

# Impact of Gender of the Players on the Viewership of Sports in India: A Case study of ICC World Cup Tournaments

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Over the past decade, there has been a tremendous growth of media and mass communication. It has not only kept us updated about the recent news and happenings around the world, but has been a great source of entertainment as well. It is through the mass media that sports today are presented with thrilling beauty. Media plays an important role in developing people's interest in sports viewership. Be it for entertainment, recreation, personal interests, or to inspire physical fitness goals, sports broadcast has gained huge prominence across ages and all over the globe. Yet there is a remarkable difference between the audience viewership patterns in sports played by men versus those played by women. It is observed in India that the TRP (Television Rating Point) of women sports is significantly lagging behind to that of men; even in case of cricket which is considered the most popular sport in India. In the light of the growing popularity of the recently played Women's ICC (International Cricket Council) World Cup; this research will seek to understand as to why there is a disparity between the viewership pattern of women sports versus men sports (measured by comparing their respective TRPs).*

*The paper will also work towards collating information that will help in understanding this disparity between the TRPs; by assessing the opinion of people from the media, sports fraternity, and general sports viewers. It will conclude with a note on how lesser viewership is being detrimental to the sustainability of women sports on a commercial level. The case study on the Women's ICC (International Cricket Council) World Cup- will discuss the events that lead to its social scalability, media compatibility, telecast sponsorships and sudden improvement in viewership.*

**Keywords:** *Gender of Players; TRP; viewership; ICC Women's World Cup; Sports.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Key Concepts

#### 1.1.1 Sports

*Sports is an activity that involves and requires physical efforts and skills in which an individual or team competes against each other for entertainment or competition.*

*It comprises of several forms of physical activities and games through either in casual or organised participation. It usually aims to improve physical abilities and skills and also serve the purpose of entertainment either through participation or as spectators.*

#### 1.1.2 Media and Mass Communication

*Mass communication refers to the informing and exchanging of information on a large scale to a wide range of people through a media, which means a medium. Mass Communication includes exchanging news, informing people about any products or for any entertainment purpose. Media is the medium through which mass communication can take place that is broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet.*

#### 1.1.3 Audience Viewership pattern

*The role of media has become so all-pervasive that it has become an integral part of the society and whether it is acknowledged or not, it plays a very influential role in shaping the thought processes and pattern in which the people choose to view the television.*

#### 1.1.4 TRP

*Television Rating Point (TRP) is a tool to judge which programmes are watched the most. This gives an index of what the people prefer to view and also the popularity of a particular channel. For calculation purpose, a device is attached to the television set. These numbers are treated as a sample from the complete television owners in different geographical and demographic sectors. It records and measures the time and the programme that a viewer watches on a particular day. Then, it takes the average for a 30-day period which gives the viewership status for a particular channel.*

#### 1.1.5 Gender in Sports

*Women and men may tend to engage in different types of physical activity and their attitudes towards sport might be different. Hence it is important to have a distinguished platform for male and female in the arena of the sports so as to have a fair competition.*

#### 1.1.6 ICC World Cup

The ICC Cricket World Cup is an international championship of One Day International (ODI) Cricket. The event is organised by the sport's governing body of Cricket, which is the International Cricket Council (ICC). In every four years this tournament is held, with preliminary qualification rounds leading up to a final's tournament. This tournament is considered to be one of the world's most watched sporting events and is considered as the "flagship event of the international cricket calendar" by the ICC.

#### 1.1.7 Social Scalability

Social scalability is the ways and extents to which participants can think about and respond to institutions and fellow participants as the variety and numbers of participants in those institutions or relationships grow. It's about human limitations, and not about the technological limitations or physical resource constraints.

#### 1.1.8 Telecast Sponsorship

Sports broadcasts bring mass exposure for sponsors. Sports broadcasters want highly engaging content, for as long as possible, to draw a mass audience. The opportunity for brands is how to maximise this broadcast through personalised interaction with fans. Sponsorship's highest value is how you control it. Being able to interact socially with pre-packaged content to fans of the team that the brand sponsors are the real opportunity for marketers.

### 1.2 Research Question

**Does the Gender of the player affect the viewership of sports programme in India?**

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to find out the reason behind the difference between the viewership patterns of men sports versus that of women sports. The research will moreover examine the case of ICC World Cup. Further, the study will also analyse and present people's preferences and perception for choosing to watch a particular gender sport. Additionally, the paper will also analyse the impact of viewership of sports on sponsorship and sustainability.

### 1.4 Scope and Relevance of Study

This research will help to identify various reasons and factors that lead to the difference between the viewership patterns of men sports versus women sports by making a comparative analysis from the case study of the recently played ICC World Cup. The research focuses on analysing the ICC World Cup men and women on the basis of sponsorship and viewership. The research will further analyse people's preferences for choosing to watch a particular sport and what impact this viewership plays on the sponsorship. The research development would be a valuable addition to researcher and academicians; and useful for the people who are associated with mass media and the field of sports. This research will also help other researchers that are trying to understand the reasons for the lack of attention that women get in the arena of sports, and the role that the media can play for the same.

### 1.5 Summing up

This section explained the key terminologies that will be used often in this paper, that are major sports, media and mass communication, audience viewership pattern, TRP, Gender in sports, ICC World Cup, social scalability and telecast sponsorship. Further, it also mentioned the research question that will be answered at the end of this paper and explained the objectives scope and relevance of this study.

In the next section, the paper will focus on the literature review, its significance and how this paper different from that done in past.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bodenna, C. (2015, June 9) in his article “Why Aren’t Women’s Sports as Big as Men’s?” has examined the differences that female soccer player face, when compared to their men, counterparts. He mentions the argument of the female journalist Maggie Martens on soccer being a “feminist issue” and her frustration on the fact that female players don’t get much attention from the mainstream media and feminist activists alike. He also mentions Gwendolyn Oxenham, who communicates about “unequal fortunes” and the fact that how, of Brazilian superstar, Neymar, makes \$15 million a year, and Marta, a woman struggling to find a team without it folding soon after.

Ottaway, A. (2016) in her article on “Why Don’t People Watch Women’s Sports?” talks about the negative reaction of the people when Dani Rylan announces the formation of National Women Hockey League in North America; not only this she also mentions the statistical data from the University of Minnesota’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, which quotes that, women’s athletics receive only about 4 % of all sports media coverage. Not only this, to look deep into the reasons for such poor media coverage, she finds out that 90% of the sports editors are men. She argues that if media coverage of women sports was better then, more people would be interested in following women sports player and tournaments. She happily mentions ESPN, one of the most diverse sports-media companies, where women journalists have already established their voices in the sports world. She concludes on the note that “if we acknowledge that having more diverse newsrooms is a good thing for both men’s and women’s sports, what next?” She thinks that “ultimately our gendered expectations are too deeply rooted in a sea change to happen in the near future. We have been conditioned to think women and sports—whether the women are athletes, reporters, or fans—are an unnatural combination”.

Lamoureux, A. (2012, April 22) in her blog on “How the media portrays female athletes”, thinks that the media has a big influence on many people, especially younger generations. She wants young girls growing up and having role models who are female athletes. According to her, it’s not right if the media is always commenting on their attractiveness. She pleads on letting girls play sports and receives the same attention, criticism, and praise as men. Most of her research supports the fact that the media represents female athletes as sexualized and feminized objects. She mentions that an athlete has special qualities that make him or her great that includes competitiveness, confidence, skill, focus, determination, and pride are just some of many. She thinks its time for female athletes to get the respect they deserve. Aimee even lists down things that can be done to improve this situation, like attending more women sports; support companies that advocate women’s athletics; encourage more television stations and newspapers to cover more women sports and finally to encourage young women to participate in sports.

Maley, Christopher, J. (2012) in her research paper on “Female Athletes in the Media” has quoted that “Within the arena of sport, there is a common belief that female athletes are inferior and incapable athletes.” According to her, the media plays a role in supporting this stereotype. In her study, she examines the article patterns of female athletes in Time magazine from 2007 to 2009. The study that she has done inspects the length and content of articles in every issue distributed in that time frame to see if these athletes are given appropriate exposure or not. The past research indicates future findings; the sample shows that female athletes are seen less for their athletic accomplishments and more for their off-the-field happenings. Furthermore, the athletes that play aesthetically pleasing sports will have their off-the-field endeavours discussed more so than their on-the-field accomplishments. The research that she had done is vital according to her so as to understand the lack of media attention given to female athletes as well as the stereotype that exists for these individuals.

