



THE P(L)AY GAP

Indian Women's Cricket

“The pay issue for female cricketers is not just about what reaches their bank accounts, but is also a fight against systemic discrimination” (Pradhan et. al)

Lisa McNamara
Global Studies '23
Black Studies and
Business & Innovation
Minors
Providence College



CONTEXT

- Sports involvement and participation have a profound impact on youth development.
- Women worldwide experience pay disparities in professional sports.
- Cricket is the 2nd most watched sport in the world and the most popular sport in India.
- India has extreme social and economic inequalities, that affect women, oppressed castes, and minority groups due to Brahminism, Hindutva, and patriarchal norms.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Participation in sports for young girls is proven to be incredibly influential in the trajectory of their lives.

Benefits include:

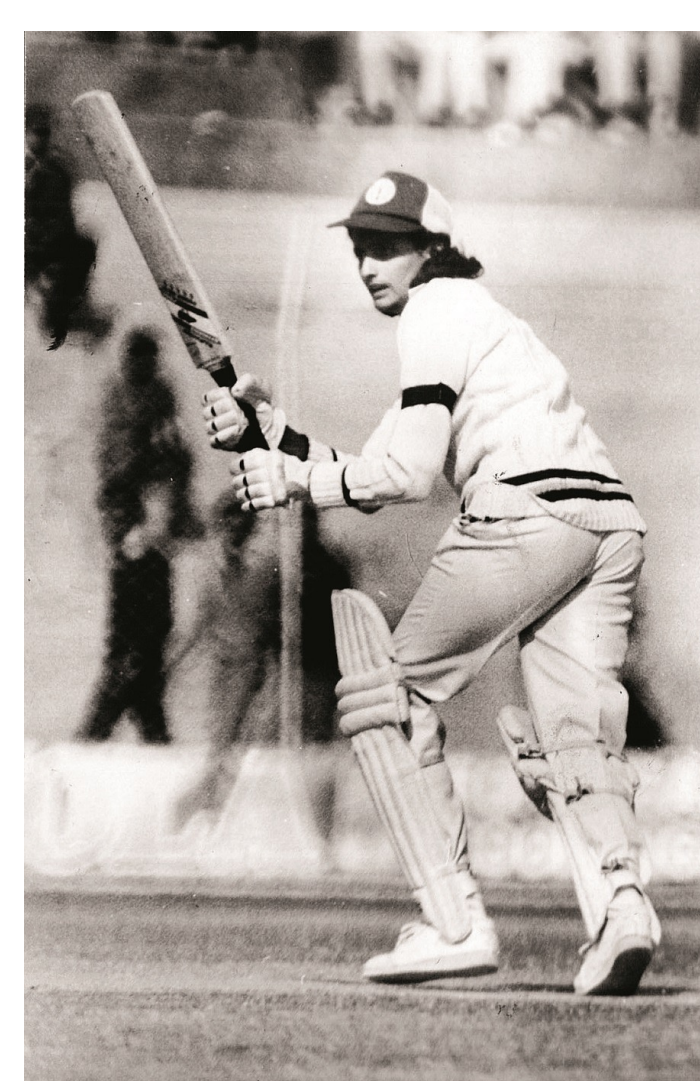
- Developing confidence and leadership skills
- Improving physical and mental health
- Mixed gender teams “...improves tolerance and promotes mutual respect” (Pradhan et. al).

“Women in sport are powerful catalysts of change and when they get the appreciation they deserve, it inspires change in several other women wanting to achieve their dreams” (Firstpost, Raj).

METHODS

- Collected and analyzed a range of secondary resources including articles in scholarly journals and news sources, reports, books, and podcasts.
- Conducted an in-depth analysis of “An Equal Hue: The Way Forward for the Women in Blue: A Report on Growing Women's Cricket in India” by Snehal Pradhan et. al

“As pioneers, we were well aware that our performance mattered, as failure would have seen the premature death of the game from the public perspective. Even to this day, I maintain that our most significant achievement is that we ensured that the game continued to thrive by performing well” – Shantha Rangaswamy, Professional Cricketer (retired)



RESEARCH QUESTION

“What are the experiences and challenges faced by women and girls related to playing cricket in India?”

FINDINGS

#1: Play Gap Reinforces Pay Gap

Top women cricketers for India make less than the lowest contract and pay level on the men's side, yet most female players are not contesting the problem (Magotra).

The women's team is also not scheduled for nearly as many matches at the fault of the governing body, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Board of Control for Cricket in India: Pay Disparity (Tribune News Service 2021)

Category	Men	Women
Grade A+	₹ 700 L	-
Grade A	₹ 500 L	₹ 50 L
Grade B	₹ 300 L	₹ 30 L
Grade C	₹ 100 L	₹ 10 L

Should revenue determine pay?

“The day women's cricket starts earning revenue, I will be the first person to say that we need the same thing. But right now, we can't say that... It is unfair on our part to say that we need to be paid as much as the men - it is not right” - Smriti Mandhana, Professional Cricketer

In a survey of female cricketers (Keshav et. al):

84.5%: felt their primary earnings from domestic cricket was not enough as primary income without another job.
58%: said fees they earned from domestic cricket did not cover the cost of equipment.

#2: Barriers to Entry, Training, and Professional Play

a. Barriers to Sport Entry and ongoing Play

- Stereotypes around being a “male-only sport”
- Lack of facilities, especially in rural settings
- Threats of being “...in spaces they have not traditionally occupied” for females and discriminated against groups (Pradhan et al. 17)
- Financial barriers regarding equipment and club fees)
- No recognized long-term sustainability in the sport due to pay gap.

b. Barriers to Professional Pipeline

- Lack of visibility to pathways for young players.
- Only focusing on urban settings for recruitment, disregarding talent in rural settings, home to majority lower castes and minority groups.
- Lack of structure in the actual pathways including sponsorships, club teams, clinics, competitive play opportunities.

“Athletic talent is outside major cities, in India's towns and villages. And yet, most of the facilities are concentrated in large urban centres” (Pradhan et. al).

CONCLUSIONS

- Lack of sustainable future seen in the sport for women, despite various and diverse benefits.
- Present day female Indian cricketers' comments against equal pay affect more than just the sport, but women advancement and visibility.
- The professional cricket pipeline is designed for wealthier males, who are overwhelmingly elite castes, which discourages participation from other groups.

FURTHER RESEARCH

- A deeper dive into the grassroots girls' programs throughout India, and the effects of Brahminism on the access to these.
- Exploring any youth programs that have addressed the explained problems.

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