

Title - Women in Sports and New Area of Empowerment: A Critical Appraisal.

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Abstract: - Gender equality and women empowerment are considered to be some of the most important buzzwords which have been gaining wide variety of attention in contemporary international scenario. It is imperative to note that gender is not biologically constructed, rather it gets shaped and determined through a process of social construction in which being born as a male or as a female, human beings gradually learn how to become fit into the preconceived perceptions of masculinity or femininity imposed by institutional structure and culture of a particular society. Further, as far as gender discrimination is concerned, it is interesting to observe the fact that despite the potential for generating growth and development, women are marginalized in every sphere of society. Following this background, this paper attempts to explore few questions. In the introductory section, this paper endeavours to explain how sport based inclusion strategy like the inclusion of 'Title IX', a low cost sport based mechanism not only helps women to take control over their lives and choices, but also successfully transforms their field experience into marketable job experience by maximizing a sense of positive embodiment. In the next part, it explores the discourse centered on the concept of gender and feminist's alternative with regard to the transformation of power through sport. Further, the most important task of this paper is to assess the national and international sport based intervention strategy and how far these strategies have been effective to change the discriminatory socio-cultural norms that kept our women subjugated till now. Following this, the article also recognizes how sport emerge as 'microcosm of gender values' and why female's participation in sport still get stigmatized as 'femininity at risk', thereby reflecting a sexual categorization of sport being regulated on gender tabulations. Coming to the end, my paper also

addresses the issue that in spite of plethora of national and international efforts (like ‘Beijing Platform for Action’ 1995, ‘Maglingen Declaration’ 2003, ‘Windhoek call for action’ 2007 etc.) being instrumentalised towards enhancing participation of women in sport, loopholes are still persisting, to a large extent, which need be addressed to reorient the development based approach towards rediscovering women with greater self esteem and abilities.

Keywords: Gender Equality; Women Empowerment; Gender Discrimination; Femininity at risk; Sports based Inclusion, Positive Embodiment.

Introduction:-

‘Women empowerment’ and ‘gender equality’ are the most significant buzzwords which have gradually been gaining wide variety of intellectual attention in contemporary phenomena. According to the Oxford American Dictionary, the word ‘empowerment’ is defined as ‘to make (someone) stronger and more confident, esp. in controlling their life and claiming their rights’. It means ‘empowerment’ signifies a process of giving power to women in all the challenging aspects of life for the sake of their physical and mental prosperity and greater control over the fundamental rights and resources, thereby throwing challenges towards existing power hierarchy in social milieu. It aims at transforming women into a self sufficient human being who is expected to be in command of herself with independent and dignified social recognition, economic self-sufficiency and autonomy. As noble laureate in Economics, Amartya Sen in ‘Development and Freedom’ asserted that women are, ‘no longer the passive recipients of welfare...women are increasingly seen, by men as well as women, as active agents of change; the dynamic promoters of social transformation that can alter the lives of both women and men’.¹ Therefore, the holistic development of any society cannot be enhanced until gender justice gets ensured. The concept of ‘Women empowerment’ was spotlighted at the International Women Conference at Nairobi, envisioning redistribution of social power and control over resources in favor of women.² Considering the dynamics of ‘empowerment’, it is essential to understand and assess the multidimensional and integrative factors (like- Education, poverty, health and safety) to explore concepts like gender justice or gender equality. Given this backdrop, sport turns out to be a significant platform to strengthen and reinforce the conception of gender equality by necessitating the prerequisites of empowerment, catering to their needs of mental, physical, spiritual or social prosperity and self belief amidst a pathetic societal scenario where female foeticide, sex violence, trafficking

