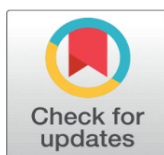


“CHAMPIONING EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY: LEVERAGING THE PRINCIPLES OF TEFU ARTICLE 165 TO FORGE A BIAS-FREE SOCIETY IN INDIAN SPORTS”

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the deeply rooted social inequalities of gender, caste, and economic backgrounds in the Indian sports system. Women and samples of the lower castes and economically disadvantaged face numerous challenges, including restricted access to equipment and training venues. The goal of the study is to use the principle of the TEFU Article 165 concerning the rights of equality in sports for redressing these imbalances in Indian context. The research offers policy recommendations, grassroots programs, and educational initiatives as an answer to the specific context of TEFU Article 165, historical inequities, and existing obstacles in creating an inclusive environment. The document provides a step-by-step plan starting with the problem statement and a review of the literature on inclusion in international and Indian sports. Exploring the main aspects of TEFU Article 165 in the EU context and its relevance to India sports. The subsequent chapters provide policy enhancement solutions, local campaigns, and NGO participation for such athletes. The last chapter explores the implementation plan where an essential component is the participation of the government, the private sector, and community participation to promote bias-free sports in India. The study also brings out the factor of recreation of the social policy through the incorporation of sporting policies for the integration of the disabled to enhance equality.

Keywords: Equality, Inclusivity, TEFU Article 165, Indian Sports, Gender Disparities, Caste Bias, Economic Barriers

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

There is a rather acute problem of inequality and prejudice to sports in Indian sports and it shows in gender discrimination in sports, caste bias and class prejudices. Female athletes are confronted with limited opportunities and resources than male counterparts in most cases. Low-caste and economically less privileged athletes face restricted access to amenities and hierarchical mobility. These issues are not just a problem for individual athletes, but also a problem for the development of inclusive sports in India.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Equity in a sporting context means that people of all genders, castes, and economic capacities should have a right to participate and excel at sporting activities. Sport is a tool for social integration and a mechanism for social transformation. In the same way, equal opportunities provide equal chances for each, eradicating bias thus make sports a mirror of the society and make the society better thus improving the aspect of sports.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The research sought to assess sports for Indians with disabilities under the principles of TEFU Article 165 with special regard to integration. The goal is to recommend measures and policies to reduce existing imbalances and raise the rate of participation in Indian sports as a means of bringing about social transformation.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE ESSAY

The essay is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review on global and Indian sports inclusion. The third chapter examines TEFU Article 165 in relation to sports. Chapter 4 discusses existing inequities in Indian sports. Chapter 5 outlines policy improvements, local campaigns, and the implication of Non-Government Organizations. Chapter 6 discusses strategies regarding implementation that would incorporate government and private sectors. Chapter 7 analyzes the prospects, solutions and future implications for the adoption of TEFU principles into Indian sports.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The advancement of equality and inclusion in sports has recorded numerous achievements across the world and in India. Historically, sporting activities discriminated against women and people of color. It was in the 20th century that civil right and women's rights started pushing against these traditions. Some of the key milestones in the development of women involvement in sport include the participation and integration of women in Olympics in 1900 and the integration of gender equity for educational Athletics in the United States through Title IX in 1972 (Staurowsky, 2016). Indian sports were traditionally dominated by the upper class, which effectively excluded lower castes and women from active participation. After gaining independence, measures such as the National Sports Policy of 1984 was formulated which sought to open up sports to all. However, gender discrimination and inadequate access to resources continue to be issues that limit the actual integration of Indian sports (Hong & Zhouxiang, 2020).

2.2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON BIAS IN SPORTS

Studies examining bias in Indian sports show systematic discrimination based on gender, caste, and economic status. Some of the challenges that women athletes experience includes limited facility access and reduced funding when compared to male counterparts. Sheth (2023) also noted that discrimination by caste still exists with lower caste athlete having less chances of getting selected. Lack of necessary facilities and trainers deters athletes of poor economic status (Das et al., 2023). These biases influence the rates of participation, the level of productivity, and the duration of employment. Although there are affirmative policies and specific programs designed to solve the identified problems, the practice reveals some challenges with their application and efficiency (Lyngdoh, 2023).

