



Critical Analysis of Gender Biasness in Sports: Challenges and Opportunities for Women in Sports in District Sargodha

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Abstract: Women's participation in sports has increased significantly over the years, yet they still face various challenges and barriers that limit their full participation and representation in sports. Gender analysis of women's sports is necessary to identify and address these challenges and to promote gender equality in sports. The study draws on data collected using questionnaires completed by women athletes. The current study was quantitative and a cross-sectional study. The findings reveal that gender bias and discrimination are still prevalent in sports, and women face multiple obstacles that limit their participation, representation, and success in sports. H₁, There is a positive relationship between the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, Cultural background, and Level of participation and Achievements of women in sports. The correlation coefficient between the Independent and Dependent variables is 0.427. This indicates a positive correlation between the variables, which means that if the values of the I.V. increase the values of the D.V. also tend to increase. The significance level of the correlation coefficient is reported as 0.01 (two-tailed). This means that the probability of obtaining a correlation coefficient as large as 0.427 due to chance is less than 1% (or $p < 0.01$). H₂, There is a positive effect of the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, and Cultural background on the Level of participation and Achievements of women in sports. This is the proportion of variance in the outcome variable that is explained by the predictor variable. In this case, the value of r^2 is 18.2%. This indicates that 18.2% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the predictor variable. The paper concludes by proposing a set of recommendations for promoting gender equality in sports, including improving access to resources and opportunities, combating gender bias and discrimination, promoting equal pay, and increasing media coverage and investment in women's sports.

Key Words: Gender Examination, women in sports, leadership opportunities, Problem for women.

1. Introduction

The sports industry is not an exception to the discussion and lobbying surrounding gender equality in other sectors. Women have made considerable progress in the past few decades in fighting stereotypes and breaking down barriers in the world of sports. Women still encounter a variety of obstacles and inequities, though, which prevent them from fully participating and succeeding in sports (Staurowsky et al., 2020). An analysis of the problems female athletes face makes evident the institutional barriers, prejudices, and differential opportunities still present in the sporting domain. This integration aims to discuss the multifaceted characteristics of these matters and any potential consequences on women's performance in sports, feministic movements, and overall gender equality in the given society (Amin et al., 2023). There are several barriers and inequities for women to fight and practice

sports Many barriers and gender discrimination have previously made it difficult for women to practice sports. For women's equity in sports around the world, much has been achieved in the various years. However, there are still some challenges that are still experienced by women which hinder them from fully engaging and excelling in sports. This is the main issue affecting female athletes; that is, the lack of equal standards as well as facilities in sports (Odia, 2023). It is a well-documented fact that women are often brides of funding, sponsorship, and media coverage compared to their male counterparts. This means that female athletes are offered different treatment in terms of attention, recognition, and encouragement than their male counterparts and hence stand helpless in their respective disciplines (Roby, 2023).

Sexism and discrimination stemming from gender is another matter of concern. Women athletes always subordinate themselves to cultural perceptions and myths that downplay their achievements. They are associated with the assumption that female players act less seriously in sports, play less competitively, or are in some way inferior to male counterparts. These prejudices limit their promotion opportunities, management roles, and sponsorships (Park, 2021). They also stand a high chance of being sexually harassed and/or sexually assaulted. Enhanced by the fact that the sports sector continues to be an area of the world with numerous cases of gender discrimination and harassment, including abuse. This behavior also has negative implications to the affected individuals and promotes a hostile climate thereby limiting women's prospects and participation in sporting activities (Benya et al., 2018). Many Southeast Asian women face problems that are general to women all over the world but complicated by cultural and societal factors unique to Southeast Asia. While several Asian nations have made progress in promoting women's sports, there are still large gaps that need to be filled. A woman is often made to stop joining sporting activities due to the culture and norms that are placed upon her (Mann & Hacker, 2024). Women are limited to the option of engaging in sports because of the societal norms and or expectations that deny them equal opportunities. Another challenge that affects women's engagement in sports is poor support and encouragement from families and society. Other factors in several Asian countries include cultural and religious aspects that dictate the level of participation of women in sporting activities (Phipps et al., 2023). In some view, there may exist social taboos and job restrictions for females who take part in some sports that claim to be indecent or improper. Asia also has its fair share of problems such as poor infrastructure, a shortage of finance, and unfair distribution of training opportunities. These are the reasons that limit the development of female athletic ability and opportunities thus inhibiting the chances of female athletes to compete on international platforms (Wasserfurth et al., 2020).