Farzalipour, S., Akalan, C., Tuncel, S., Ghorbanzadeh, B., Kashef, M., Zadeh, M. and Hajizadeh, N. (2017) in their paper on “The Role of Mass Media in Women’s Sport” have a meaningful difference that was obtained in the research that was held for this paper, between subject’s point of view in women’s sport performance

improvement variable, and results showed difference between media and sport experts & between media experts and athletes. The highest average rate is related to athletes and the lowest rate is related to media experts. Darai concluded that “informing women about sport’s benefits, training them through media and sport’s appropriate introduction, as a human need is a practical way in order to encourage women to take part in sports activities”. The paper concludes by considering the different point of views about mass Media’s role which leads to the lack of progress in women’s sport; in this paper, it is suggested to hold seminars and annual meetings with the subject to women’s sport & media, in the presence of media & sports experts. Due to the great difference between desired & present situation of mass Media’s role in women’s sport, it is suggested to set and perform operating plans & programs to eliminate this difference.

Nesbit, T. M., & King, K. A. (2010) in their paper on “The impact of fantasy sports on television viewership” have analysed the impact of playing fantasy sports on the television viewership of the National Football League and of Major League Baseball. This study found proofs suggesting that fantasy sports participation leads to an increase in the number of games viewed on television and, therefore, acts as a match to televised sporting events. The greater demand for televised sports should increase the worth of advertising spots and, therefore, lead to a greater possibility for cross-marketing across the 2 media of television and the Internet.

Hu, A. W. L., & Tang, L. R. (2010) in their research on “Factors motivating sports broadcast viewership with fan identification as a mediator” have examined the relationships among viewing motivation, fan identification, and viewing behaviour of worldwide top sports television broadcasts. The result of an empirical test of baseball games showed that entertainment, self-esteem, and positive levels of stress, positively affected fan identification, which in turn clearly affected viewing behaviour. None of the motivational factors studied had a major relationship with viewing behaviour, which confirmed the importance of fan identification as a mediator. Viewers' most motivating factors were entertainment and excitement and supporting sportspeople from their own country.

Gantz, W., & Wenner, L. A. (1995) in their paper on “Fanship and the television sports viewing experience” employed a use and gratifications paradigm, they expected that audience experience with televised sports would vary on the basis of fanship, with fans having a different, deeper, and more textured set of expectations and replies than nonfans. Fans were predicted to respond in similar ways, regardless of gender. Fanship was operationalized using cognitive, effective, and behavioural bases. In the study, fan ship made a difference, with fans clearly more invested in the viewing experience. Male and female sports fans responded in almost identical ways, although men generally were an insignificant shade more involved than women.

Ernst & Young LLP (2017) published an article titled “Sports: in a state of flux” where they have mentioned the sports sector in India that has observed a number of recent growths, which have contributed to its noteworthy growth. Although cricket remains to be the leading sport in the country, other sports have also gathered ample interest over the past few years. Starting new leagues in football, hockey and less established sports such as kabaddi is changing the face of Indian sports: players are getting a global stage to showcase their talent and viewers are getting the chance to get more involved in their favourite sports.

Live mint (17 Aug 2017) published an article naming “Is India becoming a multi-sport viewing nation?” where they talked about the awareness and viewership of different sports leagues in the country and the reasons for their popularity. In the article, they also mentioned about the July 12 interview to Mint, Sanjay Gupta, managing director of Star India Pvt. Ltd pointed a couple of reasons responsible for the popularity and increasing interest in sports other than cricket. He said a social change is tangible where the number of young children who play and follow sports has grown. With new leagues that are coming in hockey, kabaddi, football, tennis and badminton, it is no longer just about cricket. This change has been escorted by a shift in parental behaviour who now view sports as a very doable and viable career option, considering the money that sports people make by playing in these leagues.

Michael A. Messner & Cheryl Cooky (June 2010) in their study on “Gender in Televised Sports” is a discussion on the gender in televised sports report that had tracked the program. The authors have talked about the positive and the negative aspect of the findings from that report that focused on the coverage of women’s sports on television news. The positive outcomes that have been observed from their study are the noticeable improvement in the often-derogatory ways that sports commentators used to routinely speak of women athletes. In addition, there is far less insulting and overtly sexist treatment of women athletes than there was twenty or even ten years ago. On the other hand, the negative news in these times of women’s empowerment the success in most spheres of the society is that the overall coverage of women’s sports has declined to a level of outrageously small numbers.

Kelly Wallace (14 March, 2016) in her article on “The real March Madness: When will women's teams get equal buzz?” talked about her experience when she attended a basketball game, where there were hardly handful of people in a women’s match whereas it was houseful during the men’s tournament. She further researched a lot of these issues and found out that women not only got fewer media coverage but the money that a female player makes is also quite less when compared with male. Even she found out that men get \$190 million more per year in college athletic scholarships than women. She even mentions that the attitudes about women and sports still have a long way to go before we get to true gender equality. Slaner Larkin points to U.S. women's soccer star Alex Morgan, for example, wherein she has over 1.5 million followers on Twitter, and how the upcoming Women's World Cup in Canada has become a trending topic worldwide. That mentioned; girls have more than 1.3 million lesser opportunities to play sports in comparison with boys at high school, and about 63,000 fewer participation slots at the college level, according to Slaner Larkin.

Ashley K. Gibson & Dan Drane (2006) in their paper that was published in The Sports Journal “Gender, Age, and Race as Predictors of Sports-Viewing Behaviour of Sport Management Undergraduates” talked about what has traditionally had been a white male-dominated industry, are now a growing number of females and minorities assuming the position of sport manager. This trend is attributed to increasing opportunities for female and minority participation in sports organizations at various levels. Such levels include recreational, interscholastic, collegiate, and professional athletic involvement. He also mentioned noticing that the coaching and management opportunities have also increased. The purpose of this study was to determine which, if any, demographic variables of age, gender, or race could significantly predict the frequency of viewing behaviours of sport-related media for undergraduate sport management students. Based upon the literature, credibility in a sports management role can be increased through sport-related media consumption. Fifty-five students in the undergraduate sports management program at a research extensive university in the South-eastern United States participated in the study. The instrument, constructed by the researchers, was a sixteen-question survey. Using multiple linear regression analyses, only one predictor, gender, was found to have a statistically significant impact upon the frequency of viewing sport-related media (sports networks).

Walter Gantz & Lawrence A. Wenner have written a paper on “Men, women, and sports: Audience experiences and effects” where they have discussed the study they examined on gender differences in the audience experience with televised sports. Men and women were noticed to approach, observe, and respond to sports programming in different ways. Telephone interviews were conducted with 400 adults residing in Los Angeles and 307 adults residing in Indianapolis. Gender differences were tested using covariate analyses controlling for demographic attributes, favourite sport, and interest in viewing television sports. It was found that more than women, men responded like fans, even with initial levels of interest controlled. Social norms, as well as varying household responsibilities, may account for many of the differences that were uncovered.

Priyansh (29 Nov 2017) wrote an article on “Gender Equality in Sport Is the New Final Frontier for Women” mentioned that there is a sports body which publicly states its aim to ‘achieve gender equity’. In his article he said that it is majorly noticed that the male sport is far more popular and revenue generating; argument often presented is that female athletes just do not match up to their male counterparts. He also said that the pay gap

remains significant. According to the survey that was conducted, among the top 100 professional players, it was noted that men earn 24% more than women. He even found out the data which said that for any sphere of human enterprise to have less than 1% women is staggering. Female athletes who play their trade at various elite leagues of France, Germany, England, the US, Sweden, Australia and Mexico earn a combined salary that is almost equal to that of a single famous footballer Neymar, who became the most expensive footballer this summer when French club Paris Saint-Germain signed him. He concluded on the note that without the best facilities and support, women in sport will not find a home. For most of the female athletes, the lack of monetary rewards forces them to manage multiple jobs in order to continue their participation with the sport. Their semi-professional status makes it difficult for their interests to be taken seriously.

