



Email: editorijless@gmail.com

Volume: 8, Issue 3, 2021 (July-Sept.)

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW, EDUCATION,  
SOCIAL AND SPORTS STUDIES  
(IJLESS)**

*A Peer Reviewed and Refereed Journal*

DOI: 10.33329/ijless

<http://ijless.kypublications.com/>

ISSN: 2455-0418 (Print), 2394-9724 (online)

2021©KY PUBLICATIONS, INDIA

[www.kypublications.com](http://www.kypublications.com)

**Editor-in-Chief**

**Dr M BOSU BABU**

**(Education-Sports-Social Studies)**

**Editor-in-Chief**

**DONIPATI BABJI**

**(Law)**

©KY PUBLICATIONS





## **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: INDIAN WOMEN'S JOURNEY TOWARDS OLYMPICS (1952-2016)**

**Dr. MAMAN SINGH**

Associate Professor, Department of English, Govt. P.G. College, Hisar

Email: [mamansingh2011@gmail.com](mailto:mamansingh2011@gmail.com)

DOI: [10.33329/ijless.8.3.1](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijless.8.3.1)



### **ABSTRACT**

Those days have gone back when people used to say that sports are not women but for men. Indian women have proved it wrong in present times. In fast changing modern era Indian women are not behind to men in any fields. They have created new and path of progress for them. The new Indian women full of energy and new hope and modern ideas and focus on result oriented works and work for excellence. They have recognized their potential and place in family and society. The new Indian women are multi-talented and she not in salwar, suit or saris but they are in skirt, jeans and T shirt and full of boldness and new energy to do something new and create history and their own independent recognition. Indian women first time became the part of Olympic in 1952 but could not win medal. They waited for a long and struggled very hard to win a medal in Olympic and to make India proud and to prove their potential that they are not behind in any field especially in sports. This draught ended in the Olympic 2000 when an Indian woman weightlifter Karnam Malleswari won Bronze medal for India. This significant success of Indian weightlifter Malleswari in 69 kg women category in the Summer Olympics at Sydney (Australia) changed the mentality of Indian orthodox people who always underestimated Indian women. This win also ignited the energy of young women Indian female players and they started recognizing their potential to win Olympic medals for mother India. In present times there is a great crowd of women athletes in stadiums, sports academics and sports centre. They work very hard many hours and years to win national, international and to win medals in the Olympics. As a result in the many Indian in every Olympic participate in the events and games like boxing, weightlifting, free style wrestling, race and hockey, discuss throw, Judo, shooting, swimming, and archery etc. which were in ancient times were dominated played by men only. But in present times no field is untouched by Indian women. The present paper explores the new Indian women's journey from 1952 to Rio de Janeiro Olympic 2016 and their hunger and passion to win medals and to make India proud on the map of the world. All these Olympic medalists Indian woman are brand ambassador of various companies and Govt. programmes. They have made their name and fame not only in India but in entire world.

Key words: India, women, journey, struggle, Olympics

## **Introduction**

Rome was not built in a day. Nothing happens quickly and everything takes time. It is absolutely right to win a medal in the Olympic Games which the biggest sports event in the world and organized by International Olympic Committee (IOC) after every four years. We know that the modern Olympic Games first times were held in 1896 at Athens and in 2024 will be held in Paris.

*What are Olympic Games or the Olympics?*

The Olympic game or Olympic is an international multi -sports event which is organized in summer and winter in every four years. It has a long history. It has its origin in 776 in Olympia Greece and was celebrated until 393 A.D. but for a long time Olympic were discontinued and the modern Olympic games were started in 1896 Athens which were organized by International Olympic Committee (IOC) which was formed in the same year and in the first Olympic games (06 – 15 April, 1896) 280 athletes all male from 13 various countries took part in 43 events and there was no participation of India.

*Participation of Indian male in Olympics (1900)*

India first time took part in the Olympic Games in 1900 with a single athlete named Norman Pritchard (1875-1929) who won two silver medals in athletics 200 meter and 200 meter hurdles and after that many Indian male athletes won Bronze, silver and gold medals in many Olympics.