The combination of the factors owing to structural, social, and cultural factors makes differentiating between the sporting difficulties of women in Pakistan possible. Some of the Pakistani women athletes have achieved great feats; however, they come across certain hurdles that will not allow them to progress (Memon et al., 2018). Here, challenges of the Pakistani women's sports business include; The industry's main barriers are gender bias and cultural practices. Standard roles that are assigned to women are girly and mostly tied to the home thus limiting them from participating in sports. Such issues as social pressure taboos, and cultural stigmas reduce the possibility of a woman taking up sports as a job or simply exercising (Sarwar, 2022). Challenges that face the female athletes in Pakistan include; poor sporting infrastructure, absence of proper training facilities, and no funds. Unfortunately, many sports organizations and institutions are not able to provide money and support to increase female participation in sports or in watching women's sports (Sotiriadou & De Haan, 2019). Female athletes suffer in Pakistan because there is no developed system of sports for them in Pakistan and there is no attention in the media for them. There are few sponsorship opportunities available because the sports are not very noticeable or well-renowned; thus female athletes cannot financially support themselves through sports alone (Law, 2018).

Despite improvements in women's rights, gender imbalance in sports persists. When it comes to practicing sports, women face several obstacles and challenges, including limited access to opportunities and resources, gender-based discrimination, and cultural views that prohibit engaging in physical activities or sports. The goal of this research is to conduct a comprehensive gender analysis of the challenges encountered by female athletes, with an emphasis on identifying the structural barriers and underlying causes that sustain these differences. The goal of this research is to increase understanding of the challenges faced by female athletes and offer recommendations for the development of programs and policies that promote greater gender parity in sports-related pursuits.

1.1 Research Objective

- a) To examine the unequal access and opportunities given to women in sports compared to men.
- b) To assess the impact of gender inequality on women's participation, performance, and carrier
- c) To examine the social, cultural barriers, and economic factors that influence girl's engagement in sports.

d) To pinpoint the unique difficulties that female athletes have in sports.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

H₁: There is a positive relationship between the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, Cultural background, and Level of participation and Achievements of women in sports.

H₂: There is a positive effect of the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, and Cultural background on the Level of participation and Achievements of women in sports.