### 2.1 Significance

The literature review observed a few points that were common in some of the other research paper or article. It was noted that all the paper has observed less viewership for women's sports when compared with the male. The major reason for this was the aggressive and fast speed of male sports in contrast to female. Not only this, women get paid less and didn't get the chance of scholarship as much as a male player received. It was witnessed that due to the upcoming interesting and entertaining formats of various sports, the overall viewership and the awareness of different sports have increased. Another reason that added for the lack of opportunity for women players was the social norms and various household activities that restrict them to build a future in sports. Regardless it was also observed that the conditions are improving and there are different bodies coming up who focus towards equality in sports and try to give women player the same opportunity as a male player.

### 2.2 Summing up

The literature review focused on the past research done on the topics that were related to viewership in sports, gender equality in sports and the reasons why women player is given less viewership and sponsorship in the arena of sports. The next section will include the research methodology and the details of the primary research that was conducted for this study along with the support of secondary data.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Primary Study

The aim of this study was to analyse the impact of gender of the payers on the viewership of sports in India. For this primary study was conducted for two different groups; i.e. the viewers and readers (the people from the sports fraternity and general sports viewers), and the second group being the practitioners (the people who work in the media industry), in order to understand their perspective.

### 3.2. Sampling

For Readers and Viewers -

- I. Sample Size: 156 Viewers and Readers
- II. Sample Age Group: Between 17 to 35 Years

- III. Sampling Method: Random Sampling
- IV. Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative
- V. Research Method: Primary

For Practitioners –

- I. Sample Size: 18 Practitioners
- II. Sample Age Group: Between 17 to 70 Years
- III. Sampling Method: Random Sampling from people of Media Industry
- IV. Research Design: Qualitative
- V. Research Method: Primary

### 3.3. **Area of Study**

Since the research is about the viewership of sports, the geographical presence of any subject was not considered while sampling. Although the major number of respondents were from Ahmedabad, Nagpur and Gandhinagar area.

### 3.4 **Instrument**

The instrument that was designed for the purpose of data collection was a self-structured questionnaire which was designed in order to inculcate various factors, based on which the perception of the respondents was analysed.

The questionnaire that was designed included the following factors –

- Demographics – Age, Gender, Occupation, Education and Hobbies.
- Interest – In playing or following various sports
- Awareness – Regarding sports and various tournaments.
- Previous Experience – of watching any tournament and (Media) coverage for the same.
- Preference – of which gender sport to watch and how much of media coverage to give.
- Perception – on the improvement of women sports viewership and the role of sponsorship

### 3.5 **Data Collection**

Data collection was done through Google forms since geographical scope was wide and pen-paper test would be highly challenging.

### 3.6 **Data Analysis**

The questionnaire for the readers and viewers included 16 questions. Not all questions had options; few required descriptive answers. The questionnaire that was prepared for the practitioners contained 12 questions, with the majority of open-ended questions, expecting descriptive answers. The questions that had objectives were analysed using the simple statistical too - Percentage

### 3.7. Secondary Study

For the purpose of secondary research, various articles, books, reports, blogs, etc. were analysed to gain a deeper insight into the concepts. It also gave focus towards the quantitative figures of viewership of sports in India, viewership of female and male sports in India and the recent viewership of 2015 ICC World Cup Men and 2017 ICC World Cup Women. Detailed Case Study was also prepared to give a deeper insight.

### 3.8. Summing up

This section dealt with the method via which this research was done and focused on the sampling, instrument used, area of study, data collection and analyses of the primary study that was conducted using a two different set of questionnaires, one filled by the readers and viewers of sports and the other from the practitioners of the media industry. The secondary data provided additional support with the quantitative viewership figures and details for the ICC World Cup case study that focused on the reach and viewership.

The next section will highlight the recently played ICC World Cup of both men and women teams of India; and the viewership that both the matches received in the form of a case study.

## 4. ICC WORLD CUP CASE STUDY

The case study is about ICC World Cup and the viewership it got in India for the finals of ICC World Cup men 2015 and ICC World Cup female 2017.

- About ICC (International Cricket Council)

The governing body of cricket is ICC. Which represents 105 members, the ICC governs and administrates the game and works with our members to raise the sport. The ICC is also responsible for the staging of all the ICC Events.

- About ICC World Cup

The international championship of One Day International (ODI) cricket is known as the ICC Cricket World Cup. Every four year, the ICC organises, with preliminary qualification rounds leading up to a final's tournament. The tournament is said to be one of the world's most viewed sporting events and is considered the "flagship event of the international cricket calendar" by the ICC. Currently, the ICC World Cup is considered the third biggest sporting event in world sport, with only the FIFA World Cup and Summer Olympics exceeding it.

The first World Cup was held in England in June 1975, with the first ODI cricket match having been played only four years earlier. However, many must not be knowing that an altogether separate Women's Cricket World Cup was held two years before the first men's tournament, and the tournament involved multiple international teams that was held as early as 1912 when a tournament of Test matches was played between Australia, England and South Africa. England held the first three World Cups. It was from the 1987 tournament onwards that countries started sharing the hosting, which was under an unofficial rotation system.

The World Cup is open for all members of the International Cricket Council (ICC), although the highest-ranking teams receives the automatic qualification. The remaining teams have to participate and win at World Cricket League and the ICC World Cup Qualifier to get selected.

- Previous ICC World Cup Media Coverage and viewership record

The tournament is the world's third largest with FIFA World Cup and the Summer Olympics as the top two sporting events. The 2011 Cricket World Cup final was onscreen in over 200 countries to over 2.2 billion television viewers. For the 2011 and 2015 World Cup, television rights were sold for over US\$1.1 billion, and sponsorship rights were sold for US\$500 million according to the data. The 2003 Cricket World Cup matches were attended by approximately 626,845 people, whereas in 2007 Cricket World Cup sold more than 672,000 tickets.

- Viewership of ICC World Cup men 2015

The ICC World Cup 2015, till the semi-finals stage garnered 635 million viewers, which makes it the highest viewed event in Indian television. The data states a record of 309 million Indians (i.e. TAM Panel CS4+ reasoned using a standard conversion factor) tuned in to watch India's semi-final clash with Australia on their television sets. It was the most watched cricket match of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 and how can we not mention and take into consideration the blockbuster India versus Pakistan group stage clash in terms of reach. It was noted that the match rated 15.0 Television Viewership Rating across the Star network including DD and 12.7 Television Viewership Rating on Star Network and 2.3 Television Viewership Rating on DD (stated by TAM data M15+ ABC).

The 2015 World Cup was truly a 'Cup for all' as the tournament was showcased in six different languages in India – Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada, apart from English and Hindi. The regional feeds contributed to 77% of the overall viewership.

Star India CEO Uday Shankar said, "The ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 has been an epic event in terms of scale, reach and following. With over 600 million viewers, largest aggregation of advertisers ever, and one of the most talked about marketing campaigns, this edition has validated that there is nothing bigger than the World Cup for Indian consumers. Fittingly for an event of such scale, Star India took the game of cricket to the next level redefining the viewer experience. The fans' unflinching faith and passion for the game have abetted our efforts to make the World Cup bigger and better than ever before."

Led by the Star India's distributive campaign on India's world cup journey; the 'Mauka' campaign met tremendous response online and on social media. The campaign went viral with over 33 million views online making it amongst the most viewed campaigns ever on digital in India.

- Viewership of ICC World Cup women 2017

It was noted that approximately 180 million people across the whole world watched the 2017 ICC Women's World Cup, where Mithali Raj was the captain and the Indian team finished runners-up, losing to England by nine runs in the final at Lord's. In India alone, the tournament was watched by 156 million people, out of which 80 million was from rural reach and 126 million were for the finals alone. India's run contributed to a 500 % increase in viewing hours in the country. The ICC media release stated that there was almost 300% increase in viewing hours compared to 2013 which was the last edition.

"There was significant growth in audiences in all territories, but particularly impressive was an eight-fold increase in viewing hours in South Africa and a huge increase in viewers in India, particularly in rural areas, since 2013," the ICC release read.

ICC Chief Executive David Richardson said: "We are absolutely delighted with the impact the Women's World Cup has had. Instinctively, we felt that the time was right to invest in women's cricket and take it to the widest possible audience to accelerate the growth of the game and these numbers have confirmed that."

According to the data, there were 100 million video views across ICC digital platforms and social media channels with one billion impressions and 67 million unique users on Facebook via posts on ICC's official pages - @cricketworldcup and @icc.