or child marriages remain as a dangerous reality.³ Hence, sport is no more confined within the ambit of mere entertainment or leisure activity; it goes beyond the simple calculation of winning or losing. In contemporary context, sport not only implies a subject of imparting knowledge about mental and physical well being, but also fosters a sense of self realization and sort of awareness about the basic rights to improve the quality of life at home and outside, thereby, leading to a holistic transformation of society. In this essence, the practice of sport guarantees freedom of expression of girls as well as strengthens their democratic way of life and intensifies greater tolerance and justice in the society. Thus, acknowledging the extensive impact of sport on society, the UN declaration of human rights in 1948 have recognized the practice of sport as a subject of basic human right.⁴ It is tantamount to protecting the right to practice sport, right to rest and leisure which ensures a standard of living without discrimination of any kind.⁵ No doubt that sport also provides healthy alternative to deviant behavior such as drug abuse, violence and crime. Besides, it is through the increased access to sport, young women learn the key values of life such as discipline, respect for one and also for others which paved the way to combat social discrimination and patriarchal exploitation. There are considerable evidences which showed how a girl's participation and her empowerment are facilitated through sports based development programme. For instance, Title IX is considered to be a milestone in USA. It was executed in USA by the educational amendments in 1972 which aimed at creating a promising instructive model with an objective of mandating equal accesses of sports and physical education in public schools and university levels. It came out to be the most impressive low cost apparatus to enlarge female presence in schools and thereby, transforming their field experiences into marketable job experience with employment assistance. It also contributed to 10% rise in state level female sports participation as well 2% rise in female labour force participation.⁶

Sport and Entitlement:

Sport can contribute to a level of entitlement, central to the idea of reconstructing and reforming the prejudiced patriarchal norms, which also justified the ethos of inclusive growth and development. Over the past few years, it is witnessed how efficiently Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as others international actors alongside national governments and institutions have been serving the purpose of girl child education through the platform of sport. For an example, with an objective to associate women with life-skill education through sport, International Olympic Committee (IOC) and UN women have renewed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 5. As asserted by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka:

‘Sport is an invaluable tool to equip women and girls with leadership skills, reduce marginalization and dismantle stereotypes, and I am excited to continue our strong relationship with IOC...together we can bring substantive equality – a Planet 50 - 50 - to the world of sport at all levels’.⁷

Besides, IOC and UN Women together under the banner of a joint programme called ‘Women Win’ have successfully implemented innovative measures for girls in vulnerable communities so that they can be acquainted with economic skills.⁸ Further, recently sport has gained a momentum as a medium of empowerment in developing countries. In Pakistan, one of the renowned projects named as Sport Works, which is jointly run by international humanitarian organization the Right to Play and the Insan Foundation, Pakistan has successfully persuaded Afghan refugee girls’ to learn life skills and conflict prevention through different learning lessons from sport. Most crucial part of the project is that it has tried to carefully penetrate into their communities so that their religious and cultural sentiments towards the project remain supportive. This would plausibly affiliate their girl child to get out of the home and to attend school or play sport. Consequently, with well planned and persistent efforts, this project has ensured its extensive outreach to families where the numbers of participating children have grown from 1500 in 2002 to over 5000 which included 70% girls which are impressive. This project yielded a positive sport culture for women in a war torn society that results in striking out marginalization of women in society.⁹ Further, in response to the low numbers of women in leadership and decision making structure, the most significant strategy was adopted by Women and Sport Botswana (WASBO), a substructure of the Botswana National Sports Council under its call for action. It includes few action plans ranging from ensuring female membership in the decision making bodies (such as executive body), which allocates minimum 20% budget for the development of women, to ensure national delegation for international events having 30% of the training programme involving female representation. It also arranges counseling for female athletes, to the strategic execution at least 30% women participation.¹⁰

Notwithstanding, in most socio-cultural settings, adolescents are encouraged to view their bodies as sexual and reproductive resources for men, rather than seeking a sense of self embodiment, an identity for themselves. At this point, Sport would enable women to realize

their self esteem, a sense of ownership on their body and access the types of activity which has traditionally been enjoyed by men.¹¹ In addition, playing sport at the grass root level help girls to acquire community affiliations and begin to operate more openly and equally in common life. It modifies the way society and community perceives women's' role in society. In doing so, girls can challenge and change social stereotypes and mindset of the people. Taking this issue in consideration, a critical assessment can be made with regard to how sports based development intervention within a planned structure has not only intensified the process of gender equity but also paved the way for gender equality. In India, one of the most significant sport based development program was International Inspiration II (2008). It was instrumentalised in accordance with the framework of UNICEF Programmatic Response. This pilot program was based at Medak district, Andhra Pradesh. One of the major objectives of this program was to empower women and children from backward community and to give them an alternative livelihood through freedom of movement and expression. The program aimed at recruiting coaches from villages, enhancing participation level of women week by week and thereby creating a culture of tolerance, equity, justice and sustainability. Although in 2009 the recruitment of male members of community sports coaches (159 male) was higher than female mentors (44 female) because of the preconceived gender roles passed on generation to generation. But the thing which is observed is that the enthusiasm among rural girls in participating sports was tremendous. This program gave them adequate exposure to enhance their social networks in other spheres of life.¹²

