

Realities of Women's' Position in Sports in contemporary Bengal

*Md Abu Nasim

Research Scholar, Department of History, Aliah University, Calcutta, West Bengal (India)

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*Corresponding Author

Email: mdabunasim1990[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Women in the modern societies play a significant role in the development of socio-economic and political-cultural life of each society. Sports is that important aspect of modern life, which has transformed the polity, economy and society is more than one ways from individual to collective, from locality to nation . Each identity is incomplete without the touch of the sport life like today. A healthy nation is born to a healthy mother. To get healthy mother from the nation like as gift physical activity of women is most important issues. Sports are that term which is completed through the various types of physical activities. In a developing nation, like india, the participation of women in sports is more negligible than other nation countries. However, in the last seventy years there is a rapid sign of growth, with the Indian women athletics bagging gold for India. The history of women Sports in Bengal during the second half of the twentieth century reflects a clear sign of growth of women in Sports. Bengal the site of British administration and trade developed as the sports capital of the colonial India. Here the colonized men took to the sports of the colonizers by the late nineteenth century in Bengal. In the modern Bengal society, erect a platform through the playground. But in this situation the women were not consider as the part of sport activity.under the patriarchal society, women were facing a huge obstacle in getting involvement in sports , which cannot overcome still now properly.

'MOVE ME! Physical activity, health & well-being for lifeⁱ'.

It is true that life is incomplete without moving from physical and mental activity. Physical activity is not only meaning the daily work for our survivable life, but sports are the main domain of physical movement through our involvement of cultural activity. Sports are the demarcation line of civilization in our society in modern time. It focuses light on the nature of orders and social changes of the societyⁱⁱ.The importance of sport not only from political, religious and economic purpose but also important as the cultural tool of emotional bondage for every nation. Sports as an integral part of national sentiment of a popular culture, which provides a legitimate space for examining the issues of national identity and regional cooperation in the relation of human beingⁱⁱⁱ. According to Debasis Majumdar, in india the cricket , football and hocky erected the nationalist conciousness and also regional identity from the political platform^{iv}. Sports is the not only the fit form physically mentally or for entertainment, but also a social issues to stand on cultural base. Kausik Bandhopadhyay discusses the sports as the 'cultural weapon' of a nation to fight against another culture^v. Through the sports, the youth can build their confidence level on the concrete base. Regular exercise and friendship relationship can be developing through the sports. Within the sports, rules and regulation that teach the players and spectators many things, which are possible through sports and sports activity, Sports teach us respect to another. J.A Mangan judged the game based on the fundamental but complementary relationship of imperialism and sports on the question of social development in India^{vi}. Those issues are not negligible for women under patriarch Society.

In Colonial and Post-Colonial India, sports has been closely linked within the wide to wider process through the

society, economic and Culture from the late nineteenth century^{vii}. before the second half of nineteenth century india followed their traditional game like Lathi Chora(Throw Stick), danguli(play of long picces of wood), Kit-Kit (girls famous game), Goli (Marbels or Glass ball), Lattu (Top), Luko-Churi (Hide and seek), Rumal Churi(hanky Thief), Ghuri (Kite Flying) and so many traditional games^{viii}. But after the second half of the nineteenth century indigenouse people of india bending towards the foreign outdoor game. Among the foreign outdoor game football and cricket were associate with mind of indigenouse people. Football is call as the 'blood game' of Bengali people. In colonial India Football and Cricket were discussed from different aspects. However, the role of hockey was also most important^{ix}. Histories of Sports gain its prosperity in the late twentieth century. Nevertheless, in India, writing of Sports History was started within the limited area. History of Sports in india dealt mainly about history of Football and Cricket^x. In 1988, Soumen Mitra through his M.Phil dissertation discussed firstly History of Football in Colonial Calcutta. He published his thesis as book on the name of "in search of an identity: History of football in Colonial Calcutta" and discussed Sports as the aspect of nationalism^{xi}. Ramchnadra Ghuha through his book A Corner of a Foreign field: the Indian History of British Sports discussed the sport politics from different angles another edited book is 'Cricket' deals about the cricket from different point. After that the prominent Journalist and historian Boria Majumdar traced on the cricket. His one of the famous book is 'Twenty two Yard to Freedom' and 'Eleven Gods and a Billion Indian: The on and off the field story of cricket in India and beyond'. In bengal another sports Historian is Kausik Bondyopadhaya through his Bengali book 'Khela jokhon Itihas'(When Sports is History) discussed purely how a game became a History? After, he wrote many books and published article about indian football

