

ANALYSIS OF PICTORIAL COVERAGE OF FEMALE ATHLETE IN PRINT MEDIA AS SEX OBJECT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to analyze the picture content of the sports section of leading Newspapers from the angle of using female athletes as sex object. Analysis was done using the media coverage of four international sports events namely the 2014 ICC World Twenty20 Cricket, the XX Commonwealth Games, the XVII Asian Games and Australian Open of this year. Twelve leading daily newspapers on Bengali, English and Hindi published in Kolkata, West Bengal were considered for this study. Variables considered for this study was area covered for photograph (APH) and area of total news coverage (ATNC) for female and male athletes. Measurement was done by calculating the area in Sq. Cm. of the newspaper using simple geometric scale. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for each variables and comparison was done between the male athletes and female athletes. The t-test was used for this purpose. All statistical calculations were done using standard statistical software. Only 0.05 level of significance was considered for the present study. Results revealed that mean values of ATNC and APH were higher for male athletes than female athletes. Calculated t-values for ATNC was statistically significant but t-value for APH was not significant statistically. From above results it was concluded that leading newspapers portrayed female athletes mostly as sex object and there was significantly gender favoritism towards male athletes in sports news coverage.

Keywords: Print media, pictorial coverage, female athletes, sex object.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. Gender inequality is a result of the persistent discrimination of one age group of people based upon gender and it manifests itself differently according to race, culture, politics, country and economic situation. Several study

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reported about existence of gender disparity in the field of sports in society. Women in Brazil were forbidden by law to play the national sport of Football and continued to struggle to participate this major aspect of the country's social life (Knijnik, 2013). Americans holds the popular culture that girls do not play Baseball and there is no national women team for Baseball within the country (Ring, 2013). Media portrayals of male and female athletes in the 1984 and the 1988 summer Olympic Games as reflected in *The Globe and Mail* in Canada and *The New York Times* in USA was analyzed and found that men received more attention and more favorable portrayals than women in sports news in the mass media (Lee, 1992).

Till the last London Olympic Games 2012, male were participated in more events than the female. There were more medals for the men athletes than female athletes in the event schedule. In the history of Olympic Games before 2012 number of sports included for men were always higher than the games considered for women. Saudi Arab, Qatar and Brunei have never sent female athletes in Olympic Games before 2012.

Present study attempted to analyze the picture content of the sports section of leading Newspapers of West Bengal, India from the angle of using female athletes as sex object. Analysis was done using the media coverage of four international sports events namely the 2014 ICC World Twenty20 Cricket, the XX Commonwealth Games, the XVII Asian Games and Australian Open of this year.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Subject

A total of twelve daily leading newspapers on Bengali, English and Hindi published in Kolkata, West Bengal were considered for the present study.

2.2 Tool

Area covered for photograph (APH) and Area of total news coverage (ATNC) were the criterion for the present study. Simple geometric scale was used as tool of measurement.

2.3 Statistical Technique

Mean and standard deviation were calculated as descriptive statistics and difference between two means was measured by *t*-test. Significance level was set only 0.05 level in this study.

3. RESULTS

The descriptive statistics of APH and ATNC for male and female athletes have presented in Table-1 and Table-2 for the 2014 ICC World Twenty20 Cricket and for the XX Commonwealth Games, the XVII Asian Games and Australian Open respectively. Computed of *t*-test value between two genders for APH and ATNC also have been presented in Table-1 and Table-2 for the 2014 ICC World Twenty20 Cricket and for the XX Commonwealth Games, the XVII Asian Games and Australian Open respectively.

Table 1: Mean and SD of APH and ATNC for both genders and results of *t*-test for the 2014 ICC World Twenty20 Cricket

Sl No	Variables	Male gender		Female gender		<i>t</i> -value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	APH	85.0	42.05	35.45	68.73	1.38
2	ATNC	250.69	120.10	63.53	53.12	3.19*

*Significant at 0.05 level (CR 2.01).