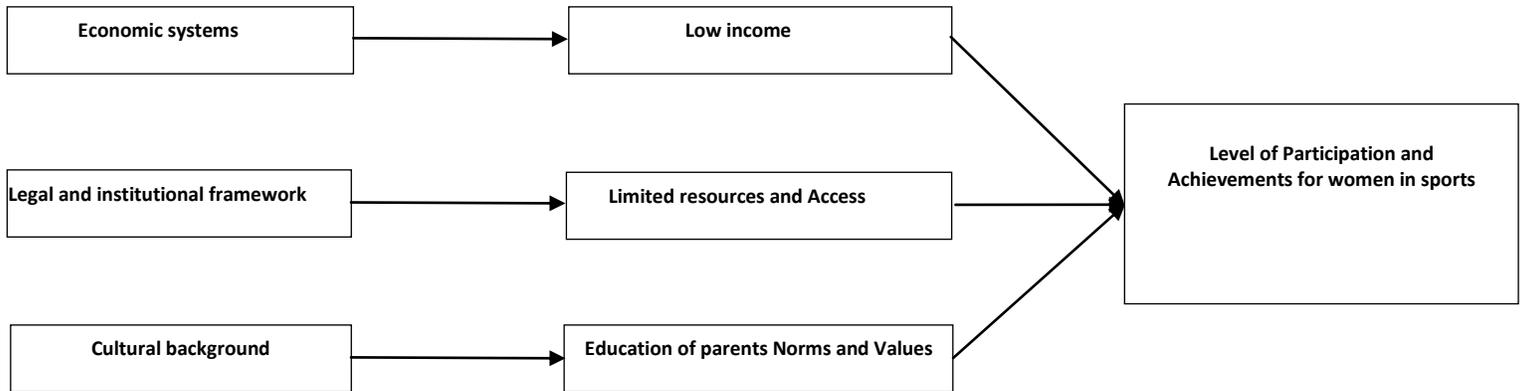


Figure.1. Research Model

2. Literature Review

Stereotyping and unfair treatment of female athletes/teams still prevail to the present day and restrict women's opportunities along with numerous obstacles in the world of sports. The studies have revealed that women encounter elements of restrictions in their activities, asset access, and power positions and are recognized by the media with less respect than men (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). All these are well rooted in social and cultural practices that associate sports with the male gender hence women are left out with little or no chances. Experience from similar other regions indicates that cultural and religious attitudes in districts like District Sargodha go a notch higher in ensuring that women do not engage in sports or can only engage in those roles that are acceptable in cultures such as taking limited part in sports (Pfister, 2010). This form of gender prejudice does not allow women athletes the opportunities that they need to grow but also re-establishes their plight as one that is hard to shift. But, on the bright side, there is an emerging trend in women in sports due to awareness of gender equity. Some efforts targeted towards strengthening and uplifting women through sports like community-based and policy changes are being implemented and thus there is little hope (Nkealah, 2011). This had only begun in District Sargodha with attempts made to focus on the issues that women sports athletes face. Initiatives that make an effort to offer equal chances and make the accessibility of the facilities as well as the encouragement of women's sports from the grassroots level are vital in eradicating gender parity (De Soysa & Zipp, 2019). The intersection of such challenges and opportunities constitutes a research genre that provides some clues on how gender equity in sports can be enhanced particularly in preservationist societies. Currently, efforts to explain the different ways in which gender influences the experiences and performance of female athletes must be anchored on a gender paradigm (Price, 2015). This literature review will critically review the studies on gender and women's participation in sports, with a focus on the themes and issues that have emerged. Women's representation in sports includes restrictions due to gender roles and discrimination because these phenomena contribute to the stagnation of women's sports (Hyre et al., 2017). Girls and women are often persuaded not to play sports because of such negative gender stereotype constructs that portray them as frail, insecure, and emotionless. Two more forms of discrimination are unfair treatment concerning remuneration and professed resources, absence of representatives in decision-making bodies, sexual abuse, and harassment (Tormey, 2022). Historically, men have occupied most of the posts in sports while women are often relegated to the background or considered of lesser importance. This has resulted in inequality,

discrimination, and no chances for women in athletics. A valuable means of thinking about these challenges is a gender approach that can help identify where these problems come from and how to solve them (Hernandez, 2022). Some of the key areas that will be explored throughout this literature review include Discrimination, Access to opportunities/ opportunities equality, and representation of women in sports media as we analyze the issue of women in sports based on 'gender analysis'. One of the challenges that women-shaped athletes face is the discrimination that they receive in sports, let alone inside the pitch (George, 2023). This may show itself in Salary discrimination, the restricted use of facilities and equipment, or placing women employees as not strong or as unproductive as their male counterparts. The challenges most affected females in sports are lack of access to lots of opportunities. Even though sports are useful in many ways including physical and social skills girls and women face key barriers to participation (Forsyth et al., 2019). Another important concern that has a bearing on women's opportunities or experiences in this field is the representation of women in sports media. This is true even today with a major problem stemming from the sports news environment that provides limited coverage to women athletes and when it provides such coverage, then it tends to be more of the glamour shots of the particular lady athlete in question or some gossip about her rather than coverage of her performance (Silbar, 2021). Due to this, young girls might be ejected from practicing athletics which would further enforce stereotypical issues of the ineptitude of the female gender as compared to the male gender.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Social Role Theory

According to the social role theory, the social roles that men and women are expected to play in society have something to do with gender disparities in sports. This idea argues that women are assumed to be caring and nurturing while men are assumed to be hostile and controlling. This means that in the sporting field, men are portrayed as better endowed with talent and ability as compared to women who are seen more as followers or supporters such as the cheerleaders or trainers. This unequal division of labor between the male and female sexes may be harmful to women's chances of experiencing equitable opportunities to embrace sports and support women's sporting activities. For example, it was established that girls have less access to many sports resources and equipment as compared to boys, thus deepening gender inequalities in sports.