Evaluating the outcomes of this program, it is evident that this sports based capacity building program has been effective in changing the community perception towards the gender roles in a society through a continuous process which seems to be impactful in countering the insecurities and vulnerabilities that women are facing there over a long period of time. One of the major focuses of the project was to encourage rural women in India to participate in sport as well to recruit UNICEF coaches from the targeted community so that not only the holistic development of mind and spirit of rural girls get ensured but also the whole community begins to affiliate sport as a credible interventional mechanism. In other words, if girls are allowed adequate space to discover their physical potential and leadership skills through imbibing values like team work, self reliance and resilience, they are more likely to be able to reframe their lives within family and community and can speak up for striking out gender discriminations.

In addition, effective participation in sport also provides girls ample opportunities to practice leadership and become a role model for the society. Recently the world witnessed how gracefully UN and the international Olympic Committee (IOC) celebrated the role of sport in development and women empowerment by co-hosting the Women and Sport Awards with an objective of acknowledging the remarkable contribution of women in sport. The IOC President Thomas Bach significantly highlighted that:

“Sports gives girls and women self-confidence...especially in countries where women’s right aren’t a top priority yet, there’s a tremendous benefit to women’s and girls’ participation in sport’.¹³

Besides, praising the increasing participation of women in IOC which amounts to 42%, she reiterated full gender equality at all level. Following this, another awardees Po Chun Liu, known as ‘the Mother of Women’s baseball’ who became an icon in Chinese Taipei by marking her name in Forbes’ 2018 list of the Most Powerful women in International Sports, has also firmly expressed her feelings about her tireless work to open up opportunities for girls and women to realize their potential and take charge of their life as well as their family.¹⁴

The discourse of Gender and Sport:

The association between sexuality, power and domination can be magnified through a psychoanalytic observation that critically explores the fact that the usage of power in terms of differentiating men and women is based on their contrasting life experiences. Accordingly, on the one hand, women’s identity which includes their body and mind is subject to a reproductive entity in which their social roles get sexualized through the enculturation in child rearing and bearing, on the other hand, male experiences seem to be contrary to the world of the household. This concept has a relevance to sports as demonstrated by Jennifer Hargreaves who opines that “In sport, ‘masculine’ identity incorporates images of activity, strength, aggression and muscularity and it implies, at the same time, an opposite female subjectivity associated with passivity, relative weakness, gentleness and grace¹⁵. As a result, when the arena of sport gets interpreted and validated by the ideological and structural stigmas of patriarchal society, women do not assume proximity with that of masculine interpretation of sport. This conviction regarding gender attributes of sports is reiterated by the eminent philosopher Buytendijk who viewed that:

‘Football as game is essentially a demonstration of masculinity as we understand it from our traditional view of things and as produced in part by our physical constitution (through hormonal irritation. No one has ever been successful in getting women to play football’.¹⁶

Our traditional view about the sexual dimensions of sport is also recognized by Eric Dunning who explored that the close affinity of traditional folk games with patriarchal traditions which includes force, combat and aggression leads to marginalization of women in sport.¹⁷ On this essence, it is believed that women are inferior to men as far as physical ability and strength are concerned. This perception glorifies physical and psychological superiority of men over women, accompanied by the social practices of exclusion which denies women to improve the means of developing athletic skills, strength and resilience. Here lies feminist vision of transformation of political power and hierarchy through the tool of sport where they can use their bodily experiences and capabilities and develop organizations which can nurture these qualities in the broader community.¹⁸

Another central question coming out of this issue is that whether the female athletes lose their cooperativeness and interpersonal orientations for being competitive in sport and become socialized into the western sporting world. With increasing orientations to inculcate aggression and winning, the values of expressive attributes in sport associated with femininity have been underestimated. For instance, Kleiber and Roberts (1981) found that North American boys seem to be less altruistic and cooperative than North American girls who play sport.¹⁹ Another school of thought like Oglesby (1984) expressed a synthesis of expressiveness and instrumental qualities in sports to ensure overall ambience of sport regardless of gender based identity. Following this, Oglesby emphasizes six positive aspects of expressiveness such as passivity, submissiveness, subordination, dependency, naturalness, and improvisation which appears to be an integral part of a sport.²⁰ Butt (1987) also holds the similar expression:

“if women athletes are oriented toward competitiveness and aggression, their presence will be damaging to sport, for it will help to sustain sport within its old limited and destructive mold”.²¹

For instance, passivity is required while taking instruction from coaches or submissiveness is necessary to abide by the rules of the game. Following this context, transition of the dynamics of sport towards feminist’s ethos can be exemplified in the instance of softball teams participating in summer soft ball league to overcome the pitfalls of male structured

sport.²² The structure of softball emerges as a ‘process oriented, collective, supportive, inclusive, and infused with an ethic of care’ with a vision of countering the patriarchal exaggeration on winning, authoritarian hierarchy, antipathy and friction against the opponent or encouragement of physical risk taking potentials.²³

Policy Frameworks & International Mechanism on Gender Equality & Sport:-

Given this backdrop, a wide number of international conventions, policies and acts proclaiming women’s right on the equal access of physical activities and sport have been appropriated for the sake of larger social inclusion of women along with the commitment of shifting the paradigm of ‘gender equity in sports’ to ‘gender equality for sports’²⁴. Thus, recognizing the tremendous contribution of sports towards human development, the General Assembly adopted a resolution 58/5 in 2004 which proclaimed the year 2005 as The International Year of Sports and Physical Education.²⁵ During this year the notion of ‘Sport for All’ was highlighted extending equality of opportunities beyond the complexities of marginalization and sex stereotypical attitudes. Further, many international and domestic policies emphasis the credibility of physical education as a key component of the right to participate, freedom of expression and ‘right to be involved freely in cultural life and the arts’ (as stated in United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).²⁶ To maximize this sense of positive manifestation, the International Working Group on Women and Sport was established in 1994 as a significant facilitator of creating opportunities for girls in physical activity throughout the world. Even the Magglingen declaration 2003 also recommended some immediate measures to include women, girls and other marginalized groups in physical activities.²⁷ In recent years the most notable move was the review of progress of a Commission considering the implementation of the ‘Beijing Platform for Action’ on the Status of Women.²⁸ In accordance with the agreed conclusions 1999/17 (I) on women and health, a principally global policymaking body on gender equality called on Governments, the United Nations system and civil society to encourage women to practice regular sport and recreational activities, which can usher positive impact on women’s health, well-being and fitness throughout the whole life cycle, and ensure that women enjoy equal opportunities to practice sport, use sport facilities and take part in competitions. The ‘Windhoek Call for Action’ (2007) goes beyond the spectrum of enhancing women’s participation in sport to instrumentalise the credibility of sport as a means of achieving broader goals in health, education, elimination of violence and human rights. These frameworks and objectives were further promoted at the Third World Conference in Montreal/Canada in 2002.²⁹

Potential Barriers & Challenges Ahead:-

Despite this broadly discussed conviction and international efforts towards empowering women, they still lag behind in all the parameters of social and human development. For instance, in developing countries we witness poor educational and infrastructural settings where sport does not seem to be occupied with the central importance at par with other areas of development. Wide varieties of gender surveys addressed the distressing reality of girls and how they have been victimized by several hindrances while participating in sports and physical activities due to the strictly enforced cultural and social restrictions on their movement at all levels of participation and decision making.

Further, looking at the history of Olympics games, it is unfortunate to know that in the past the participation of women were limited than men and women's participation were denied putting the reason that it is 'impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic and incorrect'.³⁰ It was after a long struggle that women got chance to participate in the Olympics in Paris in 1990 and that too four years after the first Olympic Games. According to International Olympic Committee, only 22 women out of a total of 997 athletes took part in just five sports: tennis, sailing, croquet, equestrian, and golf, out of which only golf and tennis had contests for women only. Although the number of participation of girls have been escalated with an increasing amount of 44 percent at the 2012 games in London games from the number of women participants at the 1964 games in Tokyo which is merely about 13 percent. Although it is at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, women first participated in all sports of Olympic programme.³¹ In addition, huge discrepancies can also be found not only in participation, but also in representation so far as decision making structures are concerned. Even, the numbers of female coaches appear low in proportion to the male coaches in sport. Besides, it is also indispensable to say that even in 21st century female athletes are highly sexualized and objectified by the media that devalues women's' athletic performance as well as indulges misogyny in sports industry.

