

FEMALE REPORTERS: A REVIEW OF SPORTS SECTOR JOURNALISM

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ABSTRACT

Although the women advancement has been accepted widely in terms of works & workplaces in comparison to men, certain fields like sports journalism have sufficient proofs of gender biases because of a prevailing custom of sexual favouritism in support of males. Women face discrimination whether they're on the field and coaches as well as sportsmen look down upon them. In addition, many women sports reporters are victims of sexual assaults in form of verbal abuses also. When it comes to offices, women journalists have to face favouritism from colleagues and bosses and such aspects result in immense difficulty for the professional career in spite of the love and dedication for work. Although it is depicted to be free from desegregation, women must be incorporated with respect to sports journalism and media sector in a full-fledged way for establishing the real theme of impartiality and fairness among genders.

Keywords: Women, Sports, Journalism, Equality, Sporting, Domination, Society, Favouritism, Media

I. WOMEN IN SPORTS JOURNALISM

Sports provide a feeling of masculinity with an organic competitive mind, blood and sweat terms which are the contrast to the feminine nature [1]. Several conventional people are in favor of male domination in these sports in terms of analysts and reporters who are the best of the best among the sports lovers. The reporters are the most superior game fans who have constructed their profession based on it and mostly males do so, not the females.

With time and technological development, orthodox mentality regarding specific gender-restricted ideas are shattered and females are accepted to be as good as their male fellows, although certain areas are still under the male-dominated where female participation is neglected and denied. Sports journalism is such a field which is thought to be the field of males and here male-favoritism is still prevalent.

II. MALE FRONTIER

Efficient researchers and analysts like Marie Hardin and Jennie Ruby have studied that, a sense and necessity of male domination is formed by the males whenever females try to break the boundaries and enter into the conventional-male fields. The dominating favoritism is unwanted in the 21st century when every sector has seen women advancement and their proficiency in huge number. As per Bleske (1991), it was the aim of the American Society of Newspaper Editors to magnify the variety in 1978 across 22 years [2]. Although, the deadline was expanded because the aim wouldn't

be achieved within the targeted time. Several newsrooms and media offices are still acquiring the medieval aged mentality where female staffs are very less.

When females make their mark everywhere in the society and civilization, the energy of the male chauvinist perception increases where women are still restricted to incorporate. Certain sectors are still considered as 'male fields' and acceptance of women in these sectors are regarded as something against the sanctity of the respective sports. As Kirca said that there lies a general concept that women are soft, delicate and have less rivalry or toughness in their overall characteristics, so they're not ideal for rough sports. The core features of women might not be like their men fellows but when it comes to enthusiasm, there are no such differences [3]. There are women who love sports and want to pursue their career in this field as reporters.

III. FAVORITISM ON THE FIELD

Sports sector comprises of tough coaches, extremely hard and rough sportsmen and sports reporters. The sports field seems to foster interest in getting covered by media as this can focus the sports content and introduce more and more advertisements and coverage. But there is a huge difference when it comes to treating the women sports reporters like their men peers instead of welcoming wholeheartedly. Where male reporters are welcomed and treated with much respect, female sports reporters are treated as if they are less qualified and unwanted in this field. So there is a continuous test or examination for female journalists to prove themselves as eligible. As per a sports reporter of Central Virginia Ryan Yemen, it's like a test to pass the eligibility criteria for being a true sports lover. He further added that the respondents have a nature to examine the women journalists before giving respect and admiration as compared to the men journalists. The fact that these women journalists have already passed eligibility examination to pursue in this field is not considered seriously. Even some people believe that female sports reporters can only cover female games or athletics. The number of female athletics is not as high as the males, so naturally, the number of women sports journalists shouldn't be much high also. This is another discriminatory perception. In the US, women's sports can cover just 7% of the media broadcast but the part of women athletics is 40% of all athletics in the country [4].

But there is lack of interest and henceforth, the intensity of media coverage is very less. Although it's the other way story because to magnify the public interest, the channels and media must telecast and cover Women's athletics in increasing manner. In spite of vehement advancement and competition in the field of female sports, the admiration and media interest is still less. As Gauntlett (2002) said, that the reporters are working based on a fake and dominating mentality that males are better than females when it comes to sport and culture. They clarify that all these are based on audiences, but the media ethics and readers quest are the reasons of masculinity-hegemonic sports sections [5]. According to Craft and Wanta, sport and the respective media are fields of male domination and false presumptions create the discriminatory act of keeping women, mainly the women sports reporters out of this genre [6].

