

Introduction to sports among women spectators in india media essay



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Watching sport represents a predominant form of leisure behavior in today's society. Large numbers of people attend sporting events and think of themselves as sport fans. Traditionally, participation in sports as a spectator has been a male dominated activity.

Women differ from men on various parameters such as physicality, psychographics, behavioral parameters, consumer behavior and consumption experiences. The differences between men and women on these parameters make it difficult for marketers to target them together as a unified segment. But, irrespective of the differences between men and women on various parameters, sports goods manufacturers and sports events marketers have pursued traditional male-oriented marketing policies.

But in recent times due to a radical change in social and financial status of women, there has been an increased participation in and consumption of sports by women. This has caused marketers to add a female-oriented focus to their strategies.

The recent introduction of female commentators in cricket to strategies to attract women in the latest IPL edition with attractive offers shows a definite change in the marketing strategies of media and marketing professionals. Also more and more women are turning to sports for recreational purpose.

With the sports industry turning more to women consumers, it has become necessary for marketers to research women's consumption behavior and consumption experiences to come up with gender specific strategies. Hence, this study would be to understand how the Indian woman consumes sports

and the level of involvement or motivation achieved set in the context of the Indian society.

Literature Review

Sports as a genre is present in everybody's life, be it in terms of participation or watching. Sports has the power to inspire, build communities, to make people cry, laugh. In the hands of an ingenious marketer sports has an almost enigmatic pull towards the target consumer.

Traditionally, sports participation and consumption was viewed to be masculine or a part of male dominion. However, with increasing number of women who have found economic and social independence the domain of sports is no longer completely a male bastion. Increasingly women are breaking the stereotypes of passivity and are actively consuming and participating in sports.

Major strides have been made over the past few years in providing participation opportunities for girls and women in sports. Media visibility has increased for a number of women players both internationally and nationally like Venus Williams, Anna Kournikova or Sania Mirza. The consumption of sports and leisure by men and women is dependent on a lot of factors such as prevalent societal norms, beliefs and attitudes. In the context of sports and leisure, what is associated with men and masculinity is valued over what is associated with women and femininity. Hence, it is important to explore the underlying societal norms to understand the consumption patterns.

A post modernistic approach

In a postmodern society, the prevalent ideology is that what is considered masculine or feminine will break down as the boundaries between masculinity and femininity continue to blur and the different forms of gender multiply. Activities that conventionally convey clear meanings, such as combat conveying masculinity and gracefulness conveying femininity, will no longer be obvious. A postmodern vision of these categories blurring into one should be liberating because it lessens the likelihood of gender being used as a way to categorize. In the context of sports and leisure, this suggests that gender is less likely to influence participation or consumption of sports previously “marked” as masculine or feminine.

Analysing literature would help us to understand historical trends of sports and leisure participation by gender in various scenarios.

Home Vs Workplace

Women have been historically associated with activities conducted at home such as gardening, sewing and cooking, due to recent advancements in technology the efforts required for the chores have reduced immensely but the modern society still views it as a woman's job. Unskilled tasks such as cleaning, eating, cooking, sleeping, leisure and child rearing were performed at home, Men were connected with activities in the workplace and less connected with the ones at home. Home for men essentially was a place to recoup from a hard day's work. A similar separation exists in sports and leisure today. (McGinnis, Chun, and McQuillan, 2003)

According to Henderson's review (1990), leisure for women tends to consist of activities which is near or at home because it can be infused with
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household chores and because few opportunities for leisure exist outside the home. According to another research by Kane, It was argued that women tend to define themselves in terms of human relationships, hence, they consume within the context of home and family.

The complexity increases for a career woman as then the leisure is dependent on family environments, especially children. Women use home as a primary place and means for leisure. And in case a leisure opportunity comes along which is out of home, then it is sort of offered in such a way as to not hamper household responsibilities.

In this case, leisure itself can be seen as constraining, as it reinforces gender appropriateness (Shaw 1994). While it appears that leisure opportunities certainly exist for women outside the home, the literature suggests that leisure for women is still largely perceived as a secondary concern.