2.3 IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL POLICIES

There has been a mixed success in the international policies aimed at enhancing equality and inclusion in sports. According to TEFU Article 165, sports should promote social integration as well as education. Title IX in the U. S. and similar policies have led to enhanced women's sports participation thus promoting gender equity (Williams & Green, 2024). The UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport enacted in 1978 is discriminated and offers frameworks of rights on access to sporting activities for all. Effectiveness of such policies is highly contingent on political commitment and the social and economic environment of the country in question. European countries have implemented gender equity in the rights to participate in sports while the less supported countries face challenges in implementation (Donnelly, 2008).

2.4 CASE STUDIES

Several countries have successfully implemented inclusive sports policies, achieving positive outcomes.

In Rwanda, after the genocide in 1994, sports programs facilitated social recovery and reconciliation, the fight against discrimination, as well as unity of the country. National sports organisations were found to have provided a great impact in promoting the youth, societal coping mechanisms, and social cohesion (Didier & Nzeyimana, 2020).

The Auckland City Council incorporated human rights approach, in tackling public health issues in a pluralistic population. This strategy put much attention to result accountability and involvement of the community and boosted the levels of active recreation participation improving the well-being of the community. It involved non-members and positively impacted on social and economic wellbeing (Gillon, 2010).

In South Africa, sport-for-development programmes employed PAR to incorporate indigenous knowledge and foster community participation. Effective collaborations between NGOs, government, and communities have improved social resources and social issues have been tackled while proving that for sport development efficient, flexible and community focused models need to be applied Burnett 2009.

The examples of described case studies show that the effective sports policies aimed at increasing inclusion can bring positive changes to the society and can offer useful recommendations for other countries.

3. UNDERSTANDING TEFU ARTICLE 165

3.1. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Article 165 of the TEFU was incorporated during the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 in a move that marked a strategic imperative to adopt sports as part of the social and cultural activities of the EU. The history of the Article 165 can be traced back to growing recognition of the importance of sports for social inclusion and physical activity as well as education. It was given a major boost by the 2000 Nice Declaration aimed at underlining the role of sport in reconciling society and improving the quality of life (Parrish, 2003). The primary aim of Article 165 is to enhance, facilitate and complement Member States' initiatives in promoting sports that are compatible with the European values and contribute to the social and cultural integration of the Union (Eur-lex, 2018).

3.2 CORE PRINCIPLES

The core principles of Article 165 are based on such values as equal opportunities and non-discrimination in sporting activities in the EU. It is to promote non-discrimination of citizens in the area of sports and play a crucial role in social inclusion of all groups of people regardless of sex, age, disability or income. The article focuses on the idea of establishing the European model of the sports, which involves the promotion of the sport starting from the grassroots level, acknowledging the social and educational functions of sport as well as the fight against such vices as doping and match-fixing. Moreover, article 165 emphasizes the need to incorporate sports policies into a larger overall health and education agendas for the betterment of community health and harmony (Weatherill, 2011).

3.3 APPLICATION IN THE EU

Article 165 has made it possible to launch several actions that will contribute to the promotion of sports integration and equity in Europe. An example is the European Week of Sport that began in 2015 and encourages sports among people of all ages with a special focus on the less active segments of the population. This corresponds to the principles of accessibility for persons with disabilities as stated in Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, also aiming to promote the participation of individuals in sports.

Another major area is the Erasmus+ Sport scheme that provides grants to projects addressing the application of sports for integration of marginalized communities and enhancing health of such vulnerable populations. This program has funded a variety of processes promoting the use of sport to rebuild integration of refugees, promote gender equality and prevent social exclusion projects (Kirilova et al., 2024). Furthermore, Article 165 has been used to encourage the EU to pursue non-discrimination in sports; for instance, through action plans to combat racism and xenophobia means for equality in the sporting area (Garcia, 2009).

4. CURRENT STATE OF EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN INDIAN SPORTS

4.1 GENDER DISPARITIES

Gender inequalities are evident in Indian sports in various aspects including women participation, funding and media coverage. However, the level of focus and dedication to women's sports in India is still comparatively low to that of men's sports even if there are successful female athletes like P.V.Sindu and Mary Kom. Despite significant advancements, Indian women athletes continue to endure several challenges in their careers this requirement, for example, lack of access to training facilities, cultural norms, and inadequate funding this has been established in the International Olympic Committee (2022). Funding being awarded is mostly given to male athletes and sports that predominantly involve male athletes hence women do not have as many chances as they would like in professional leagues. Moreover, it is equally alarming that women's success earns little media attention compared to men's achievements, and this also erodes the necessary encouragement of female athletes (Kochi, 2018).