Although the female sports reporters mustn't be restricted to only women's games and events, the amplification of women's sports coverage could be helpful to gain equal respect and admiration. For this, the general audience should comprehend the impartiality and equality between sportspersons. The equality between athletes doesn't come with a condition to equalize the sporting nature and habits. We look down upon the quality of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) by

comparing a particular game with that of the National Association (NBA). But is it even okay and is it included in the duties of WNBA to copy the game or nature of NBA? As it's in the nature of the audience to link sex-varied games in the same bracket, so they demand to witness more competitive men games. Although if it was seen and acclaimed that women's lacrosse is an entirely different game and the NBA is not the same thing like WNBA, the female games could earn more coverage and viewership.

Currently, only 2% airtime is allotted to female sports in 'Sports center' of ESPN and 5% of media telecast at the time of the greatest show on Earth, the Olympics. An increment in media attention and coverage would certainly be advantageous [7].

There is only one post where female journalists can get into without any competition, and it's the rank of a sideline journalist. But the most important criteria of being a sideline reporter are an unmatched beauty. The eligibility criterion is mostly neglected in this aspect. As per a regional sports reporter, the roles of female sideline reporters are regarded only as beautiful faces amid the ruthless bunch of coaches, sportsmen and media people and this point engulfs all other qualities. Erin Andrews is a famous name among the sideline journalists who are often looked just as a pretty face, in spite of being supremely talented and knowledgeable. This criterion is also widely accepted with respect to the successful female sports reporters, those who are allotted the on-air time because they're attractive, and not because they're knowledgeable about the game.

The aspect of beauty in terms of female sports journalism isn't rare for newly introduced thing, this has been found quite ago as eligibility criteria. As per Senat, who was a publishing researcher as well as the editing head and publisher didn't omit this criterion till the middle of the 1970s [8]. Furthermore, he explained that the captions of 'Editor and Publisher' as well as news contents regarding females used terms like "Dixie darling," "news hens" or "matron" which were derogatory and depreciating as well. Unfortunately, these types of terms are still prevalent in male hegemonic areas, from demonstrating the glamour of women sports reporters like Erin Andrews to FOX News making the critical remark on Hillary Clinton's appearance (because politics is male-dominated area). Even women reporters have been subjected to sexual assaults (also verbally) by the coaching staffs and the sportsmen they are covering. As Breeds have remarked, 48% of female journalists and media staffs could voice the experience of sexual assaults in a locker room and these incidents are not flashed in news headlines. The issue and debate about Erin Andrews ultimately made it to the media [9]. As CBS News has reported, the person with a title of Barrett took a room adjacent to Erin Andrews several times to make offensive videos of Andrews and publish online. This incident made it to the headlines which resulted in captivating Barrette. Another case happened when soccer player Joe Namath was drunk and flirted with the female reporter on-air. This case wasn't as serious as the former one but was enough to blow the respect and admiration of Namath. Such cases are not flashed regularly and this results in an assumption that these cases happen rarely. Female-objectification happens in a casual manner, e.g. Ryan Yemen attested that a football coach casually said that he would prefer to give the interview to a female journalist as she was attractive. These instances are taken jokingly and often bypassed but must be considered as a serious offense against females.

The clearest aftermath of favoritism in favor of males in sports media is demonstrated in the real on-air period that female reporters get as compare o their male peers. Sarah Brennan, a graduate from Georgetown who finished her postgraduate topic on gender studies, made a compilation of

comparative airtime between men and women at the time of the most famous soccer tournament, the Super Bowl. At the following table, the disproportionately arranged on-air time is quite visible.

In the Super Bowl, men reporters occupy maximum on-air time which is common in a conditional telecast. Although, in case of sideline reporters, females still lag behind. In a review on "Sports center" of ESPN, an almost same trend was noticed where the sports topics were concentrated on male sports apart from all-men analyst forum.

IV. FAVORITISM IN THE WORKPLACE

On the off chance that managing male mentors, players, and fans were insufficient, women in sports media additionally need to adapt to partiality by their coworkers. It is a totally outlandish practice, as because of fundamental qualities gained through sex, women are exceptionally appropriate to work in the field of news coverage; these characteristics can even give ladies favorable position over men in article positions [10]. A lady journalist stood up, expressing that there is "No reason that a lady can't hold any daily paperwork duplicate supervisor, sports essayist, city lobby columnist, police correspondent anything [8]. She later makes the contention that women are normally more mindful of detail than men, which gives them a favorable position in many positions in publications. However, women really confront an outrageous absence of chance, an "unattainable rank," in the business. As indicated by Lont, "A 1995 review of around 200 Association of Women in Sports Media individuals by Miller and Miller found that in spite of the fact that respondents announced occupation fulfillment, they likewise revealed partiality and an "undetected" status in their games divisions" [4]. This "imperceptible" status is potential because of the physical absence of women. In particularly brandishes news coverage, ladies just constitute 13% of games newsrooms [5].