Opportunities for leisure exist, but only when other duties and other concerns have been addressed first. Expectations of a women and her role in society appear to transcend the opportunities outside the home. Men face the same constraint, but can define what is expected of them more so than women.

Spectatorship and Leisure time

It is a common point of contention that men and women both enjoy watching sports on television, but their preferences differ, as men tend to prefer more competitive and aggressive sports as compared to women. We find evidences of media reinforcement of the gendered consumption patterns, for

example NBC positioned the Olympics with storylines resembling soap operas.

Men have generally dominated the consumption of organised sports. But the 'Spectator Gender Gap' is reducing with more women watching conventionally male sports such as Golf, football. However, research suggests that attempts by women to increase their sports consumption in a way threatens the male dominion as sports is viewed as a masculine domain where men are allowed to bond with one another. Women entering this domain are seen as upsetting this setting (McGinnis, Chun, and McQuillan, 2003).

Leisure is another area where the gender gap exists, women in general experience a lesser amount of free time as compared to men as their part of their free time is generally spent doing housework or taking care of children. Men can experience larger blocks of free time without worrying about other commitments.

Role of the Indian Media

Women are traditionally not encouraged to indulge in sports. Sports are men oriented, where men play and women watch. It is clearly visible in the Indian media too, be it films or advertisements. For instance, in an advertisement of Clinic Plus shampoo, a coach of a boys' cricket team in school discourages a girl to play with the team by fearing, when he says, "Baal kharab ho jayege" (your hair will get damaged if you will play cricket in sun). Another advertisement of Tata sky featuring Gul Panag and Aamir Khan, she has been portrayed as a woman for whom sports is a nuisance. During the <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-to-sports-among-women-spectators-in-india-media-essay/>

cricket matches and sports world cups, time and again, many news channels have shown how women have to sacrifice watching their saas-bahu dramas and newspapers also write about falling TRP's of TV serial and how these matches are a jeremiad for women. Because in the family, their husbands, brothers and father are glued to the sports channel and the power of attorney for the remote control is transferred to men for those few days when the matches are held.

In addition, Some of the commonly held beliefs associated with female fans and women sports are explored below-

Women are not interested in sports - fact or fiction

In terms of viewership, over 2.2 crore women watched the 2003 World Cup in India alone. Female viewership comprised an astounding 46% of the total World Cup viewing population and TRPS for female viewership for India matches climbed to a phenomenal 9.8, significantly higher than the 3.9 registered during the Nat West Trophy final played at Lords in June 2002 (ESPNSTAR, "Interesting history of women's cricket in India"). The Twenty20 World Cup had a strong, growing female audience for the sport and it's not restricted to cricket alone. There is an overall 54 per cent increase in ratings for the three tennis grand slams-especially with regard to women's viewership where the growth has been significant. To reach out to this diverse market, most channels are developing a strong programming line-up that is a healthy mix of acquired and original content. (The financial express, 'Cashing in on sports').

For the first time, a non-cricketing glamorous female host – Mandira Bedi – was brought in as a studio anchor. The experience was something which shocked cricket purists. But with a mix of elements for the purist as well as the novice and the fence sitters, ‘Extraaa Innings’ combined academic cricket with mainstream entertainment like never before.

This resulted in a whopping 50% increase in average rating of Indian matches and 37% increase in the rating of non-India matches, reached out to a record 78% of the Indian audiences in C&S homes. More interestingly the female gross reach grew by an unprecedented 261%. Mandira Bedi became a celebrity and was soon a part of life even for women in conservative Indian households. Purists like Wisden, which condemned the experiment with women anchors during the ICC Champions Trophy in Colombo in September 2002, were forced to retreat. Women joined betting circles and housewives in Delhi and Ahmedabad formed clubs to enjoy the sport (ESPNSTAR, “Interesting history of women’s cricket in India”).