and culture. He mainly trace the importance of the I.F.A Sheild of 1911 and politics of the three prominent club, Mohunbagan, Mohammedan and East Bengal Club. And Ronojoy sen through his book 'Nation at Play:A History of Sport in India" discussed the Calcutta Maidan Politics. After that Debasis Majumdar, Navo Capadia also discussed the sports from different angles. Nevertheless, all of them unconsciously avoid the position of women in sports in Bengal is very absent. Position of women, relation to health and sports of women is a major lacuna in the field of Sport culture. This present paper would try to find out the position of women, health of women from the angle of sport.

In India spots means the Football, Cricket Hockey, Table Tennis etc which were, began in the nineteenth century, introduced by British regimental teams and missionaries during colonial rule^{xii}. Though the traditional games were present which were replaced by the modern game mainly in colonial Bengal, which were introduced as the activity of enjoyment. India had its traditional game and sports but the football and cricket quickly replace the traditional game. After few days the aim of the sports became changed, where the sports mainly football was started as the enjoyment of lessiere time of the British Army. Only the British soldier would able to play the sport, which were associate with their culture and Indian, would avoid by the game. In addition, they consider their game and sports as the reflection of their cultural society. Macaulay who was the Secretary to the Board of Control under *Lord Grey* from 1832 until 1833 described the Indian as typical uncultured society^{xiii}. The Indigenous Bengali people imitation the British and their sports football to be involve with the British. Kausik Bandhopahyay through his thesis showed that with in short time after imitation the football game became as the medium of nationalism through the competition of football Game. Though it not properly and completely nationalism but inspired the national identity and movement from the sports ground. It was for not only the men but also limited participation of women within the sports activity through many ways. Though direct involvement of Indian women became late than the western women but it was appraisable because as colonial country it was also a very important for participant of women within sports. Using a complex analysis, Stevenson showed that increasing girls' sports participation had a direct effect on women's education and employment^{xiv}. She found that the changes set in motion by Title IX explained about 20 percent of the increase in women's education and about 40 percent of the rise in employment for 25-to-34-year-old women^{xv}.

Sports are fascinated as the mirror of the society. Sports are also considered as the issues of good health. It is impossible to achieve good health without sports, game or movement of body organ^{xvi}. Not only it important for only male, but from the ancient to modern period female are conscious about their health. the question of women good health and physical activities within sports are less important in this masculine outdoor game. Almost four decades after the federal education law called Title IX opened the door for girls to participate in high school and college athletics, a crucial question has remained unanswered^{xvii}. Do sports make a long-term difference in a woman's life? Sports is essential contributor to life style of exercise and also an alternate way of life to fit from physically and mentally. Physical inactivity is a

