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CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT:

Over the past few decades, female athletes have achieved success at both the national and international levels and made incredible strides in sports. Despite these successes, they nevertheless encounter many obstacles that limit their engagement, output, and professional development. These issues include uneven compensation, gender discrimination, poor sporting facilities, underrepresentation in the media, social and cultural barriers, harassment, and challenges juggling sports, school, and family obligations. This article looks at the main obstacles that female athletes must overcome and makes recommendations for how to make sports more welcoming and encouraging.

Keywords: Women athletes, gender parity, involvement in sports, obstacles equal chances, Empowerment of women

1. INTRODUCTION:

Sports are essential for fostering social development, leadership, teamwork, mental health, and physical fitness. Improved educational options, government programs, and shifting social attitudes have all contributed to a major growth in women's participation in sports. Nonetheless, there are still a number of barriers that prevent female athletes from reaching their full potential. In order to achieve gender equality in sports and provide equal chances for all athletes, these challenges must be addressed.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify the major challenges faced by women athletes.
2. To examine the impact of these challenges on sports performance.
3. To identify strategies for improving the participation, performance, and well-being of Women athletes.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Das, D., Kumar, P., Dixit, A., & Balyan, V. (2023). "The Missing Gender: Examining the Barriers to Women's Participation in Sports in India "Using MICMAC analysis and

Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM), the study looked at the main obstacles that prevent women from participating in sports in India. The results showed that the biggest challenges faced by female athletes include financial limitations, poor sporting facilities, few employment options, sociocultural norms, and prejudice based on gender. They concluded that in order to promote equitable chances and boost women's engagement in sports, governments, academic institutions, and sports groups must work together.

Sharma, D., & Lal, M. (2025). **Breaking Barriers: The Journey of Women in Indian Sports and the Fight for Equality**. The paper explored the problems faced by women athletes in India and emphasized the progress made toward gender equality in sports. According to them, women's involvement and performance are still hampered by social prejudices, poor sporting facilities, unequal chances, media bias, and a lack of funding. In order to support women's empowerment through sports, the paper also stressed the significance of public awareness, equal access to sports facilities, high-quality coaching, and government initiatives. They concluded that in order to guarantee equitable opportunities and long-term success for Indian women athletes, persistent governmental changes and societal support are crucial.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

4.1 Research Design:

The current study uses secondary data and a descriptive research design. The descriptive technique was used to investigate current literature, research papers, government reports, policy documents, and publications from national and international organizations in order to examine and assess the many issues faced by female athletes.

4.2 Methodology of Data Collection:

The entire analysis is based on secondary data that was gathered from trustworthy and legitimate sources. A thorough examination of published research articles, peer-reviewed journals, books, conference proceedings, government reports, policy documents, reports from national and international sports organizations, and official websites was used to obtain the necessary data.

4.3 Scope of the Study:

1. The study focuses on the main obstacles that female athletes must overcome in order to participate and succeed, including institutional, psychological, social, and economic restrictions.
2. To comprehend the current state of women in sports and the policies implemented for their empowerment, the study examines published literature, government papers, and academic articles.
3. Researchers, sports administrators, legislators, coaches, academic institutions, and groups promoting gender equality and the growth of women's sports may find value in the study's conclusions.

4.4 Limitations of the Study:

1. Since the study relies solely on secondary data, no primary data from female athletes was gathered.

2. The accuracy and accessibility of published literature, journals, reports, and government records determine the conclusions.

3. No statistical analysis based on field surveys or experimental investigations is included in the paper.

4. The study does not offer a comparison with male athletes, instead concentrating on the difficulties encountered by female athletes.

5. MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ATHLETES:

1. Gender Discrimination:

Compared to male athletes, female athletes frequently experience less respect, less opportunities, and unfair treatment. Men's sports continue to receive more funding from numerous sporting groups.

2. Unequal Pay and Sponsorship:

There is a big salary difference between male and female sportsmen. Despite putting on exceptional performances, women typically receive lower salary, prize money, and sponsorship arrangements.

3. Limited Access to Facilities:

Women's access to high-quality sports facilities, coaching, equipment, and infrastructure is often restricted, especially in rural areas.

4. Social and Cultural Barriers:

Stereotypes and traditional gender norms deter females from playing sports. Women's participation in competitive sports is frequently limited by societal attitudes and family expectations.

5. Media Representation:

Compared to men's sports, women's sports get far less media attention. Public recognition and sponsorship prospects are diminished by low exposure.

6. Safety and Harassment:

During practice and competition, many female athletes encounter abuse, bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Maintaining secure athletic environments is still a major challenge.

7. Balancing Education, Career, and Family:

Women athletes frequently find it difficult to balance rigorous training schedules with obligations to their families, professional lives, and academic obligations.

8. Health and Nutrition Challenges:

Specialized nutrition, medical attention, and psychological support are necessary for female athletes. Performance may suffer from a lack of access to sports medicine and healthcare.

9. Lack of Female Coaches and Leadership:

Mentorship possibilities and female presence in decision-making are limited by the comparatively small number of female coaches, referees, and sports administrators.

10. Financial Constraints:

Due to a lack of funding for coaching, travel, equipment, and competition costs, many gifted female athletes give up on sports.

6. IMPACT OF THESE CHALLENGES:

- Girls' and women's participation in sports has decreased.
- Athletes are less confident and motivated.
- Few options for employment.
- A rise in dropout rates.
- A decline in global competitiveness.
- Adverse impacts on mental and physical health.

7. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION, PERFORMANCE, AND WELL-BEING OF WOMEN ATHLETES.

1. Making Sports Facilities More Accessible:

The goal of the project is to determine how to give female athletes equal access to high-quality training facilities, equipment, and sports infrastructure. Improved facilities boost athletic performance and promote increased participation.

2. Improving Mentoring and Coaching:

Finding ways to increase access to qualified coaches—especially female coaches and mentors—is the main goal. Long-term career progress, confidence, and skill development are all improved by effective guidance.

3. Strengthening Institutional and Financial Assistance:

The study aims to investigate policies that can lower financial obstacles and allow female athletes to pursue their athletic careers, including scholarships, sponsorships, incentives, and government support.

4. Guaranteeing Security and Welfare:

The goal highlights how crucial it is to establish a harassment-free, inclusive, and safe sports environment. It also emphasizes how important it is for female athletes to receive medical treatment, adequate nutrition, and mental health support.

5. Encouraging Gender Awareness and Equality:

Through awareness campaigns, equitable chances, and supportive policies in sports groups and educational institutions, the study seeks to uncover solutions that eradicate gender discrimination.

6. Promoting Family and Community Support:

The goal is to investigate approaches to improve community, school, college, and family assistance. Encouragement boosts women's involvement, drive, and retention in sports.

8. CONCLUSION:

Despite many obstacles, female athletes have shown extraordinary talent, fortitude, and tenacity. For women to be empowered in sports, gender discrimination must be eradicated, resources must be better accessible, safety must be guaranteed, and equal chances must be offered. To develop an inclusive sporting environment where women athletes may reach their full potential, governments, educational institutions, sports organizations, the media, and society as a whole must collaborate.

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