On Twitter, the hashtag #WWC17 and #WWC17Final was the most tweeted hashtag and was trending for women's sport in 2017 with one million tweets, which is a 24-time increase over the 2013 edition.

#### 4.1. Conclusion

The case study was about the ICC World Cup viewership men 2015 and women 2017. The case study gave us the conclusion that the viewership on women has tremendously increased and there is no doubt about that; apart from the viewership, even the awareness has increased. The social media campaign played a huge role in this as it does not just build awareness but also attracted more viewers. When compared with the past years, 2017 was proven to be the best for ICC Women World Cup 2017 in terms of coverage and viewership. Unfortunately, there was a huge difference seen between the viewership of ICC Men World Cup 2015 and ICC Women World Cup 2017. It was found that the viewership that men got was almost 635 million creating a record in India whereas for women it was 180 million. Although both had different kinds of social media marketing yet a gigantic difference was noticed.

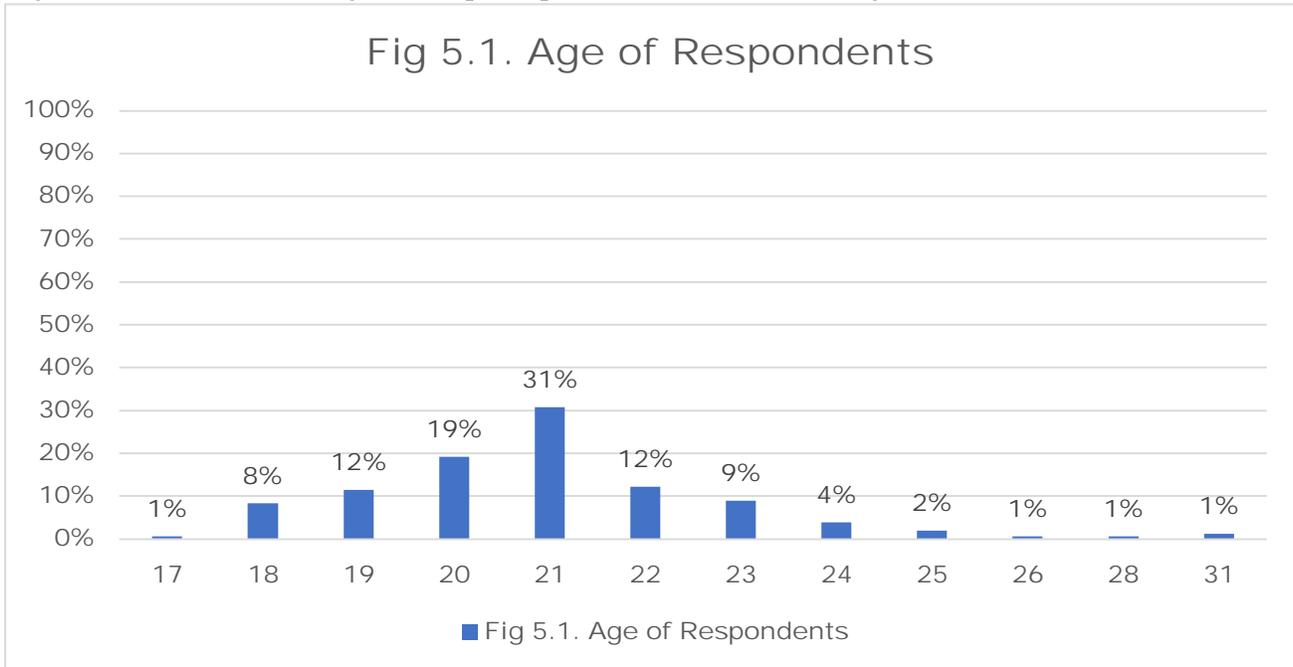
The next section will look into a detailed discussion of the primary data collection that was done for this research with the focus on finding the reasons for the lower viewership from the reader, viewers and the practitioners of the media industry.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main aim of this study is to analyse the reasons behind the differences between the viewership patterns. The analysis is done from the questionnaire that was asked to be filled and the results of that are as follows, along with brief discussions. Analysis of this data has been done by using the statistical tool of percentage for objective questions. The results and discussions are divided into 2 categories; that is, the viewer's and reader's prospect and the second being the practitioner's prospect.

### 5.1. Reader's and Viewer's Prospect

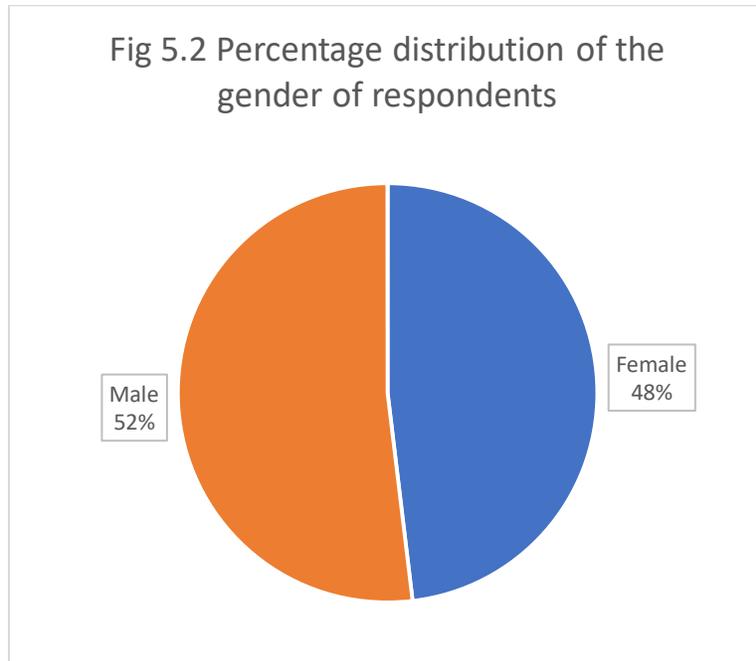
Fig 5.1 gives the idea about the age of the participants (with X-axis as the age and Y-axis as the number of



subjects)

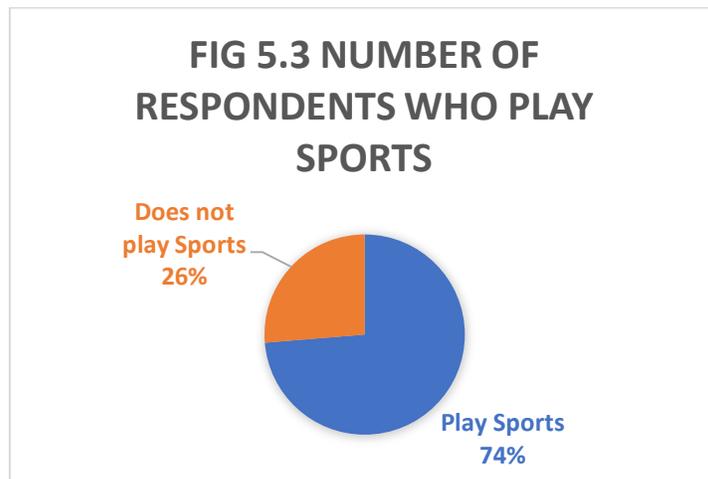
**Fig 5.1. Age of Respondents**

Out of the total 156 respondents, 30.8% of respondents i.e. 48 subjects, are of 21 years of age. 19.2% of respondents that include 30 subjects are of 20 years of age. This makes the study highly youth-centric and would help us understand the viewership pattern better.