4.2 CASTE AND ECONOMIC BARRIERS-

Some of the barriers to sports in India include caste and economic status. In the past, sports have been a domain of the privileged and the elite from upper castes whereas lower castes and economically backward people face a lot of difficulties. A survey conducted by Philip et al. (2021) notes that athletes belonging to lower castes face discrimination, poor facilities, and scarcity of opportunities to make it to elite sports. These challenges are further compounded by economic challenges, where families with limited resources cannot afford to cater for the training, apparels, and other requirements such as transport costs to and from events such as competitions. It narrows down the talent development and creates a continued cycle of exclusion that minimizes the representation of marginalized groups in sports.

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

One of the biggest issues in Indian sports organizations is that they are nontransparent, highly bureaucratic, and carry biases that fester and block the progress of an equitable sports environment. These institutions are often characterised by corruption and favouritism which hinders prospective athletes with no influence or sponsorship. These organizations do not offer proper representation and support to women, lower-caste people, and economically susceptible athletes; thus, they continue to be discriminative (Chauhan, 2023). Moreover, measures aimed at increasing the representation of minorities are frequently implemented inefficiently or lack adequate supervision to ensure that the funds reach the targeted beneficiaries (Khasnis et al., 2021).

Furthermore, India, being a secular country, officially enshrines the ideals of equality of every person regardless of his/her religion. This ideal is even more relevant in the field of sports where participation and accomplishment should not be dictated by religion. However, some recent events have shown that this equality is not always maintained properly. For example, Muslim players have complained of discrimination in the selection and placement of athletes to national teams especially in the game of cricket and football. Likewise, there have been times when the religious minorities were excluded or discriminated in the sporting arenas and training sessions. Thus, there is a need to pay special attention to maintain secularism and promote equal opportunities for everybody regardless of religion in Indian sports.

For instance, India cricketer Mohammed Shami was trolled extensively for his religion Muslim after the Indian cricket team's defeat against Pakistan in the T20 World Cup in 2021. The backlash brought to the fore religious prejudices that athletes undergo in a country that holds itself as secular. However, the year 2023 cricket world cup was exceptional for Shami as he led India to finals and took record seven wickets in semi-final and thus, he became hero. These are the same critics who once criticized him for his religion now have his back (Mogul, 2023). The given case highlights the fight for equality and integration of all religious players in India, and physical activities' potential to eliminate religious discrimination. This has called for the fight on secularism in Indian sports where no player should be discriminated based on their religion.

4.4 PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND MEDIA REPRESENTATION

The media also influence people's perception of sports and athletes in India in a very special manner. The media gives attention to a select number of sports, for instance cricket, and successful male sportsmen leaving out other sporting activities and women athletes. Such representation perpetuates gender stereotypes and reduces the visibility of various athletic potentials (Kochi, 2018). Stereotyping and social influence by the media contribute to the unfair treatment of female athletes and athletes of color in terms of sponsorship and support from society for traditional male athletes and

traditional sports. A more representative journalism could change these perceptions and increase the acceptance and encouragement of a wider variety of sports and athletes (Das et al., 2023).

5 LEVERAGING TEFU ARTICLE 165 PRINCIPLES IN INDIAN SPORTS

5.1. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make Indian sports governance more consistent with the principles set out in TEFU Article 165, several policies require alteration. First, there should be a policy to facilitate equal participation of all citizens in sports regardless of their sex, wealth or colour. This can be done by enforcing different percentages of female and other marginalized groups in the sporting activities and events (Eur-Lex, 2018). Furthermore, funding should be distributed fairly, this means that women sports as well as sports practiced by the minority groups deserve adequate funding. Lack of transparency within the governance structures of sport organizations remains a significant factor that contributes to corruption and misuse of resources (Shah & Elling, 2008). Policies should also contain provisions against discrimination to safeguard athletes against bias and for equality. In addition, there must be proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism instituted to review the relevant policies and ensure that the change required to deliver the intended impacts of the policy and programme initiative is produced (Scherer, 2002).