serious threat to a healthy and balanced for lifestyle in modern time. Increasing health enhancing physical activity can significantly benefit the physical, psychological, economical, political and social wellbeing of girls and women throughout the whole life span. Globally sixty three percent of women are not doing sufficient activity to achieve the zenith benefits and levels of participation of the activity particularly among adolescence are major concern^{xviii}. However, it is also a great challenge of women to maintain their physical activity, especially during the critical phases of their lives namely puberty, motherhood, menopause, old age, periods and the time of acting as family care and during intensive career development. Healthy lifestyle can be promoted, for instance, by cooperating with the other sectors in the society to address physical inactivity and other priority health issues that women face such as sexual and reproductive health, as well as the prevention of cancer, and other impairments^{xix}. According to Suparna Bhattecharya the first half of twentieth century women were not within sports activity properly. Though very few women were took active part in colonial Indian society, most of them were Anglo-Indian. But the entry of Bengali women within sports started during 1980s^{xx}. It is also important that growing of the participation of women from few Hindu Cultured and anglo Indian family^{xxi}. Muslim and most of the higher class women were not given this chance to participate within Sports. Women of elite class hindu and muslims belongs from 'Zenana Quarter', naturally they were not able to take active part with in outdoor game. It was very important that in the Helsinki game indian women were largely absent from the sport history from the colonial india. Only two women Nilima Ghosh and Mary D'Souza represent them from india in Helsinki Olympic Game^{xxii}. Though it was also an inspiration for the indian women because that time participation of women in Olympic from india was a great emancipation. In the year of 1918 the anglo indian women Jeni Sandison from Khargpur, Bengal represent the country at Wimbledon though she lost in first round, and another Anglo Indian girl who represent the Country at Wimbledon was Leela Row who won the Cup in the year of 1934^{xxiii}. After the independence of India Rita Davar, in 1952 was the runner in Women's Wimbledon^{xxiv}. in 1954 Manila Asiad won the Gold medal in Indian's Women realy^{xxv}, and after next Game Stephe D'Souza the anlgo indian women won the Silver medal in the year 1958 which was held in Tokyo. According to Ronojoy sen in colonial period Hockey and basketball were popular game among the indian women. Women's Hockey Association was formed by lady Kathleen Tegart who was the wife of Charles Tegart, Commissioner of Calcutta in 1928, and first hockey tournament was held in the 1947, the first international hockey tournament was held in England^{xxvi}. Although the number of the participation in the games from Bengal increasing gradually day to day, but participation maximum from higher educated caste or from town area not from lower caste or rural area. The rural area women are going away from the game and sport. Some peoples' and authority's narrow mentality and in difference responsible for not being included women in game. in example before few days ago Anandabazar reported that in Mohunbagan Stadium include of women participation are increasing but the mohun bagan club established in the year 1889 but there is not a single toilet for the women^{xxvii}. So that women can't take participate in this maidan also. This type of

various indifference of Authorities and People has women kept away from the game.

However, while women and girls account for more than half of the world's population and although the percentage of their participation in sport and physical activity varies between countries, in almost every case it is less than that of men and boys in case of Bengal more less. If we consider the women as the important element of sports in previous century that is time we can understand the situation. The inclusion of women in Sport became marginalized group within masculine sports area. They could not participate through the share space in the stadium or outside the sports ground. Now day's women share their culture outside of the field as spectators by supporting their team and flying their flag. Now days In case of rural areas, women are totally difference than the women of town. Women of rural area are negligible for their sports but women of town and from elite class cannot comes out from their 'Zenana Quarter' to masculine 'Sport Capital' in the main stream of Sports activity.

Where, In ancient Sparta, girls were favored with an exceptional educational system that included training in most of the same athletic events as boys. The aim was eugenic: healthy women produced healthy citizen-warriors. The contests were restricted to unmarried girls, who competed either nude or wearing only skimpy dresses. Boys were admitted as spectators, a practice intended to encourage marriage and procreation. Some Spartan maidens ran a special race for Dionysos, god of adult females, and this athletic ritual may also have celebrated their communal rite of passage^{xxviii}. Today's society is far away from the original issues of introducing the Sports. In our society the women are neglected from various issues.