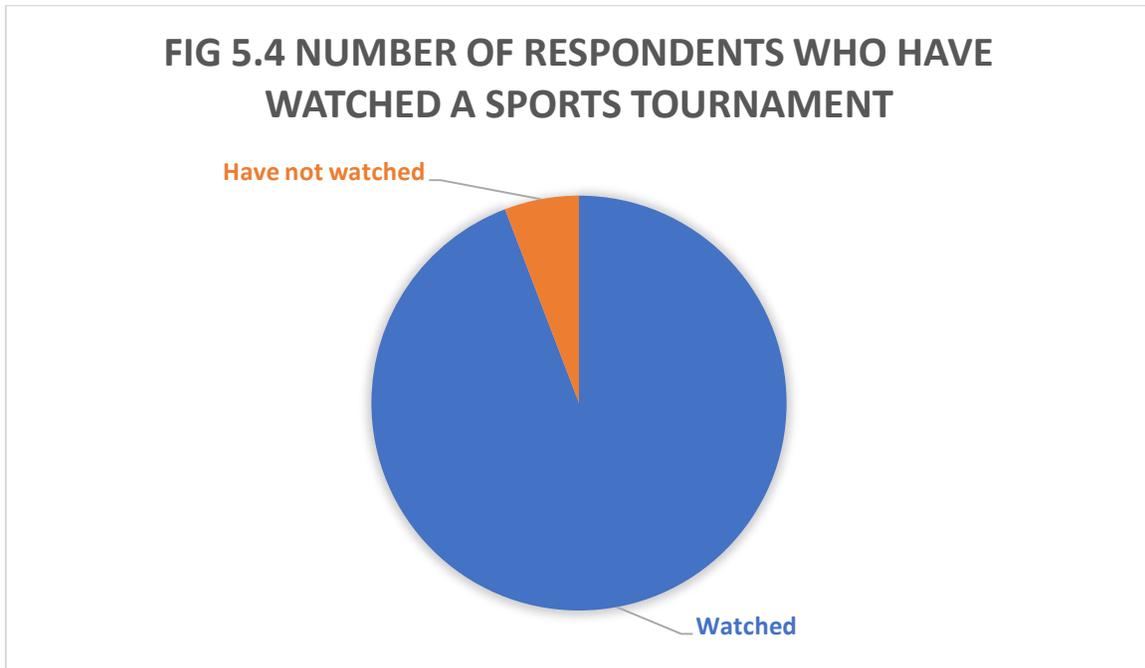
**Fig 5.2 Percentage distribution of the gender of respondents**

Out of 156 respondents, 81 were male and 75 were female; making the sampling almost equal. The percentage distribution of the sample is based on the gender of the respondents.



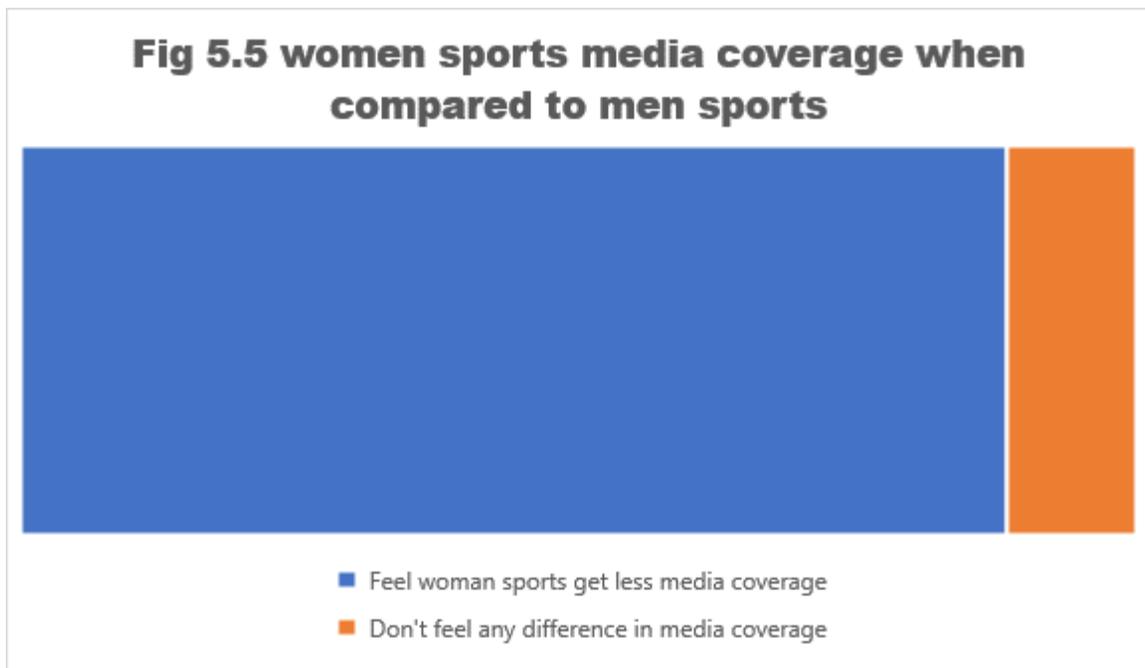
**Fig 5.3 Number of respondents who play sports**

This question helped to know how many respondents played some or the other sport. It was found that among 156 participants, 115 subjects (73.7%) played sports whereas 41 subjects (26.3%) did not.



**Fig 5.4 Number of respondents who have watched a sports tournament**

To know whether the respondents have ever watched any sports tournament, this question was asked. It clearly showed that majority of them had seen some of the other sports tournament. Out of the 156 respondents, 147 participants (94.2%) have watched a sports tournament whereas only 9 participants (5.8%) did not watch any form of the sports tournament.

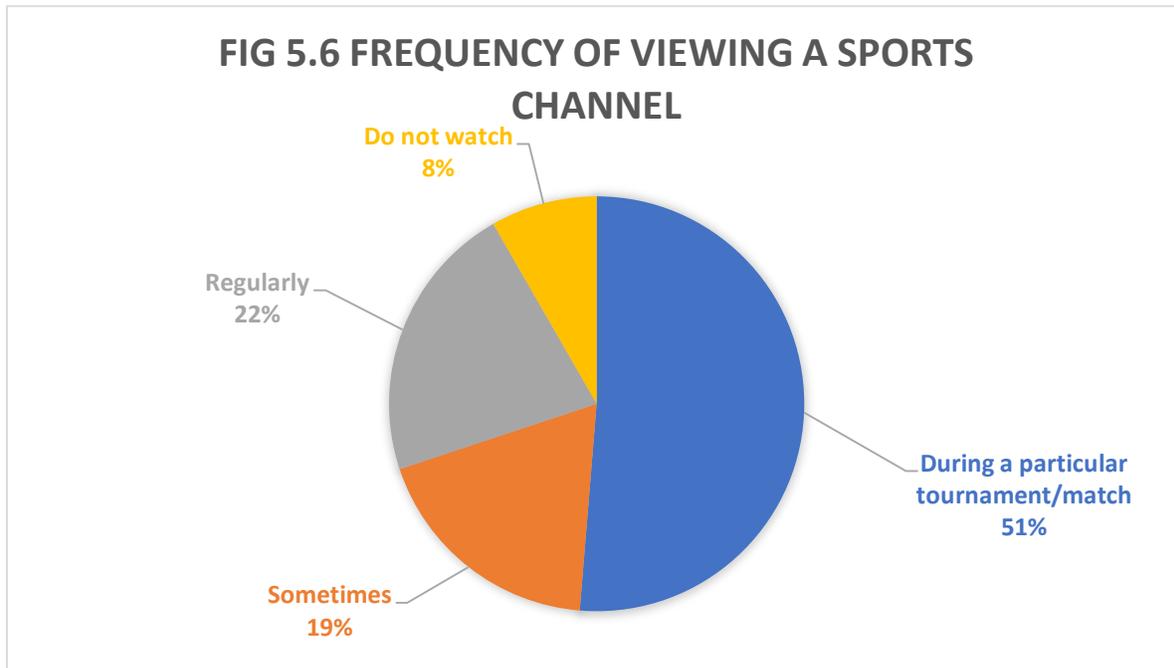


**Fig 5.5 women sports media coverage when compared to men sports**

The respondents were asked if, according to them the women got fewer media coverage than men in the field of sports. It was found that the majority of them, which includes 138 participants (88.5%), agreed that women did get fewer media coverage when compared with that of men. Only 16 participants (11.5%) denied that according to the women players did not get less media attention.

The participants were asked if they had ever watched any women sports, and if yes then which sport have they watched. The results that were seen showed that almost 50 respondents did not see a single women's sports tournament. On the other hand, people who saw women sports tournament included cricket ICC World Cup 2017 as the most viewed match that had almost 63 respondents. Tennis was also viewed by many, with the number of respondents being 41 and badminton that was viewed by almost 32 respondents. Other sports that were viewed by the participants included basketball, football, table-tennis, hockey, kabaddi, volleyball, wrestling, gymnastics, kho-kho, athletics and weightlifting.