3. Methodology

The present study adopted the quantitative research approach and it was conducted at District Sargodha; more specifically at Tehsil Sargodha and Tehsil Sahiwal was selected for data collection purposes. Both purposive and convenience sampling methods were used to collect data from the respondents. The data was collected from two key locations: the colleges and universities of Tehsil Sargodha and the Girls' Degree College at Sahiwal. The study involved 105 female students who all participated in sports, and all the participants were from the University of Sargodha. The primary method of data collection for this paper was a Lickert scale structured questionnaire, designed based on the set objectives of the study. As it has already been mentioned, most of the questions were prepared in advance to address the objectives of the research. The collected data was analyzed and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. One of the practitioner's more popular tools for using quantitative data analysis was SPSS which was very helpful in saving the researcher a lot of time in the course of data entry and analysis. In this study, descriptive statistics were utilized to inform data analysis and composite summaries of the participants' demographic information and other crucial variables regarding gender bias in sports. To understand the correlations between gender bias, challenges, and opportunities for women in sports, a correlation analysis was conducted. In regards to gender bias, regression analysis was used to measure how women athletes' participation and performance were affected.

4. Data Analysis and Results of the Study

Table 1: The data distribution about the Demographic part of the Study

Sr.#	Variables	Categories	Frequency	Valid percentage
1	Age	12-22	73	69.5%
		22-26	19	18.1%

		26-30	13	12.4%
2	Education	BS	88	83.8%
		MSc	13	12.4%
		M Phil	3	3.8%
3	Marital Status	Single	82	78.1%
		Married	18	17.1%
		Divorced	5	4.8%
4	Parents Education	Illiterate	13	12.4%
		Primary	4	3.8%
		Middle	23	21.9%
		Matric	65	61.9%
5	Occupation of the Parents	Businessman	4	3.8%
		Employed	32	30.5%
		Shopkeeper	14	13.3%
		Labor	55	52.4%
6	Income	10,000 to 20000	12	11.4%
		20000 to 30000	81	77.1%
		30000 to 40000	9	8.6%
		40000 to 50000	3	2.9%
7	Game playing	Cricket	48	45.7%
		Baseball	27	25.7%
		Badminton	15	14.3%
		Football	9	8.6%
		All rounder	6	5.7%
8	Playing from	1 year	6	5.7%
		2 year	36	34.3%
		3 year	6	5.7%
		4 year	30	28.6%
		5 year	27	25.7%
4	Locality	Rural	15	14.3%
		Urban	66	62.9%
		Semi-Urban	24	23.8%

Table 1 shows the frequency and valid percentage of various demographic variables of the participants. The majority of the participants (69.5%) fall in the age range of 12-22 years, followed by 18.1% in the age range of 22-26 years, and 12.4% in the age range of 26-30 years. Most of the participants (83.8%) have completed their Bachelor's degree, followed by 12.4% who have completed their Master's degree, and only 3.8% have completed their M-Phil. The majority of the participants (78.1%) are single, followed by 17.1% who are married, and only 4.8% are divorced. Most of the participants' parents have completed their Matric education (61.9%), followed by 23% who have completed their Middle education, 12.4% have completed their Primary education, and only 12.4% are illiterate. Most of the participants' parents are laborers (52.4%), followed by 30.5% employed, 13.3% shopkeepers, and only 3.8% Businessmen. The majority of the participants (77.1%) have an income range of 20,000 to 30,000, followed by 11.4% who have an income range of 10,000 to 20,000, and only a few participants

have an income range of 30,000 to 50,000. The most popular game among the participants is cricket (45.7%), followed by baseball (25.7%), badminton (14.3%), and football (8.6%). A small percentage of participants (5.7%) consider themselves as all-rounders. The participants have been playing games for different durations. Most participants have been playing games for 2 to 4 years, with 34.3% playing for 2 years, 28.6% for 4 years, and 25.7% for 5 years. Only a few participants have been playing games for 1 year (5.7%) or 3 years (5.7%). The majority of the participants (62.9%) live in urban areas, followed by 23.8% who live in semi-urban areas and only 14.3% who live in rural areas.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

H₁: There is a positive relationship between the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, Cultural background, and Level of participation and Achievements of women in sports.