*Participation of Indian females in Olympics (1952 - 2016)*

Sr. no	Year	Venue	Total women's Participation and Medal (s)
1.	1952	Helsinki	4 Nil
2.	2000	Sydney	23 one
3.	2012	London	54 Two
4.	2016	Rio de Janeiro	54 Two

The above table shows that it was the year 1952 when Indian women first time started participating. In the summer Helsinki Olympics only four Indian women Nilima Ghose, Mary D'Souza, Dolly Nazir and Arti Saha took part in various events. It is different thing that she could not win the Olympic medal but she broke the barriers for Indian women's participation at the highest level in sports.

In a country where sports is often dominated by men the Indian Olympic women accepted the challenge and paved a way for Indian women in sports and in present times Indian sports has seen a big rise in the number of its female athletes. Indian sportswomen have a long way since they have made an appearance at the Olympics. Looking back at the 1952 Olympics where only four Indian women became the part of Indian Olympic group. Indian women first time became the part of Olympic in 1952 and the racer Mary D'Souza was the first Indian woman took part in 100m and 200m race and in which she came in 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> position in Olympic game in 1952. In the Olympic in 1952 only four Indian women participated but no medal was won by them. Indian women waited for a long and struggled very hard to win a medal in Olympic and to make India proud and to prove their potential that they are not behind in any field especially in sports. This drought ended in the Olympic 2000 when an Indian woman weightlifter Karnam Malleswari won Bronze medal for India.

This significant success stirred the energy of young women Indian female players and they started recognizing their potential to win Olympic medals for mother India. As a result in the Olympics number of Indian women's participation is increasing every year, Even in the games like boxing, weightlifting, free style wrestling, race and hockey, discuss throw, Judo, shooting, swimming, and

archery etc. which were in ancient times were played by men women are participating and bagging medals for India.

Actually the fast journey of Indian women towards Olympic was started in the year in 2000 when Indian weightlifter Karnam Malleswari won Bronze medal in 69 kg category of weightlifting. Her gigantic success stirred the energy and hunger of Indian young women's athletes for medals the Olympic. It changed the traditional thinking of Indian men. Actually Malleswar's success was like a dawn for Indian women who imbibed the sleeping energy and spirit of Indian women athletes. It was in Indian sports like the intellectual Movement Renaissance in European countries which originated in Italy and then it spread in various parts of Europe. Similarly the first bronze medal of Malleswari not only changed patriarchal mentality but also inspired Indian women to recognized their power and participate in all activities for the progress of society and India. As a result in all sports places we can see the young girls taking part in all sports events with a hope to participate and to win medals for India.

The Indian women who won Olympic medals are in detail discussed below:

Indian Women and Sydney Summer Olympics (15 September -01 October 2000)

1. Karnam Malleswari (b.1975...) Weightlifter and Bronze Medal winner

Karnam Malleswari is the first Indian woman who won bronze medal for India in Olympic and made India to feel proud on females. . She was in 1975 was born in a small village of Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. She is a known as the 'Iron Lady' of India who made the nation proud by winning Bronze medal. She started weighting at the age of twelve under a coach Neelamsetti Appanna who was an employee in Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP). She won four medals (two golds and two silver medals) in the World Championship in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996.

Malleswari stood third and bagged bronze Medalist in the category of 69 Kg by lifting 110 kg in the snatch category and 130 in the clean and jerk which was total 240 kg. In a talk with The Telegraph on 8 July, 2004, the glory of India and Olympic medalist Malleswari, in her interview with telegraphindia.com. says:

I'm enjoying my preparation for a second medal ....I'm very hopeful. <sup>(1)</sup>

Her success motivated millions of Indian women. Her success has become a motivation for not only for Indian women athletes but men also which infused new energy Indian women athletes. Malleswari's achievement opened the eyes of Indian young women and motivated them to work hard till you till the As a result in present times and every moment young athletes can be seen working very hard and sweating many hours at a stretch in all Indian stadiums, sports complexes and academics from helmets to big cities.

The success of Indian women and their potential to do every impossible work have changed the mentality of Indian men. In past those people who consider girls burden and shame of the family have started looking bright future and fame not for family but also for village, state and nation. She lives in Yamunanagar (Haryana) with her weight lifter husband Rajesh Tyagi. In June 2021 Malleswari made the first woman Vice-Chancellor of Delhi Sports University. She was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Sports University established by Govt. of Delhi. As is earlier mentioned that the new and modern Indian is multi-talented and keeping this view in consideration Delhi Government has appointed the versatile Malleswari V.C. of Delhi Sports University.