The participants were then asked if they had watched any men sports and if yes then which sport have they watched. Only 9 of the respondents mentioned that they did not watch any men sports tournament. Majorly people mentioned that they preferred watching IPL (Indian Premier League) and FIFA. Most of the participants also mentioned that they viewed almost all the major sporting tournaments including F1 race. Other sports included tennis, badminton, chess, swimming, basketball, football, table-tennis, hockey, kabaddi, volleyball, wrestling, athletics and weightlifting.

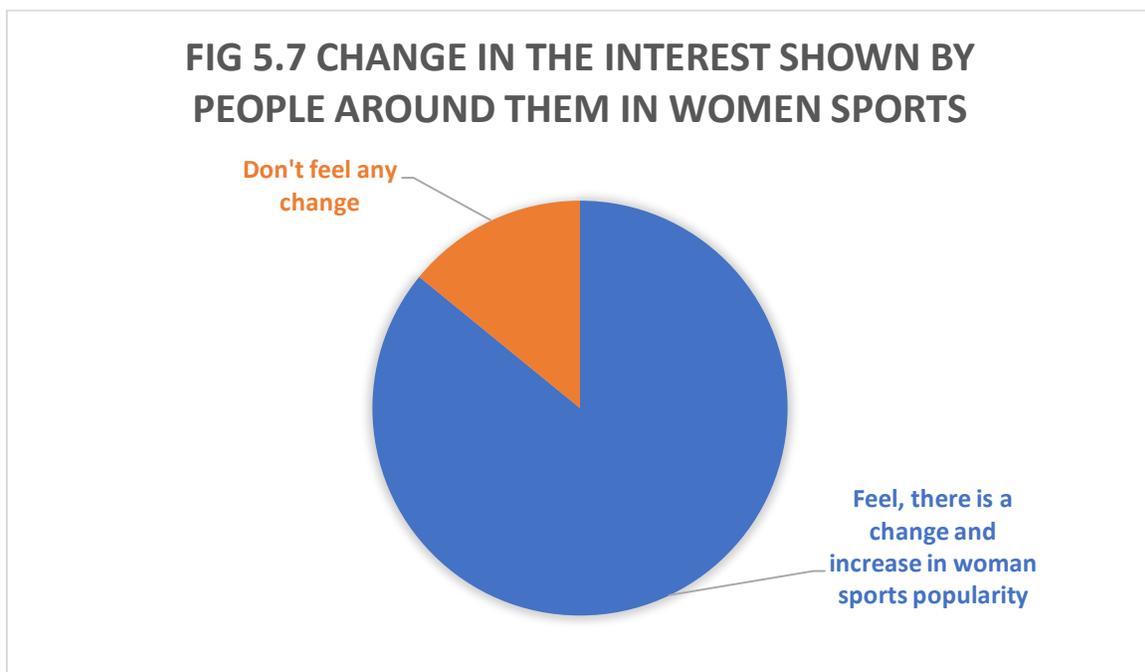


**Fig 5.6 Frequency of viewing a sports channel**

Respondents were asked on how frequently they watched the sports channel on the television. It was witnessed that majority of the respondents, that is 80 subjects (51.3%) viewed only during a particular tournament, whereas almost 34 subjects (21.8%) regularly watched the sports channel and 29 subjects (18.6%) preferred to view the sports channel sometimes. On the other hand, 10 subjects (6.4%) did not watch any sports channel at all. Few of the respondents mentioned that they followed and viewed various tournament on the internet (and not television), and few only followed the Cricket World Cup, whereas one watched it extremely rarely.

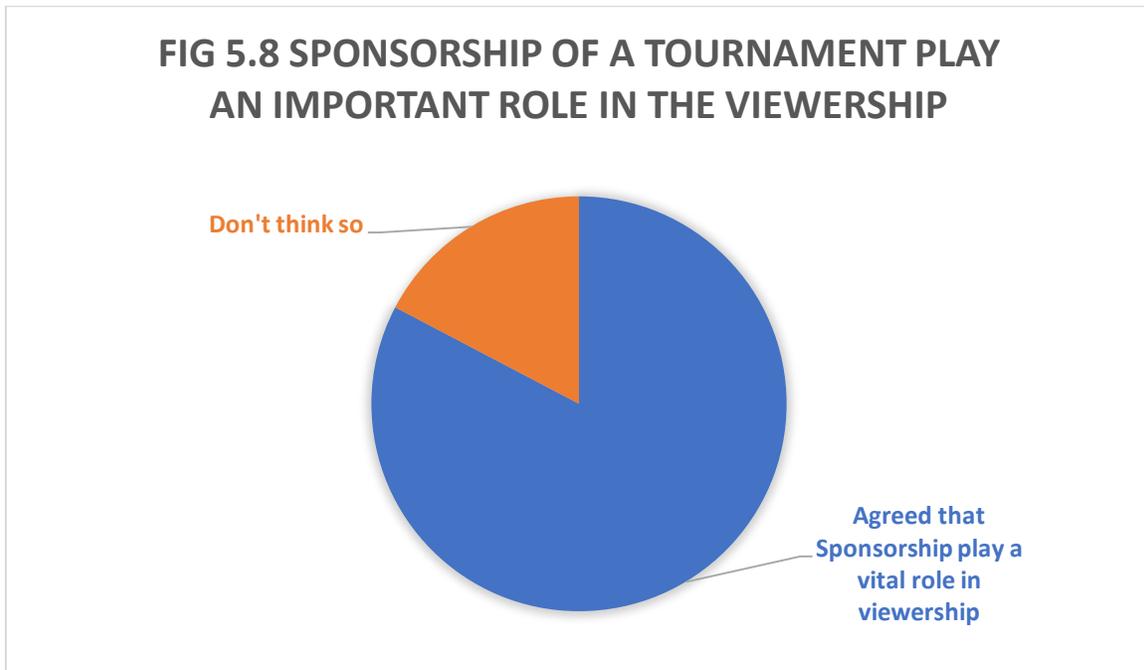
The participants were questioned if given a choice which sport will they prefer to watch, men sports or women sports and the reason for the same. It was found that majority of the participants preferred to view men's match as they found it more interesting, energetic, competitive, intense and entertaining when compared with a women's match. They also mentioned that they found the publicity and coverage of a men's tournament better than women's tournament. Not only this, few also talked about the moves and tactics that they got to learn from the men's match as they think that the performance and standard of the game are better; they feel connected viewing a men's match. Many also said that gender did not affect their viewing; and the fact that they were more interested in watching the sports tournament regardless of the gender. Few also said that they believed in gender equality and more than the gender they consider the tournament that's that they are interested in. They feel that it is important to build a sporting spirit and they will look at the quality and competitiveness of the game rather than gender. Irrespective of this, there were a few who mentioned that they did not watch any women's tournament and hence as an experience, they would want to watch it. There were respondents who said they would watch a sports tournament for the famous female athlete, whereas others said they would prefer to watch a sports match to support them and empower them. There was one candidate who also mentioned that watching a female sports tournament motivates her and makes her proud.

The next question that was asked was whether, according to them, is there a sudden improvement in viewership of sports played by women when compared with the past and the reason for the same. Only 8 respondents out of 156 thought that there was no improvement whereas the rest of them strongly felt that there was an improvement due to the increased media coverage, awareness, encouragement, empowerment, feminism, media presence, sponsorship and increased competitiveness. Many also mentioned it's their talent and skills, as women, as winning more and more titles (in Olympics) and are reaching finals of major tournaments (ICC World Cup 2017), are raising people's attention and changing how the society thinks. Even the literacy and education has increased which brings gender equality. They also mentioned that many people have realised that there is more to sports than what the mainstream media broadcasts and the male tournaments that are held. Few also said that due to social media, and various Bollywood movies (Mary Kom, Dangal etc) and appreciation made by various famous public figures, the awareness is increasing.