In terms of playing the sport, there has been significant increase in the number of professional sportswomen in variety of sports including Badminton, tennis, hockey, golf and athletics. The increase in the number of tournaments is a testament to that fact, recently an international basketball tournament – the FIBA Asia Women’s Championship was hosted by Chennai, Featuring the best players and top teams from across the continent, the tournament was a success. (Deccan Chronicle, India Wakes up to alternative sports)

Female sports fans are different from male sports fans -fact or fiction?

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According to a research by Sargent, Zillmann, and Weaver, men and women enjoy distinctly different types of sports. Their findings revealed that males preferred watching combative sports on television whereas females were partial to stylistic sports. Sport socialization research examines the impact that environmental forces have on children and individuals from two different perspectives: socialization into sport and socialization through sport.

This line of inquiry indicates that people are attracted to sport due to formal channels (i. e., parents, peers, coaches, mass media, teachers) and informal channels (i. e., school, church, and community-based programs), as researched by Kenyon & McPherson .

Media plays a primary role for introducing new teams and sport leagues to adults. According to a study by Bruce, Institutional, social, and familial contexts also shape viewers' interpretations of sports broadcasts. He also found that women did not display strong loyalties to specific women's sports teams that are common with men and their favorite men's teams. This was attributed to the extensive sports information and media attention given to men's sports.

In a study on cognitive development and socialization by James, in the initial development of team loyalty, it was found that children form preferences for sports teams early in life. Results of this study revealed and that the gender stereotype associating sports with males was prevalent among children and that fathers were the most influential socializing agent in introducing children to sports teams.

In a study on experiences and effects of viewing televised sports, Gantz and Wenner found differences based on gender for 9 of the 15 motivation items examined; however, these differences were not dramatic. Most notable among their findings, women were more likely to watch televised sports for companionship and sharing the experience with family and friends whereas men watched to unwind and become wrapped up in the excitement and drama of the game.

Men invested more time in reading, listening, watching, and talking about sports and they were more likely to experience emotional fluctuations from watching sports.

Men also tend to display a fan behavior and identify more strongly as a fan according to Dietz-Uhler.

However, an equal number of male and female college students considered themselves to be sport fans. Females reported being fans because they attended and watched sporting events with family and friends while males were more likely to consider themselves fans because they played sports and wanted to acquire sports information.

Measuring Spectator Motives

Various methods to research on sport spectators have been developed which utilizes a number of scales to assess the psychological motives related to attendance, media usage and interest at live sporting events.

1) One of the first methods was developed by Wann. He designed a

comprehensive scale to measure eight factors observed to influence

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behavior; eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic (gambling), aesthetic, group affiliation, and family.

2) Second method developed by Trail and James was the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) to examine ten aspects of spectator behavior: achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, drama, escape, family, physical attraction, physical skills of players, and social interaction.

3) Thirdly, McDonald, Milne and Hong (2002) utilized a scale to measure spectator and sport participant motives related to: risk-taking, stress reduction, aggression, affiliation, social facilitation, self-esteem, competition, achievement, skill mastery, aesthetics, value development, and self-actualization.

Research Methodology

Conceptual Framework or Problem Definition

Till now through an extensive analysis of literature we have seen that men and women both consume sports in their own way and one cannot generalize the consumption pattern of women. The motivations and the level of involvement for women depend on a lot of factors.

Research Gap : There is no study done in the Indian context to understand the women sports consumers, their stages of involvement and motivations to participate. Hence, this study is a step towards achieving an understanding of the same.

Research Objective:

The objective of the research is to understand the Woman sports consumer in terms of her involvement level and motivation to consume a particular sport.

The study of motivation for predicting consumer behavior is very difficult as to understand the interrelation between motives and specific behavior. Also, to develop a list of consumer motives comprehensive enough to capture the wide variety of motivating forces that stimulate and shape behavior is challenging.

To do the above, a framework could be constructed in the form of a social continuum which broadens the sport consumer motivation notion by using involvement as a motivational construct to distinguish between various levels. Factors like woman's role in the society would also be a part of this construct. Hence, a study of the immediate environment becomes imperative for studying the consumption pattern.