Given this backdrop, it is important to address the impediments that prevent girls to get involved in sports. Following this scenario, these complexities arising out of the challenges of using sport as a vehicle of women empowerment can be explored below:

- **Socio - Cultural Barriers:** - one of the complicating factors which we have to understand is the gender relations which are deeply engrained in educational systems and social structures. Sociologists claim that sport is a mirror of society or sometime it is

considered as a microcosm of gender values. Thus socio - cultural context is very much important to determine socially acceptable behavior. It is evident that lack of females' participation in sports, especially in third world countries is more on the part of women's lack of interest rather than traditional patriarchal structure, culture and social system that decides the ultimate parameters for the categorization of what is being treated as unfeminine and what is feminine. It is noted that sportsman spirit always has been considered appropriate in 'masculine domain' and whenever girls start competing within this domain their sexual orientation gets challenged and stigmatized as 'femininity at risk'.³² Further the concept of division of labour (public/private responsibilities) is a major barrier for women to get involved in sport. Even research shows that it is due to the traditional culture, not only men but also mothers predominately want their daughters to become an ideal wife or mother because according to the norms of social construction if women step into the domain which perceives to be dominated by the structure of masculinity, their dignity as women will be questioned. Following this, M K Sing's in his book 'Indian women and sports' holds that most important factor that keeps women away from the larger participation in a physical structure is grounded on sexist theory. Gender reflects a process of social construction, a system of social stratification where human beings learn how to become women and men. The child is expected to behave in accordance with the roles customarily assigned to his or her sex³³. By the time, girls learn that being born as a female, her world is restricted by the rules and social norms. Sport as a mirror of society and microcosm of gender values naturally reflects that of cultural values and social practice embedded in our society. Gender based attributes of sport and social stigmas with regard to women's unsuitability in the arena of sport leads to the dejection among women to view themselves as independent, strong and self governing entity. Thus, these stereotyped perceptions which accept that the physical contacts and competitions are not 'ladylike' behaviours, require a transformation followed by the rise of sportswomen nationally and globally so that it can ensure the fact that physical activity and sport can actually be empowering as well as liberating women.³⁴

- **Infrastructural Lacunae:** - Infrastructural, material and technical barriers in public domain can also be linked to a girl's lack of participation in physical education. Clean, sheltered changing rooms, adequate lighting and easy access to other facilities are needed to be ensured for more girls' participation in sport. It has also been witnessed that in many countries physical education has been inappropriately dealt by generalist's teacher, thereby pushing this subject into a neglected domain. Moreover, it is due to the decreasing

curriculum, time allocation, material inadequacy, fund crunch, undervalued budgetary allocations have led girls feel passive, insecure, unsafe and unprotected while involving in sport from the grass-roots level.

- **Lack of Female Role Model in Sports:** - one of the major obstacles for girls' participation in sport is lack of female role models before them. Recognizing the dire need of the hour, UNICEF South Asia has launched a girl cartoon character called Meena who is portrayed as a female idol. The stories of Meena and her parrot dealing with the critical issues like nutrition, health care, school, child marriage, etc. didn't not only expose discrimination against girls in her family and community life, but also offered positive, achievable solutions, through an example of the empowerment of girls and women.³⁵

Recommendations:-

Following the above discussion, it can be said that few innovative steps taken by national government as well as international actors to improve the conditions of women through sports activities are highly appreciating. Government should also acknowledge the importance of physical education and sport in education curriculum by means of improving the budgetary allocation to physical education and sports. Further, in this new millennium, it is extremely important for the society to recognize more faces of female role models who are making a breakthrough despite all odds and socio - cultural impediments so that a radical transformation within the society gets ensured by securing societies' trust and respect over women's leadership skills in the form of men honoring women among themselves. However, from an administrative perspective, it is mandatory to address the current loopholes in existing system and to bring out some well designed need oriented effective ideas which can sufficiently be responsive to gender rights and can curb the misconceptions regarding the relationship between sports and women participation.

Looking at the glimpses of the existing lacunas surrounding the above issue, some recommendations can be highlighted to address the flaws within the administrative and societal structure and propose strategies to tackle the challenges. These can be scrutinized as follows:

- Sports program must provide safe female friendly public spaces where girls will come to know about their rights and learn new skills for having greater control on their livelihoods.