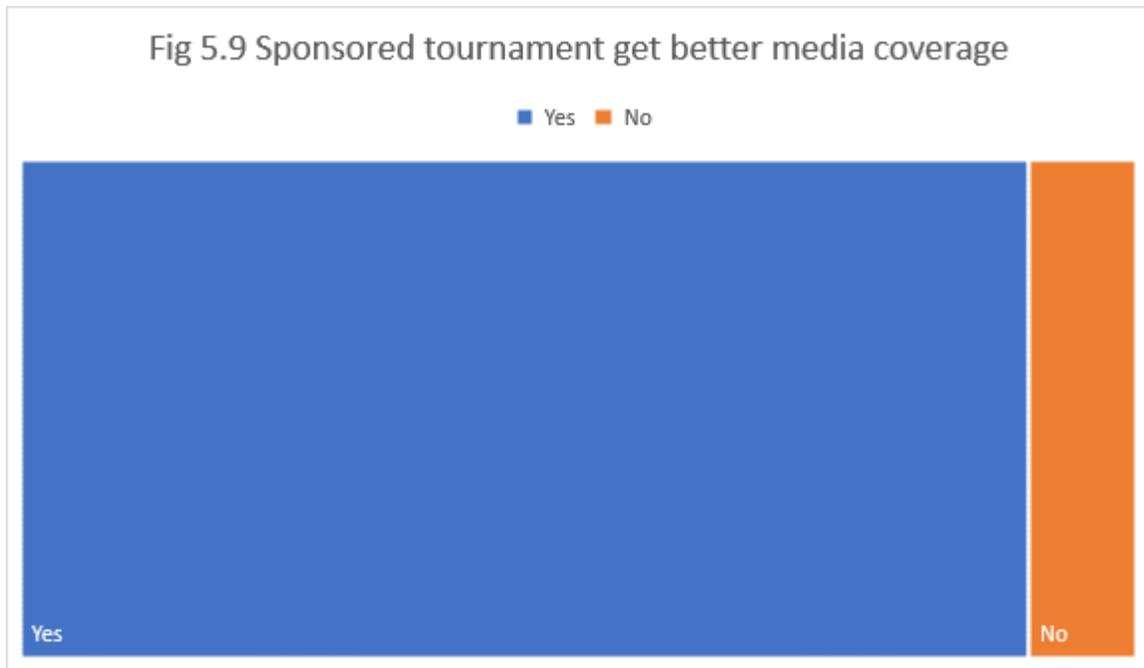
**Fig 5.7 Change in the interest shown by people around them in women sports**

The next question was objective, where the respondents were asked if according to them, has there been any perceptible change in the interest shown by people around them in women sports. Majority of them agreed as 134 subjects (85.9%) said yes they have seen people get more interested in women sports, whereas 22 subjects (14.1%) denied, and felt no change.



**Fig 5.8 Sponsorship of a tournament play an important role in the viewership**

The participants were asked whether according to them, sponsorship of a tournament played an important role in the viewership. Majority of the respondents that amounted to almost 129 subjects (82.7%) agreed that sponsorship did play an important role in the viewership of that tournament. On the other hand, 27 subjects (17.3%) denied saying that viewership wasn't affected by the sponsorship.



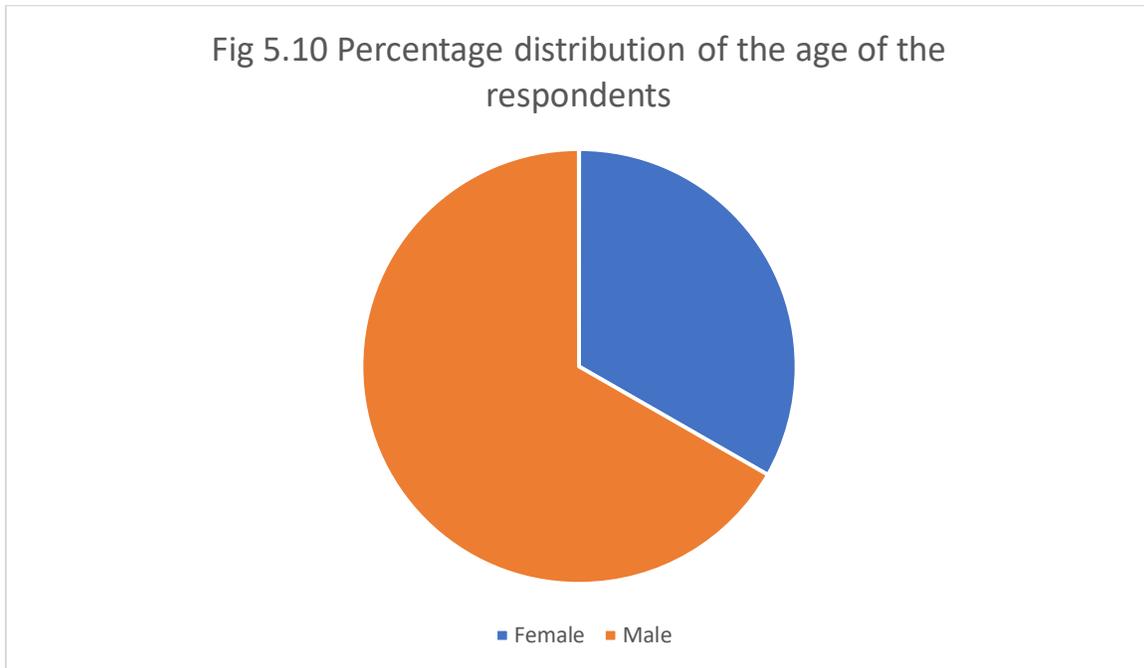
**Fig 5.9 Sponsored tournament get better media coverage**

To find out if media coverage was affected by sponsorship, the respondents were asked if according to them, a good sponsored tournament got better media coverage; 141 respondents (90.4%) agreed and said yes, whereas only 15 respondents (9.6%) said no.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether women sports got less sponsorship when compared to men sports and if yes, according to them what could be the possible reasons. Only 8 respondents denied rest all 148 respondents agreed and said that sponsorship is majorly given to increase the viewership of that product or service and as women tournament gets less viewership it is not that profitable. Sponsors expect high rates of ticket sale, not only this in India there are fewer female players when compared with male. Few also said that it's a male-dominated society that prefers aggressive competition that is not seen that much in a female match; as a result, the audience is less, resulting in lack of viewership eventually less sponsorship.

## 5.2 Practitioner's Prospect

The practitioners include people from the media fraternity; the once who have been behind various news stories and articles, and majorly includes journalist. There was a total of 18 respondents.



**Fig 5.10 Percentage distribution of the age of the respondents**

Out of the total 18 participants, 12 were male (66.7%) and 6 were female (33.3%) making it little more tilted towards the male side.

The practitioners were asked on what ground a media industry selects sport for coverage, the majority of them mentioned that it was the popularity of the sport and the people's choice and preference. Few also mentioned that the coverage was also decided on the basis of the level of tournament, sponsorship and the money involved. Others mentioned that achievement, the performance of the player and location of the match were additional few criteria there were looked into.

The respondents were then asked if according to them, gender was given any consideration for selecting sports for coverage. Majority of the respondents that were almost 13 subjects denied that gender was not given any consideration and every tournament was treated equally without any gender biases. On the other hand, 5 subjects agreed and said yes, there was preference given but they also mentioned that things have changed in last 4 years.

The participants were then asked as to how space/timing for the sports news was determined. A response that was analysed had a variety of points that were considered starting from the participation of India in the tournament. One also mentioned that many newspapers have special space for sports news that is not cancelled under any given conditions, so all major tournament and recent sports news are updated. Another respondent also mentioned that major international events were given more preference. Few also said that the sports events are covered on the basis of the popularity, performance, achievements and even controversy. Other mentioned that in India, cricket is in limelight so special preference is given to news related to cricket and cricket players. One also talked that current events and the psycho fancy play are a very important role especially in writing about cricket heroes. The subject further added that sports journalists in India are totally biased and they allot space to please their favourite icon, as a result, the local heroes hardly find space. But not all journalists are the same but a majority are.

The participants were asked according to them was there a difference in the coverage of sports played by men versus that played by women and if yes, what are the reasons for the same. Only 6 subjects denied and said no,

and thought that same coverage was given to both men and women in the arena of sports. On the other hand, majority of them agree and mentioned the following reasons; few said that women sports are given more coverage once they reach semi-finals or qualify for finals. Another subject mentioned that unless it is a major championship like Wimbledon, women players find less coverage due to less sponsorship, less visibility and the mindset that sports are basically a male-dominated arena still. One respondent mentioned that, there is a difference; men's sports find more acceptances while women's sports, barring Grand Slam tennis, are yet to reach a level of acceptance. One subject very strongly talked about this saying, in India it is, particularly in cricket that is being highlighted as in this game, vested interest plays major role and journalist are also biased he/she further mentioned that women cricket got highlighted only when they reached finals in London Rest women wrestling is very interesting game but after Olympics he/she hardly know any local girl who will matter in next Asian and Olympics game. Hence, he/she believes that there is a difference in coverage. Few mentioned that it is because of less exposure and bigger viewership for men's sporting events. One also mentioned that the coverage can be less as sports played by men are considered more dynamic due to the biological advantage of higher strength and stamina in men.