Table 2: The data distribution of Correlations

I.V	Pearson Correlation	I.V	D.V
		1	.427**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	105	105
D.V	Pearson Correlation	.427**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	105	105

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between two variables (independent variable) and (dependent variable). The correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. In this case, the correlation coefficient between the Independent and Dependent variables is **0.427**. This indicates a positive correlation between the two variables, which means that as the values of the I.V. increase; the values of the D.V. also tend to increase. The significance level of the correlation coefficient is reported as 0.01 (two-tailed). This means that the probability of obtaining a correlation coefficient as large as 0.427 due to chance is less than 1% (or $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the correlation between the two variables is statistically significant. The sample size for both variables is 105, which is a moderately large sample. The sample size is important because larger sample sizes increase the statistical power of the analysis, making it easier to detect significant correlations, the correlation table indicates a moderate positive relationship between the I.V and D.V, which is statistically significant. However, it is important to note that correlation does not necessarily imply causation and further research would be needed to establish causality between the two variables. A correlation coefficient of 0.427 suggests a moderately positive relationship between the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, Cultural background, Level of participation, and Achievements of women in sports. This means that there is a tendency for these factors to be positively associated with each other.

4.2 Regression Analysis

H₂: There is a positive effect of the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, and Cultural background on the Level of participation and Achievements of women in sports.

Table 3: The data distribution of Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.427 ^a	18.2	.174	4.73506

a. Predictors: (Constant), I.V

18.2%

The model summary table provides information about the fit of a linear regression model with one predictor variable (I.V) and one outcome variable (not mentioned).

R Square: This is the proportion of variance in the outcome variable that is explained by the predictor variable. In this case, the value of R Square is 0.182 or 18.2%. This indicates that 18.2% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the predictor variable.

Table 4: The data distribution about ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	513.572	1	513.572	22.906	.000 ^b
	Residual	2309.342	103	22.421		
	Total	2822.914	104			

a. Dependent Variable: D.V

b. Predictors: (Constant), I.V

The above table shows that regarding the effect of the Independent variable on the Dependent variable of the study in views of this, it is concluded independent variables have a significant effect on the Dependent variable because the sig value is less than **0.05**

Table 5: The data distribution about Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.503	2.646		.190	.850
	I.V	.305	.064	.427	4.786	.000

a. Dependent Variable: D.V

Coefficients show data regarding the coefficient values of the regression analysis. In this regard, data showed that the independent variable has a positive **0.427** and a significant effect of **0.000** on the dependent variable of the study. A regression result of 0.427 suggests that the Economic system, Legal and Institutional Framework, and Cultural background have a positive effect on the level of participation and Achievements of women in sports. This means that these factors may contribute to the success of women in sports.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of the present research underscore the effects of the economic system, legal/institutional structure, and cultural setting on women’s involvement and performance in sports in District Sargodha. H₁ is supported by the results; therefore, there is a possibility that these independent variables have a positive correlation with the level of participation and achievements of women in sports. In particular, the level of conformity between the independent variables (economic system, legal and institutional framework, cultural background) and level of participation, as well as achievements, is expressed by the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.427, meaning a moderate positive correlation. Therefore the coefficients of determination of 0.301 and 0.441 signify a moderately strong and positive relationship between the two variables while the significance level of 0.01 lowers the chances of this happening by chance to less than 1%. Therefore, it can be seen that all the great economic, legal, and cultural factors have a key role that has helped women to do well in sports.

This observation is consistent with other studies that have been conducted in comparable environments. A previous study, which is, agrees with the opinion and has identified a direct positive relationship between institutional

support and women's sports participation indicating that legal reforms of policies and economic liberalization have been some of the major factors that boosted women's athletes' participation (Eime et al., 2022). Likewise, the other study highlighted the aspect of culture and culture acceptance as well as support from the community regarding women competing in various sports (Casey et al., 2022). All of these prior studies support the findings of the present study by drawing attention to the complexity of obstacles that women experience and the need for systematic organizational intervention to combat gender discrimination in sports. In H_2 , the regression analysis indicates that the economic system, legal & institutional environment, and culture are positively significant influences on the participation/achievement of women in sports with an R square of 0.182. This means that the total variance in the dependent variable which can be accounted for by the independent variables is 18.2 percent. Whilst this figure is by no means exceptionally high, it does prove that all of these items are significant contributing factors to women's performances and involvement in sports. This positive relationship is born out from the coefficients table by the regression coefficient of 0.427 and the statistical significance of 0.000.