- It is unfortunate that most of the young girls and women in developing countries are still found as unpaid laborers in the informal economy or while performing their domestic task and thus the female population remains unutilized compared with men. If participation in athletes secures girls' future by economically productive means, then it must have a strong impact on women as well as for the growth of the country. The life – skill education modules that informs about financial literacy, if integrated with the quality based sports program, can assist young women in achieving financial independence.
- Sound data base, surveys and the full details about women's active participation in physical education should be documented and evaluated to address the gaps between what has actually been done for women empowerment through the medium of sports and the measures need to be taken in to accomplish the objectives discussed before.
- Participation and greater involvement of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) with respect to the specific agenda of empowering women should be welcomed in sports sector for accelerating larger development plans.
- Mass media should be more active to portray the female role models who excelled in sports' arena which will help to spread public awareness about the values of physical education and sports to address the shameful conventional stereotypes as major hindrances which have been suppressing the social empowering process over the decades. Moreover, in India it is unfortunate that the coverage, marketing and promotion of women's sports are often made highly sexualized. Therefore, media having a larger audience must be utilized in popularizing women's sport in India. Attention should be paid on improving the quality of reporting on women's sport program so that it can change the dominant stereotypical gender images in sports. For example, India recently launched its first women Professional Kabadi League. The popular sport in South Asia has traditionally been dominated by men. But this women's league turned out to be the most popular one. The first two matches of the league

had attracted 38 million viewers which even surpassed the viewership of Euro 2016 championship. Nearly 40% of these viewers were women contributing to its ever-rising popularity. Beyond this popularity, the credit for the marketing strategies of Star TV broadcast cannot be denied. Thus, by having an adequate amount of knowledge about the successes of women in sport all over the world, women will get to know their potentials and exposures in sport and no more remain underestimated by patriarchal power hierarchy.³⁶

- One of the practical requirements is to pay attention on the local socio - cultural needs of a particular community and accordingly embrace the community based strategies along with mainstreaming sports based development model so that girls' participation could be sustained.
- Lack of the adequate funds is one of the main problems in this specific area. Thus to achieve bigger and broader goals in physical education, Sports Ministry has to go along with the line of some out of box thinking where specific target based provisions and facilities concerning physical education require to be implemented so that opportunities are easily accessible to girls to be physically active.
- More thorough and scientific research is needed on this particular area to explore the credible synergy between sports, physical education and women empowerment guided by the diversified experiences throughout, so that the outcome based feedbacks likely lead to the formations of well calculated target based policy making towards rediscovering women in the field of physical education and sports with greater self esteem and confidence irrespective of their identity.

Conclusion: Thus, throwing light on this issue, it is imperative for the policymakers to understand that there is an obvious symbiosis between sport and women empowerment where both gets mutually strengthened and intensified by complimenting each other. To that effect, the scope and spectrum of sport based empowerment can be widened with target based intervention strategy on the basis of which a process of sustainable development and inclusive growth of the society can be initiated and intensified. It involves commitment on

the part of responsible authorities and other actors at all levels, from the leaders, bureaucrats, communities, families to the individuals concerned. In this regard, the most important challenge before educationists and policy makers is to reorient the capacity building program from a 'welfare based' approach to a 'right and development based' approach with a special thrust on achieving gender equality and inclusive growth through sport and physical education. Further, it can be argued that despite all the international and national efforts towards gender equality women are still suppressed in every sphere of our society. Discrimination against girl child, adolescent girls and women is much more prevalent in a developing society that suffocates the cause of empowerment. For instance, physical education or sport in India as a part of the curriculum has a very nominal role to offer and in most of the cases this subject is treated as a resting period after the prolonged academic session. India has several universities where sport and physical education have hardly served as serious educational programs. Further, lack of techniques, strategies, qualified coaches, scientific education, and psychiatrists concerning sports education undermines the true essence of empowerment through sports. Although in this era of new millennium, positive changes are occurring leading to facilitate wider women's participation in sports. Target oriented schemes and initiatives have also been taken to provide women a secured and safe place for their wider participation in sports. Thus, the more empowerment and recognition girls get from the arena of sport, the more they will be in a position to throw challenges questioning the unequal and uneven socio-cultural processes on the basis of which gender hierarchy gets embedded in our society. Hence, it truly justifies the fact that sport has freed women from the shackles of patriarchal exploitations, discriminatory laws and customs. Sport with its tremendous potential to fight for the realization of gender equality has ensured the advancement of the civilization and will continue as a gateway to women's empowerment, inclusive growth and gender-responsive societal development.

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