5.2 GRASSROOTS PROGRAMS

Initiation of grass root sports with an aim on vulnerable segments of the society contributes towards realization of inclusive sports participation in India. There should be programs which should ensure that children and youths in rural and underprivileged urban areas get the best sports facilities, training and support (Moore et al., 2010). Partnerships with local schools, community centers and sports clubs can also help in the setting up of a series of regular sports activities and matches. There is need to encourage people to embrace sporting activities and ensure that leaders embrace such efforts. Further, training an indigenous set of coaches and volunteers from the community will go a long way in nurturing culturally and socially appropriate sports programs for the participants (Das et al., 2023). By ensuring that these programs are free or affordable and providing equipment and infrastructure, the financial barrier to participation will be eliminated.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

The incorporation of sports and teaching inclusiveness in schools and universities will also go a long way in changing the orientations of young people and the society as a whole. Introducing aspects of Diversity and Inclusiveness with regard to sports and physical activities in the school setting should be enhanced by Schools to incorporate programs that promote the values of physical education, including teamwork and share respective diversities. It is beneficial to implement prescriptive approaches by creating courses and workshops at the universities for sports management, ethical aspects, or inclusive opportunities so that students follow the career of sports for social impacts. Organized sporting activities should be part of co-curricular activities for students, care should be taken to ensure that girls and marginalized students are included. Education institutions should also have partnerships with the sports organizations in order to allow students participate in research, internships or even community service projects that promote inclusiveness in the sporting activities (McLeod et al., 2021).

5.4 ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Hence there is a considerable importance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in supporting the cause of inclusive sports among the disabled in India. NGOs can fill gaps by offering knowledge, materials and support to advocate for the rights of the needy groups. They will be in a position to collaborate with governmental organizations and communities to build and implement applicable sports that will meet the community's needs (Philip et al., 2021). Through embracing the activities and supporting the targeted groups of marginalised groups and population, the involvement of NGOs can also lead publicise other potential and possible impacts of the sport activities to the health needs of humans, social integration, and social growth aspects. Further, NGOs can also support in offering training to coaches or other sports related authorities to ensure all individuals are included within this specific sector and programs (Banks 2020). Thus, result of such programs, NGOs can provide feedbacks and advocate for the social and sporting policies that can provide chances and opportunities for marginalized people in the sporting society.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

6.1 GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

For equality and inclusive sports policy in India, the government and policymakers need to change the current policy to be a little more sensitive toward women, lower castes, and the economically backward section (McLeod et al., 2021). This must be done by enforcing the policies that call for equal financing and provision of resources to all types of sports and gender. These inclusive policies could be executed by a specific authority to make sure that the management is responsible and open. To reduce imbalances in participation, quotas for sports scholarships and training programs should be set (Chauhan, 2023). Additional encouragement for the sports organizations that have effectively adopted the diversity policies could go a long way in ensuring that these changes are legally enforceable and thereby sustaining such practices.

The government of India must incorporate and implement policies that ensure religious parity regarding participation in sporting activities. Some of them are the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation; the provision of incentives for diverse selection and recruitment; and the national and international campaigns for tolerance and secularism in sports. Also, grants should be provided to help open equal opportunities for participation in sports for different religious groups that are often left out.

6.2 PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Promotion of inclusive sport programs in the private sector can go a long way in improving its effectiveness. The government can incentivize these endeavors by providing tax exemptions, subsidies, and certification to companies (Sharma & Kiran, 2012). Government and the private sector could seek the cooperation of cross-sectional partners like other companies, local governments, and NGOs to fund and implement sports infrastructure and programs for the youths. Organizations can urge firms to adopt effective CSR policies through sponsoring programs that will enhance the rights of minorities within sporting activities. To increase participation, it may be important to draw attention to the advantages for the businesses it serves, which include enhanced brand perception and employee morale (Tanwar et al., 2018).

It is important that private sectors support inclusive sports programs for children with disabilities. They could be in form of fiscal measures such as offering tax credits to firms that financially support sporting activities in religious minorities or promote diversity in teams. Corporation relations also offer sponsorship for the infrastructure, training, and scholarships that will enable the athletes of all religion to compete on equal grounds.

6.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation is a requisite in the implementation of policies. It is recommended that the government should create an agency that will review the effectiveness of policies and programs in sports in terms of inclusiveness and equity (Garcia, 2009). This body would establish concrete measures for assessing activities, such as turnout and resource allocation. Technology such as keeping records in data analytics can help in overseeing the process and make it more transparent (Jayal et al, 2018). It is necessary to conduct periodical audits and receive feedback from other stakeholders to understand whether certain policies need to be adjusted and improved. The dissemination of evaluation results to the public may contribute to heightened responsibility and sustained improvement.

It is therefore important to build strong frameworks to track the efficiency of these new policies. This can encompass establishing organizations to undertake periodic evaluations and monitoring of the standards of the sports programs, monitoring of the implementation of the anti-discrimination policies, and monitoring of progress of the religious minorities in sports. Measures such as transparent reporting and accountability shall assist towards making sure that all these initiatives have a positive impact.