The economic policies/legal protections had a significant impact on women's participation in sports, the result of the current study accords with a similar study (Vadhera, 2018). A study noted the following as explanations for the poor achievements of women athletes; poor facilities, inadequate funding, and weak legal support could be a step up for women athletes (Staurowsky et al., 2020). The current findings complement these outcomes on the same with findings of women's active participation in sports being in tandem with the structural reformations in social structures with emphasis to legal and economic institutions. As much as the correlation and regression analysis entails benefits in coming up with association and prediction tests between gender biases and opportunities for women in sports, the researcher realizes certain drawbacks of this approach. Like it is with most of the cross-sectional studies, correlation does not equal causation again, here. Hence, from the outcome of this research study, it is acknowledged that there is a positive correlation between the independent variables and women's achievements in sports but to establish causality more elaborate research involving cross-sectional investigation and a better analysis of these individual factors has to be carried out. Sports is closely tied to structural changes in society, particularly in legal, institutional, and economic frameworks. While the correlation and regression analysis provides valuable insights into the relationship between gender biases and opportunities for women in sports, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this approach. As with most correlation-based studies, a significant correlation does not necessarily imply causation. Therefore, while there is evidence of a positive relationship between the independent variables and women's achievements in sports, further research involving longitudinal studies and a more nuanced analysis of individual factors is required to establish a causal link between these variables. The findings of this study affirm the significance of the economic system, legal and institutional frameworks, and cultural background in shaping the participation and achievements of women in sports. Besides contributing to growing knowledge about gender bias and athletic activities, this research calls for untiring efforts toward enhancing the factors that could enable women to practice in this area. Mainly it is necessary to understand economic restrictions, legal requirements, and cultural differences as far as gender bias hinders women in sports or not, and make changes as appropriate.

5. Conclusion

The studies carried out in District Sargodha regarding the aspect of gender bias in sports specific to women suggest that the economic system, legal and institutional environment, and cultural endowment profoundly shape women's sports performance. The results also show that these factors are positively correlated and gain a significance level, meaning economic support, legal statutes or policy, and cultural perceptions have a positive effect on women in sports. Nevertheless, the study provides living examples of such issues as societal expectations and restricted organizational support that still encumber women to the optimum level in sports. Such barriers must be mitigated through formulated policies, promotional campaigns, and equality adoption in the 'fairer sex' sports. This work would also suggest that more needs to be done to eliminate gender bias and address issues of parity and opportunities and achievements of women in sport at the county and national level.

5.1 Recommendation

There is a need for the government to make appropriate policies that will ensure gender equity in sporting activities. Some ways this can be done include: increasing the funding for women's sports initiatives, developing campaigns to popularize women's sports, and signing laws that demand equal remunerations for female athletes. Thus, it is recommended that sports organizations set down practices that are halting the progress of gender equality. To do

this, there may be a need to offer equal opportunity to male and female coaches, leaders, and participants. Women's sports may also require more coverage than their male counterparts are given for example. At the home level parents and guardians must encourage girl children to embrace sports by providing them with resources equally as the boys. There is sometimes a need to destroy all previously created gender stereotypes and encourage equal treatment. Women that engage in sports should continue demanding their rights and those of other women and equal rights should be granted to women. This may involve creating relations and sources of support and going out for opportunities to cultivate their sport.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

- Limited data: It is also possible that there are disparities in the available information relating to women and their involvement or success in athletics, therefore it may not be easy to conduct a good analysis on the issue.
- Biased data: The supplied data could be distorted especially due to human interferences hence leading to bad findings and solutions.
- Cultural and contextual factors: A sort of gender differential treatment is also observable in culture and setting which can vary from one nation to another or from one region to another. Thus, I found that it may be difficult to generalize a study completed in one geographic location to others.
- Limited sample size: While discussing such variables as race or ethnicity, and sexual orientation, the number of cases under study might not be enough to result in significant conclusions.
- Limited scope: Since there is a potential for focusing on an area of the problem as opposed to the greater system that creates it, research studies could perhaps fixate on one or possibly two aspects of it, including coverage of the phenomenon by the media, pay disparities or representation ratios.
- Bias in the researcher: Researchers themselves may bring in their own biases into the process when developing questions, the means of data collection, and even the data interpretation process.
- Applicability: Very specific in its applicability that it only may apply to the University of Sargodha Punjab Pakistan.

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