female Perspective
Football is my life ... It's my life	Sports improves your personality, it unites you, there are less chances of falling in depression
Without sports and especially football I am nothing	nothing can replace sports in my life

Cricket is my love	You can accept people easily and you can face rejections ,sports helps to bond
Sports is my life, its everything I have	I love cricket and its feels amazing watching India matches
Any sports you play it disciplines you, given identity in my life	Sports made me who am
Perspective regarding cricket Ads	Perspective regarding football ads
Encouraging ,enthusiasm, Working hard on game	Encouraging, bringing change , connect emotionally
Men and women are equal in game, both play hard for nation	Can help to bring change
Ads could have been much better if compared to other ads of Nike	Cricket are given more important than football, and women are not given importance in sports till they reach to high level

Perception of Facial Expression while seeing ads:

➤ Players and followers gave following emotional response-

Smile, amazed, Focus, confused,
remember ad, fixed, wide eyed, cheer

The most common words used in Interviews:

difference (6)	supportive (6)
understand (11)	government (5)
seventeen (2)	coming (9)
positions (9)	university (9)
football (35)	obligates (5) foundation(7) Friending(2)
people (10)	Instagram (15) RCB(2)
players (25)	India(11)
matter (3)	Passion(6) Gender (7) Follow(5) Fan(5)
watching (19)	IPL(8)
school (11)	ISL(7)
communicate (10)	La Liga(5) objectifying (1)
level (6) management(3) cricket(39) play	
cricket(8) foundation(5) International(6)	
Twitter(9)	

imagine (1)	interest (3)
International (1)	industry (2)
father (3)	inspire (5)
sports (9)	passion (6)
start (2)	parents (3)
stage (1)	games (5)
happening (2)	aspiring (6) School(4)
level (1)	

Findings :

To encourage greater participation in sports, developing sports culture in the country through improved infrastructure, increased corporate investment and government development is needed. Though India cannot yet be considered as a true sports nation, though the increasing interest and growth in various disciplines points in the right direction for sports in India. Despite this, sports is not recognized as an important sector of the economy in India, mainly due to a lack of comprehensive research on industry size, potential and opportunities, where there is a for-profit industry in the sports industry, which went largely unexplored. Innovations like the Indian Premier League (Cricket), Hockey India League, Indian Badminton League, Pro Kabaddi League, Indian Super League (Football) changed the Indian sports landscape. Importance of human capital. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of professional sports administrators in the country. Without professional sports administrators, government efforts to make India a sports superpower will not succeed. Despite key weaknesses, the Indian sports industry shows tremendous growth. Professional sport managers can provide the solid foundation needed to build this industry. Factors in performance determine the progress of players, signifying the advancement of technology and research of sport. It also examines the external factors of athletes and players, playing environment, voluntary compensation of alcohol, sleep, variety of emotions. Thus, understanding a wide range of factors, it may influence athletic performance. During an exercise or game, athletes exert energy in a hot environment, thus his or her temperature rises due to exercise or game as compared to moderate temperature. This may affect the decrease in athletic performance due to a continuous rise in temperature, thus physical factors should also be considered as major components while practicing or playing.

Discussion:

While we are proud of our passion for the game, we acknowledge that our country is not yet a leader in this area. More progress can be made in India to raise the standard of sports, win more Olympic medals and what more importantly, we will encourage a culture of fitness. The best way to develop sport on the ground is to make it a priority for schools. Schools have an invaluable combination of facilities and organized youth groups. Schools have untapped potential that we must harness. There is a need to improve the facilities available for the sport and upgrade the existing facilities. Many sports require only open space and equipment, but the right facilities are necessary to pursue any sport in an organized manner. Elite athletes also need to have adequate facilities to train and improve their skills. Specialization in all sports should be encouraged in Indian schools. PE teachers need to identify talent in schools and connect students with local sports teams, and then they need to provide appropriate training. National associations should assess the progress of players on the basis of talent and send them to national training facilities. Schools should establish large sports quotas for athletes at the state and national levels to encourage parental support for children participating in sports. Parent support groups and forums are important to help parents understand the program and their role in it. Parents and family members have not been encouraging, and the traditional lifestyle is a major barrier for women in sports. Female participation in sports is still not common. Government projects like Khelo India can adapt, providing financial and infrastructure support.