As a rule, women appreciate the activity of being a games columnist; be that as it may, they disdain endeavoring to make it a profession. An entire 98% of ladies in sports media can authenticate preference at work, regardless of whether it is an absence of advancements or pay imbalances. As per an examination by Lont, the most baffling part of the activity for women is an absence of professional successes [4]. The basic sociological topic of ladies being compelled to pick between the "most optimized plan of attack" and the "mom track" is particularly obvious in sports news coverage; ladies at the best have been noted to have no families. Women in sports media that make progress are always helped to remember her "place" – as a mother, and a spouse [8]. With respect to those women who attempt to both keep up a profession and a family, it is a test in any field. Women dependably have what is known as a "moment move" of work, errands, and essential home undertakings to finish; these can signify very nearly 40 hours every week, more than twofold that of men. As per Atton, "Such sexual orientation related incongruities in familial parts, joined with work locales that have been ease back to incorporate ladies, have been referred to by specialists as a great part of the reason that women keep on working on the edges [7].

Women likewise need to confront preference from their male coworkers. According to Craft and Wanta, numerous media editors segregate since they see the female essayists as gifted and a feasible risk [6]. In nearby newsrooms, a large number of the guys' demonstration like dear companions yet females is totally "let alone for the workplace kinship". Due to this consistent prohibition, women have fortified together and shaped the Association for Women in Sports Media, which gives an outlet to abused female games columnists.

The expansion of women into sports news-casting offices has made the once male-restrictive industry "integrated;" notwithstanding, to have a completely utilitarian working environment without sexual orientation partiality, ladies need to end up noticeably incorporated into sports news coverage newsrooms. Hardin and Shane depict the circumstance as:

"An integrated work environment is one in which the dominant part gathering (men) endure the nearness of the minority gathering (ladies) yet don't attempt to meet women on their terms. A coordinated working environment offers an acknowledgment of distinction yet a grasp of that distinction and a fuse of contrast as something solid, vital, and important [6].

In many cases, women are just brought into the field for newsrooms to "fill the quantity" of having a lady on staff. According to a nearby author, "there's additionally a blending notion among sports scholars that I've heard firsthand where individuals are persuaded that female games columnists are in a time of governmental policy regarding minorities in society". Lamentably, the administration does not generally concur with the need more ladies in newsrooms. Joseph and Sharma refer to an overview that demonstrates an entire 41% of games editors don't feel any commitment to build the quantity of ladies in divisions managing sports reporting [10].

V. MASS MEDIA IN MODERN SOCIETY

When it comes to mass media, it is the mirror of present mentality, ethics, and social behaviors. In case of sports journalism also, no such exception is followed and the 'sport' as a genre is considered to be 'gender-based cultural organization' [3]. A considerable amount of varieties are there for games, particularly arranged with respect to sexes. This fact is true for almost every aspect of sports and covers the sports media also. The media broadcast of sports has a huge audience base and the sports pages do not just show the standard of the gender biases, these cooperate in shaping the mentality and standards as well [7]. As per Jones, sport is the reflector of male ethics and ideologies, for instance, which are athlete and sportsmen and these values imprint upon the society with a racist idea only white-skinned heterosexual men with good physique are eligible for particular sports and some other are for women.

It's imperative for the society to adapt to the belief that female sports must not be compared or judged against the male sports because they're differently made. So, women reporters must not be restricted to only women games because they are not less or inferior version of male games. Female games are the different type of competition and must be regarded likewise. Ryan Yemen asked in a personal interview whether the softball is actually female baseball or not. It's not because it's separate depending on the physical qualities of two genders. So these games should not be compared ball by ball. These types of comparison often make it to the media when excellent women sportsmanship is observed. For instance, the University of Connecticut's women's basketball performed brilliantly to break all past records and viewers and sports analyst made no late to compare them against the male team of University of Central Los Angeles. This is not fair at all because both the teams were fabulous in their respective fields and nature of the games was different as well.

The consideration and mentality to look women's and men's sports differently can transcend to the wish to incorporate more women in sports media section. When the women reporters will be accepted as an individual with knowledge in respective field, the incorporation can happen. Female reporters are capable of doing things in their own manner and it's not okay to judge or compare them always with their male fellows. The male hegemony in this field must be removed to accommodate female in

sports journalism. Amalgamation of both genders in terms of brilliance and final social lamination can bring an intense and well-crafted new-age sports newsroom.

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