6.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT-

It is crucial to involve the locals in order for the sports for everyone strategies to work. Local people themselves through local community sports councils comprising of leaders in the community and other sports lovers can support grassroots sports. Public awareness programmes that focus on the social and individual issues that can be solved through sports activities can help to unite people. Community programmes should increase participation at local sporting events such as organize local sporting events and sporting workshops which would create awareness. Promoting volunteer involvement and local sponsorships can help in increasing community endorsement and stakeholding in sports

programmes. Engaging the community in the planning and implementation of the sports programs can go a long way in championing for the culture of sports (Forde et al., 2015).

Community participation plays a central role in achieving equity in sports. Some of the approaches include the annual services on appropriate ethnically diverse community sporting activities, civic lessons on the need for religious tolerance, and leader advocacy for fair sport ethnic treatment. Community mobilization involves ensuring that secularism is supported at the base by cultivating relevant cultures of gender and other diversities.

7. CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS, AND CONCLUSION

7.1 ANTICIPATED OBSTACLES

Several challenges are likely to be encountered when coming up with policies for the inclusion of sports in India. Resistance might come from culture that supports male biased sports and discriminates based on economic class and caste (Das et al., 2023). Problems in implementation of policy and distribution of resources include bureaucratic problems and corruptions in sports organizations (Maennig, 2005). Lack of funds, especially in the less privileged areas, hampers appropriate sports facilities and programs which are essential in encouraging participants across the populace (Das et al., 2023). Furthermore, lack of interest in the policy may be witnessed due to compromise from the private sector because of perceived low returns on investment in inclusive sports activities (Hoye et al., 2010).

7.2 OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Solving these issues calls for a more qualitative, community-based and systemic intervention. The public needs to be educated on the topics and encouraged to embrace the need to include athletes. . These campaigns should be implemented with support of media and other important influential leaders in the society so as to address large groups of people and avoid reinforcement of existing stereotypical beliefs (Sharma & Kiran, 2012). In the existing social institutions fighting bureaucratic and corruption problems it is necessary to apply transparent regulation of activity and regular checkups in sport organizations. The government could also provide other forms of rewards to the private sector for their contributions in the inclusive sport programs pointing out ways through which the private sector may contribute, this includes, tax exemptions and royalties (Hums et al., 2023).

Developing partnerships with NGOs that operate in areas with minorities can assist in filling gaps in resource distribution and deliver sports programs effectively. Furthermore, the use of technology in monitoring and evaluation increases efficiency to increase the transparency and accountability of the implementation of policies (Banks, 2020).

7.3 CASE STUDIES OF OVERCOMING BIAS

There are other successful cases that can be valuable references for India. For example, the “Sport for Life” program implemented in Canada has shown success in the promotion of sport participation for Indigenous population in terms of traditional games incorporation and accessibility. Likewise, Norway’s Gender Equality Act has been effective in pushing up women’s engagement in sports through the requirement of equal funding and opportunity to promote a proactively progressive change (Hovden, 2012). In South Africa, the sports programs that targeted post-apartheid integration proved that the principle of sports is extremely effective in establishing social integration and eradicating prejudice (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008).

7.4 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

This discussion has revealed the problems and inequalities in Indian sports, based on gender, caste or economic status. Therefore, with the implementation of TEFU Article 165 standards, it is possible to achieve a more inclusive and equal society in India through extensive policy changes, support for grassroots sports, education, and NGO participation. Best practices from other nations show that commitment and proper strategies, sports can indeed be a powerful agent of social transformation and integration.

7.5 FUTURE OUTLOOK

The principles of TEFU Article 165 when applied to Indian sports could lead to significant, lasting change. India should strive to make sports more inclusive as it will help enhance unity, health and empower the discredited groups. This approach can also make Indian athletes more competitive on the international platform by expanding the talent base and offering everyone a chance. Furthermore, the application of diversity and equity in sports can be a reference point for other societies, therefore promoting social and economic justice.

7.6 CALL TO ACTION

To achieve these goals, all stakeholders: government, private entities, sports management bodies, and local municipalities, should actively work on enhancing the accessibility of Indian sports to people of all backgrounds. Policy makers should therefore focus on the implementation of good, inclusive sports policies. Private companies must embrace corporate social responsibility by financing and supporting the inclusive sports programs. There is a need for sports organizations to begin employing ethical practices that are free from bias. Moreover, communities must participate and fund sports for the improvement of gender equality and integration thus making sports in India represent the society.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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None

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