Structured competition:

Athletes should participate in well-organized competitions with a sustainable schedule. While competition is far from ineffective, having structured, long-term competitions encourages positive development and talent discovery. Opportunities for athletes to compete as well as develop skills

Separate leagues for women and other provisions: Like IPL and ISL there should be leagues for women so that there are equal opportunities and the best talent can come forward. The requirement for safe spaces for young lady competitors is non-debatable. Their interest for female mentors, wherever conceivable, ought to be met, alongside female specialists for registration, female physiotherapists, and female therapists. It is shocking that such essential issues have not been tended to till now. For an important vocation in sports, young ladies must start preparing at a youthful age (around nine years), yet Indian young ladies approach at a significantly later age and families falter to send them for occasions with male mentors. There is no motivation behind why the government ought not to make arrangements for a relative to go with young ladies to sports occasions if it is demanded.

ISL's Grassroots program :

The Indian Super League (ISL) has played an important role in the popularity of football. Beyond the immediate impact of the inaugural season, the ISL's grassroots initiatives promise long-term benefits for Indian football. For example, FC in Mumbai has 50 festivals in its grassroots program, only 15 have been organized so far, but they have reached 3000 children besides which they have planned 15 workshops to train teachers and new teachers because they have already reached 375 teachers by the start of workshop. Similarly, FC Goa's program involves 800 children (6-12 years) from 14 schools. Indian football needs the support of Indians, especially youngsters, to grow. It requires attention and passion from fans to make it work.

Limitations

- The research includes a limited sample size as a part of the qualitative research. The population may differ.
- Hard to find female footballers as compared to males.
- Biased opinions to the respondent's favorite sport leading to lack of consideration to its counterpart.
- The research does not consider the third gender, only males and females.

Conclusion

After a thorough analysis of interviews of players and followers, many factors and issues were highlighted, like India being a cricket centric nation media is always showing some or other news regarding cricket, people love watching and following cricket but when a player wants to pursue career in it there is no proper guidance and support. Females find it more difficult as it's a team game and if there is no proper team chances are very less of success for even qualifying for further rounds. Football on the other hand is considered as more masculine in nature and due to this participation of females is less on field, and after a point of time females are seen less interested either due to lack of coaching, infrastructure, or family support, and this was clearly seen while searching female footballers for interviews. Females in India still can't take football as a career due to monetary and other conditions, even if they want to and are good at it. Media covers less news relating to Indian football, footballers and women cricket which is again a reason that people are less engage with these teams and this was clearly seen during interview analysis, as the players and followers had played interzonal and regularly followed these sports but only 2 football lovers were able to identify names of footballers shown to them, in cricket all including males and female respondents were able to identify national male cricketers, but when it came to national women cricketers they were only aware of Mithali Raj, Harmanpreet K and Jhulan Goswami. Females in India still can't take football as a career due to monetary and other conditions, even if they want to and are good at it. Media covers less news relating to Indian football, footballers and women cricket which is again a reason that people are less engage with these teams and this was clearly seen during interview analysis, as the players and followers had played inter zonal and regularly followed these sports but only 2 football lovers were able to identify names of footballers shown to them, in cricket all including males and female respondents were able to identify national male cricketers, but when it came to national women cricketers they were only aware of Mithali Raj, Harmanpreet K and Jhulan Goswami. Sports PR and sports managers should make sure that they have important role to play as they are the connecting medium between players, teams and masses. Being male or female player most of them said if they had got right opportunity (infrastructure, support, coaching, medical facilities) and at right time may be they would have progress more. Former ISL player clearly mentioned that even being from Pune city (tire1) he started playing professionally after his graduation. Lack of knowledge relating to sports equipment and injuries also affected players during important matches and practice sessions. And how family support and proper coaching are essential for successes.

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