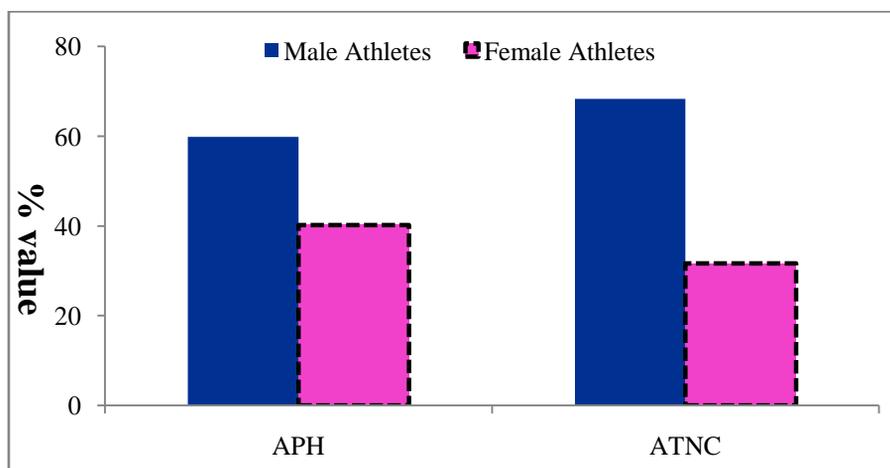
Table 2: Mean and SD of APH and ATNC for both genders and results of *t*-test for the XX Commonwealth Games, the XVII Asian Games and Australian Open

Sl No	Variables	Male gender		Female gender		<i>t</i> -value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	APH	140.51	107.27	115.92	84.28	1.01
2	ATNC	499.48	258.68	283.28	118.27	3.96*

*Significant at 0.05 level (CR 2.01).

Table 1 and Table 2 shows that *t*-value of ATNC for both sports coverage was statistically significant but *t*-value of APH for both sports coverage was not-significant statistically. This was due to more pictorial coverage of female athletes for all the sports tournaments than the news writing coverage in print media. The APH and ATNC converted in percentage value and has presented graphically in Figure-1 below. Figure-1 revealed that difference in percentage value for APH between male and female athletes was less (19.68%) than ATNC (36.68%).

Figure 1: Pictorial Coverage (APH) and Total Sports coverage (ATNC) in print media for different variables



4. DISCUSSION

Several study reported higher sports coverage for male athletes than female in print media. This discrimination in sports news coverage for female athletes is not only exists in the print media of Bengal, India but it is the general trend of some other countries in the world also. Several studies analyzed the content of sports coverage of magazine, newspaper and television and reported about both quantitative and qualitative gender differences in sports media content that favour men (Dadario, 1997; Eastman, & Billings, 2000; King, 2007; Sil, 2014; Talukdar, & Sil, 2015).

Present study found no significant difference for APH between male and female athletes in print media coverage. The cause of insignificant difference in pictorial coverage between male and female athletes as researcher found in this study might be due to that the print media published more pictures for female athletes than male and among these pictures some the pictures of the female athletes were printed as sexual intuition. Some of the pictures of print media (Figure-2,3,4 from TOI and Figure-5 from ABP) have also included here as example of this fact where female athletes have presented not as an athlete but as a sex objects. Their beautiful body and their sexual appeal were given top priority in this pictorial coverage than their sports excellence. Some print media printed more photograph of women athletes who involved in modelling and had fabulous glamour. They printed such photograph of the female athletes because of their sexual appeal. Literature reviewed in this regard and found that print media often portrayed female athletes as sex object and have focused their attention on men's

sports, often ignoring women in sports unless they offered sex appeal (Vincent, 2004; Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005).



Figure-2



Figure-3



Figure-4



Figure-5

5. CONCLUSIONS

Leading newspapers portrayed female athletes mostly as sex object and there was significantly gender favoritism towards male athletes in sports news coverage.

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