The next question was that according to them how media can help in promoting women sports? Almost all the respondents mentioned that more media coverage would make a huge difference. One respondent very strongly mentioned that Media needs to play a positive role in promoting women sports, first and foremost is to give space to achievements of women in the field, including their struggles. Do out of the box stories so that it catches the attention of not only the readers but also the corporate houses that are important for sponsorship deals. Another participant said that daily space allotment of their grievances their struggle to reach the milestones allotment of funds to their respective sports by the government and no bias if they have any grievances, it will then be sure that this will definitely help women's games the subject further added that now it's enough of highlighting men's cricket. One subject also talked that media plays a big role in promoting sports be it a men's sport or women's; It's not the media, but the organisers who need to promote women's sport more, the more women's events are organised the more the media coverage. Lastly, everyone also mentioned that more attention, coverage and special space for women's sports will surely make a difference.

The respondents were then asked if sponsorship played an important role in determining the amount of space/timing which is given to that sports news. Almost 11 subjects agreed and said yes whereas 6 denied, one subject said that there is a difference in sponsorship and advertisement (in print media); Sponsorship is given to players whereas advertisements are published in newspapers; to some extent, and in some newspapers nowadays, advertisement plays a big role in determining the space given to any sport the subject further added that there are still some newspapers who report and publish sports news according to their merit.

Lastly, the practitioners were asked did they think women sports got less sponsorship when compared to men sports and if yes, the reason for the same. Not a single responded denied, everyone agreed and said yes. One respondent mentioned that because women in sports are less visible on the fields than men; the mind-set that women are not serious on the field also needs to be corrected; it's a vicious circle - lack of media coverage indirectly translates into less sponsorship and sponsors look at the commercial viability n if they think women in sports are not lucrative, they will not pump in money. Another responded mentioned that there is a need to sponsor more women and in other sports besides cricket, lot many sportswomen can't come up due to lack of funds. A subject also talked that it is not about giving less sponsorship to women from men. It's about popularity of sport; if the sport is popular, sponsors will come, but if the game is less popular and played by few then few would put in their money; if women players perform well and will medals/titles then sponsor will approach them, but if they fail to perform then, nobody would put their money on them. Lastly, others mentioned that less popularity, lower level of excitement, limited readers and viewers are the reason as commerce play a vital role and returns the count of the sponsors.

## CONCLUSION

After all the research, results and discussions the conclusion that this paper has acquired is that female player in India get lesser viewership and attention than the male players; not just in ICC World Cup but almost in all the sports. The reason for this is majorly due to the way women are portrayed in India, they are majorly recognised in the 'glamorous' industry for work. People find women sport less interesting and exciting. The female athlete gets recognition only when she reaches a certain level, like finals or wins the tournament.

On the other hand, viewers majorly choose male sporting events to watch as they find them more aggressive, entertaining, fast and think that the game has more skills when compared with a women's match; as a result, man, sports are more popular than women; which eventually makes people more aware about men tournaments.

As viewership is more in men sporting events, they get better sponsors who are ready to put in their money. Women athlete and games get less sponsorship as the viewership, awareness and popularity is far way lower than that of men. And at the end sponsorship is all about building money and viewers for the brand, which eventually they get the benefit if they invest in a men's tournament.

Media plays a huge role in terms of giving the right amount of coverage, building awareness and promoting women athlete; sadly, this again in some conditions depends upon the sponsorship that the women tournament or player gets.

Although there has been a tremendous difference in the awareness, viewership and popularity of women sports from the past years; a noticeable increase has been seen in this scenario, yet a lot of efforts are still required to bring women in the same position as men in the arena of sports.

## RECOMMENDATION

### 1. *Social Media*

With the world becoming more tech savvy and more and more people coming on the various social media platforms, it is important that the organisers of the tournament along with the sports ministry focus towards the social media marketing for promoting and building awareness for women athletes. Various hashtags (#) can be used and made 'trending' on various platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc., not only this various social media campaigns, player story, fun facts etc. during the season of any female tournament can be made popular; this will make people more aware which eventually can help in the increasing the viewership.

### 2. *Media coverage*

Media in India plays a huge role in not just as a medium of updates but also as an influencer. Newspaper can come up with a special space for updates on female sporting events and for their stories. This will help female athletes get more recognition. Not just newspaper but also the radio and various news or sporting channel on television can come up with the same where they provide a dedicated time for their updates, stories and coverage of their tournament.

### 3. *League formats*

Nowadays leagues formatting of the tournament in India are on the rise and various sports are coming up with their own leagues where they bring entertainment and sports match together. The Indian Premier League (IPL) for cricket, Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) for kabaddi and Indian Super League (ISL) for football are the three sports league that is on top in India, unfortunately, all the three are a male-dominated league with not a single women athlete. Various sporting federations should bring leagues like Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) for table tennis and Badminton Premier League (BPL) that contain both male and female players in equal amount in all the teams.

### 4. *Equal Opportunities and awareness*

In the end, it all sums up to the opportunity that a female player receives. The government and various federations should promote more and more girls to get into sports from their school times. Not only this there is a need to educate and liberate the minds of people who think shallow of a female player and restrict them from getting into sports. An equal platform should be created that gives women an equal opportunity as men.

## LIMITATIONS

- One of the main limitations of the study was the sample size. The study can give better precision in the analysis provided a much bigger sample size.
- The area of study could be much wider according to the need of this research which included an on-field interview of various male and female athletes along with knowing more insights of the media and the sports industry in India.
- There is a possibility of fake data which is a limitation of online forms. Since the subject's geographical locations were varied, it would be challenging to have the questionnaire filled otherwise.

- An equal amount of male and female subjects could be taken to have one more dimension to the analysis.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire for Readers/ Viewers

An Impact of Gender in the viewership of Sports in India

Name

\*

Short answer text

---

Age \*

Short answer text

---

Education \*

- Higher secondary
- Graduate
- Post Graduate
- Other...

\*

Required

Gender \*

Female

Male

Other...

Hobbies \*

Short answer text

---

Do you play any sport? \*

Yes

No

Have you ever watched any sports tournament? \*

Yes

No

According to you, do women sports get less media coverage when compared to men sports? \*

Yes

No

Have you ever watched any women sports tournament? If yes, mention it. \*

Long answer text

---

Have you ever watched any men sports tournament? If yes, mention it. \*

Long answer text

---

How frequently do you watch sports channel? \*

- Regularly
- Sometimes
- During a particular tournament
- Don't watch at all

If given a choice which sport will you prefer to watch, men sports or women sports? and Why? \*

Long answer text

---

According to you, is there a sudden improvement in viewership of sports played by women when compared with the past? Why? \*

Long answer text

---

According to you, has there been any perceptible change in the interest shown by people around you in women sports? \*

- Yes
- No

According to you, does sponsorship of a tournament play an important role in the viewership? \*

- Yes
- No

According to you, does a good sponsored tournament get better media coverage? \*

Yes

No

Do you think women sports get less sponsorship when compared to men sports? If yes, according to you what could be the possible reasons? \*

Long answer text

---

### **Questionnaire for Practitioners**

Impact of gender of the players on the viewership of sports in India: A case study of ICC World Cup tournaments.

\* Required

Age \*

Short answer text

---

Occupation \*

Short answer text

---

Which Company/Organisation are you associated with? \*

Short answer text

---

Hobbies \*

Short answer text

---



Gender \*

Female

Male

Other...

On what ground does media industry select sports for coverage? \*

Long answer text

---

Is gender given any consideration while selecting sports for coverage? \*

Long answer text

---



How is the space/timing for the sports news determined? \*

Long answer text

---

According to you is there a difference in the coverage of sports played by men versus that played by women? if Yes, why? \*

Long answer text

---

According to you, how can media help in promoting women sports? \*

Long answer text

---

Does sponsorship play an important role in determining the amount of space/timing which is given to that sports news? \*

Long answer text

---

Do you think women sports get less sponsorship when compared to men sports? If yes, why? \*

Long answer text

---