The level of involvement of women consumer of sports should form the basis of the framework of social continuum where the stages vary from viewership to acceptance to fan base to taking part or actively playing to encouraging others to play or advocacy. As shown below,

Identification of critical factors which defines each of the stages could be looked at and the motives of each stage should also be looked at. According to each stage a corresponding set of behavior would be associated.

Understanding different spectator motivations and involvement levels can be of significant benefit to the sport marketer looking to boost team revenues and gate receipts. Of particular interest are both the marketing manager understanding the specific motivations that drive a spectator or fan to consume a sport and the subsequent development of marketing communications based on these motivations. These effective marketing communication plans can often help build groups of “diehard” fans, thus expanding the customer base for a team. Spectator and fan motivation can also be used as an effective psychographic segmentation method that can result in more effective marketing campaigns.

Sub Research Objective:

Involvement

Involvement could be defined as a state of interest, stimulation or motivation towards an object, a product or even an activity. As put by a study done by Mitchell, Involvement represents an internal state variable that reflects the amount of arousal, interest, or drive evoked by a particular stimuli or situation that mediates consumer behavior. Application of the involvement construct to examine sport spectators and

sport fans would provide a fuller understanding of motives and what stimuli and situations direct behavior (e. g., attendance, purchase of team merchandise, media consumption) and attitudinal formation (e. g., preferences, commitment, loyalty). Some parameters of study for involvement would be

Importance of product as perceived by the consumer

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Pleasure or enjoyment provided by the product

Risk of making the wrong purchase or participating in the non enjoyable activity

Self expression it represents the identification of the person with the purchase or participation

Centrality to lifestyle, encompasses socializing and interactions

Motivation

Theories and studies have been done by researchers on how to assess the motives for consuming sports. These motives can be generally classified into the broad categories of study as -

Entertainment

Stress and stimulation seeking

Social Interaction

Achievement seeking

Approach to Analysis

According to the sample defined above, the research would be conducted two phases:

Phase 1: This would be in the form of exploratory research which would be used to develop a conceptual model for examining involvement stages and their corresponding motives. The purpose of this is to identify any potential

parameters related to spectator motives or involvement framework which were missed. In-depth interview of 5 respondents approximately would be taken in each market segment.

Phase 2: This is the validation phase where the qualitative study would be validated by quantitative so that the result of the first phase could be extrapolated to a larger population if required.

Sampling Universe: The sampling universe could be defined as young women who are primarily college goers or into the first 2-3 years of job, who follow at least one sport, belonging to SEC A or SEC B.

Details of Phase I

Sample Size: 15-20 (Qualitative study)

The sample size setting is done with a non-statistical approach where the selection is done anticipating subgroup analysis. The anticipation is that 4 meaningful clusters (market segments) would emerge and each cluster will contain approximately 5 respondents in average.

SEC A

SEC B

College Goers

Urban

Semi Urban

Working Women

Semi Urban

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Urban

This is for the qualitative part of the research.

Sampling Procedure: Convenience Sampling (Non- probability sampling)

Care would be taken to ensure that heterogeneity of the entire population can be effectively covered in the sample.

Details of Phase II

The phase II methodology would depend on the data collected in the first phase.

Scope

The study would help marketers understand the woman spectator motivations and stages of involvement in consuming sports in India, in turn, help in predicting behavior

This would help marketers tap into the growing woman spectator base.

Expected Contribution

There has been no study on understanding women spectators in the Indian context done till date. This research would help both the academia and industry to understand an upcoming segment.

Understanding different spectator motivations and involvement levels is important for a sport marketer to tap the women consumer segment which is increasingly becoming independent economically and socially.

Understanding the involvement and motivations that drive a woman spectator to consume a sport in India would help marketers target this segment with crisp and relevant marketing communications.

The involvement stages and motivations can also be used as an effective psychographic segmentation method for forming effective campaigns.