

## "Women, Gender Equality And Sport"

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### **Abstract:**

Female participation in sports rose dramatically in the twentieth century, especially in the last quarter, reflecting changes in modern societies that emphasized gender parity. Although the level of participation and performance still varies greatly by country and by sport, women's sports have broad acceptance throughout the world, and in a few instances, such as tennis and figure skating, rival or exceed the male counterparts in Popularity. An important aspect about women's sports is that women usually not compete on equality against men. It has been understood that the "natural order of the universe" consisted of man to the marketplace, woman at home with her family, woman the mistress of domesticity, man the master of all else, man the rational thinker, woman the guardian of morals, man dominant, and woman subordinate. The injection of equality between the two genders challenged the foundation of the social order. Women's sports in the late 1800s focused on correct posture, facial and bodily beauty, and health. In 1916 the Amateur Athletic Union holds its first National Championship for Women. Women's sports include amateur and professional competitions in virtually all sports.

### **Introduction:**

Women's participation in sport has a long history. It is a history marked by division and discrimination but also one filled with major accomplishments by female athletes and important advances for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Among the many remarkable achievements are those of

Helene Madison of the United States of America, the first woman to swim the 100 yard freestyle in one minute at the 1932 Olympics; Maria Teresa de Filippis of Italy, the first woman to compete in a European Grand Prix auto race in 1958; Nawal El Moutawakel of Morocco, the first woman from an Islamic nation to win an Olympic medal for the 400-metre hurdles at the 1984 Olympics; and Tegla Loroupe of Kenya, who in 1991 became the first African woman to win a major marathon. Women have taken up top leadership positions in sports, such as Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Olympic Committees. More and more women have also taken up employment opportunities in all areas sport, including as coaches, managers, officials and sports journalists. These achievements were made in the face of numerous barriers based on gender discrimination. Women were often perceived as being too weak for sport, particularly endurance sports, such as marathons, weightlifting and cycling and it was often argued in the past that sport was harmful to women's health particularly their reproductive health, In 1896. Baron Pierre de Coubertin founder of the modern Olympics, stated: "No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks." Such stereotypes fuelled gender-based discrimination in physical education and in recreational and competitive sport, sporting organizations and sport media.

### **Resolution Of The Second International Olympic Committee World Conference On Women & Sports:**

1. The resolution, adopted in 2000, calls for a number of strategies and actions to be taken by the International Olympic Committee, Government and international organizations, including the United Nations system, such as:
2. Meeting the 20 percent goal of women in decision-making by 2005;
3. Increasing scholarships and training for women athletes, coaches and other officials;
4. Raising awareness about the positive influence of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the development of physical activity and sport for women and girls;
5. Urging the Commission on the Status of Women to recognize the importance of physical activity and sport to women's and girls' development at all stages of their lives;
6. Raising awareness about the importance of quality physical education;
7. Developing strategies and educational material to support physical education for girls;
8. Implementing sexual harassment policies, including codes of conduct; and
9. Working with the media to ensure a more accurate projection of women's sport.

**The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport:**

The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport calls for;

- Equality in society and sport;
- Sport facilities that meet the needs of women;
- An increase in the number of women coaches, advisors and decision-makers in

sport;

- Education, training and development programmes that address gender equality;
- Information and research on women and sport;
- Allocation of resources for sports women and women's programmes; and
- Incorporation of the promotion of gender equality and sharing good practices into governmental and non-governmental policies and programmes on women and sport.

**Source:** International Working Group on Women and Sport (1994). The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport. Available from is [www.iwg.gti.org](http://www.iwg.gti.org)

**The Montreal Tool Kit Manual for Change:**

The Montreal Tool Kit was developed for the Third World Conference on Women and Sport as a reference manual containing 20 tools to help women activists working to increase women's participation in sports. The manual includes tools on advocacy and awareness-raising, such as "Creating an advocacy strategy" and "Non-sexist sport commentary for media"; tools organizations, such as "Terms of reference for a Women and Sport Committee" and "Sample harassment policy"; tools for individual development, such as "Building a case for mentoring"; and other tools for action, such as "Measuring your success".

**Sports As A Vehicle For Gender Equality And The Women Empowerment Of Women And Girls:**

The relationship between gender equality and sports is not solely about achieving equality in women's participation and treatment within sports, but it is also about promoting "sport for gender equality", or harnessing the potential of sport for social empowerment of women and

girls. Sport offers a valuable channel to strengthen women's and girls capabilities and provide information on important social issues, such as health, HIV/AIDS and women's rights. Women and girls participation in sport can also challenge gender stereotypes and break down entrenched discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. Myriam Lamare, a World Boxing Association champion from France has aid that the punches she lands shake the foundations of society.

### **Studying Attitude Towards Women And Girls On Sport In**

#### **India:**

A study was carried out in rural and urban India by the Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Sciences on the attitudes of parents, teachers and coaches towards female participation in sport. The findings indicated that policies are needed at the local level to support and protect women's participation in sport and, in particular, efforts are required to remove misconceptions related to women's participation in sport and the impact of sport on women's health.

#### **Conclusion:**

With self-confidence and leadership and teamwork skill, girls are better equipped to challenge societal norms which continue to oppress women and relegate them to being second-class citizen. Though discrimination persist around the world, and act as a deterrent to girls participation in sports, the value of challenging these norms has become increasingly recognized by international actors, Government Bodies and communities themselves.

As a means of empowerment and development. But the real testimony comes from girls and women themselves. With each woman who excels in sports, barriers are broken and a new generation of girls is able to benefit from participating in sports in a way that their mothers and grandmothers could not.

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