However, Well-shaped body is also most need of sports for the women through physical activity . Physically active people can keep the ir body and lungs healthy. following a healthy diet and by avoiding smoking heart and lungs can keep healthy. If we consider the women as the reproductive of generation then to get a disease less and strong baby, mother should be strong from mentally and physically to give the gift of diseases less society for next generation^{xxix}. In modern time the western societies were more advance than the eastern societies. When India could not strait its backbone in men sports thus contemporary time Dorothy Edith Round Little as a women was leading the team in England and Helen Hull Jacobs from America in the tournament of Wightman Cup^{xxx}.

Before a century, Adult women were prohibited from attending the men's Olympics on penalty of death. The laws of Elis, the city that hosted the games, dictated that any woman caught entering the Olympic assembly on the forbidden days or even crossing the river that borders the site was to be hurled to her death from the high cliffs of Mount Tyaion opposite the stadium. There is no evidence that such executions were ever carried out. Kallipateira, who attended disguised as a trainer and leapt into the stadium to congratulate her victorious son, went unpunished out of respect for her illustrious family. But to prevent such a violation from happening in the future, trainers thereafter had to enter the stadium naked. Yet maidens could

attend the men's games, probably to familiarize them with the world of men. The only married woman permitted to watch the Olympics was the priestess of Demeter, whose privilege probably derived from the location of an ancient altar and sanctuary of that goddess in the middle of the stadium seating area. This was the colonial time, but still now number of women each and every sector of sports increasing but not like the men. The limited number of women mainly who are belongs to town area or educated family they can took active part as the competitor is sports. But the women of elite class family are totally negligible. In case of rural area, this condition is very poor. Consciousness among the lower family and rural area are avoidable. The society never consider still now about the involvement of equity and equality of women in sports.

Gender equity has been an issued in society since the beginning of Ancient Time. In recorded history, one can find many accounts of where women faced issues of equity in relationships, their career, education, and athletic opportunities. The purpose of this paper is to explore the history that surrounds the issues of gender equity in sport, what actions have been taken to provide equal opportunity for women in sports, the current issues facing women in sports today, the research surrounding the issues pertaining to gender equity in sport, and also to discuss the findings and present recommendations for further research in this area .As was previously mentioned, women face gender equity issues as athletes and as sport governance officials. There is a lack of women in leadership positions in sport due to the fact that sport is a gendered institution and that all processes operate within a hegemonic masculine norm. Furthermore, sport institutions have institutionalized masculinity as the operating principle within sport, which identifies male activity as privileged, and reinforcing masculinity and masculine behavior as acceptable leadership qualities required in sport. Therefore, it is said that gender inequality has become an institutionalized practice within sport organizations^{xxxi}. Those institution which were established in colonial Bengal based on dominant power of men like..like as Dalhousie Club, wellington Club(1887) sovabazar Club(1887), The Jublee Club(1887), Mohun Bagan Club(1889), Mohammedan Sporting Club (1891)Howra Sporting Club (1889) Chingsugra Sporting Club(1893) Kumartulai and Aryans Club(1889) East Bengal Club(1921) etc^{xxxii}. main aim and object of those club were established for physical activity and sports also. because the sports and physical activities are an integral aspect of the culture of every nation. But never a single sports institution is not established still now by the power of women or for the women.

The first international conference on women and sport brought together policy and decision makers in sport at both national and international level, in Brighton, UK from 5 – 8 May 1994. The 280 delegates from 82 countries representing governmental and non-governmental organizations, national Olympic committees, international and national sport federations and educational and research institutions, endorsed the Brighton Declaration, which provided the principles to guide the action intended to increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles. Aim was of the convention were the overriding and to develop a sporting culture that enables with values, the full

involvement of women in every aspect of sport and physical activity^{xxxiii}. Government and non-government organizations should incorporate the promotion of issues of gender equity and the sharing of examples of good practice in women and sport and physical activity policies and programmes in their

associations with other organizations, within both domestic and international arenas. In case of Bengal we should influenced the women towards the outdoor games to develop our cultural society. It is not our duty to involve the women within sports but it is their right to associate with the outdoor game.

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