She has been awarded with Arjuna Award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award and Padama Shri Award. Many companies have made her brand ambassador. The Govt. of India and many other State governments gave lakhs of rupees in cash prizes. In this way Malleswari is an example of women

empowerment in India through sports. Actually is not one women but representative of all athletes who have dream to make career in sports....boxing, wrestling, weightlifting and so on.

Indian Women and London Summer Olympic (July 27 – 12 August 2012)

1. Saina Nehwal (b. 1990...) Badminton Player and Bronze Medalist

In London Olympics 54 Indian women athletes participated but Saina Nehwal after Malleswari became the second Indian woman who won bronze medal created history by winning Olympic bronze medal for India in Badminton. She was born at Hisar (Haryana). She was greatly influenced by her parents who used to come with little child for playing badminton in the badminton hall of Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar. As a small child Saina saw them playing. When she was only five year old she learnt to handle the racquet and by nine she started playing. After superannuation of her scientist father at HAU Saina's family shifted to Andhra Pradesh and Saina joined Gopichand Badminton Academy, Hyderabad in the beginning and later Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, Bengaluru under her badminton coach named Vimal Kumar and became No. 1 badminton player in the world.

Saina won many international championships and medals. In 2006, Nehwal became the under - 19 national champions and created history by winning the celebrated Asian Satellite Badminton Tournament. In 2009 she was on no. 2 rank in the world and in 2015 she attained no. 1 position in the world. Prakash Padukone in a talk with timesofindia.com confirmed this news on April 2, 2015 as he tells:

It is official that Saina Nehwal is world No. 1 badminton player. <sup>(2)</sup>

Indian woman badminton player Saina Nehwal became the shining star in London Olympic 2012 when she bagged a Bronze medal for India in 2012 Olympic.

The journey of medal does not stop here. Indian women have been making their recognition in other fields also. The daughter of India Saina became the first Indian Badminton player who won Bronze medal for India. In this way Nehwal has become an inspiration for Indian Badminton players. In March 16, 2016 on yahoo.com on the grand success of Saina Nirmala Foster remarks:

Badminton born in India sparked by Saina Nehwal's success.<sup>(3)</sup>

In this way Nehwal not only made India proud by winning the Olympic medal but also she paved the way for younger Indian badminton player like P.V. Sindhu and millions of others. As a result even in village, small or big cities we can see badminton academies and badminton players working hard for hours to win medals for India. But due to some circumstances Saina left Padukone Academy and came back to Hyderabad for further coaching under Pullela Gopichand at Gopichand Badminton Academy, Hyderabad. On this Pullala Gopichand announced Saina's coming back and in a talk with deccanchronicle.com on September 2017 he declared the news of Saina's homecoming. He tells:

Saina is India's top player and someone whom I have trained for ten years and it is nice that she has decided to come home back. <sup>(4)</sup>

She has been conferred various awards like Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, Arjuna Award and Padam Bhusan etc. The govt. of India and government of various states gave her lakhs of rupees as rewards. She is also a brand ambassador of many companies.

2. M.C. Mary (b. 1983) Boxer and Bronze Medalist and Olympics

M.C. Mari Kom (b.1983) is one of the biggest boxing stars of India and the world. She belongs to Manipur and she scripted a history by winning Olympic gold for India. She started her boxing at early and at the age of 15 she joined Sports Academy in Imphal. In the beginning her father opposed

and tried to convince that boxing might spoil her face and chances of marriage. When Mary won the State Championship in 2000, he began to support Mary and understood her love for boxing. In 2005, Mary won gold medal in Asian Women's Championships and in 2010 and 2012 and many other medals.

The Indian boxer M.C. Mary Kom in the Olympic 2012 created a history and made the nation proud by winning medal in boxing. She has become the icon and torchbearer for the young generation Indian women athletes in many ways. She started her training in boxing at a very young age and represented India at the highest and made the nation proud by winning at international championship. She is physically very fit and about her fitness and very successful. In an interview on sportskeedia.com Mary discloses secret of her fitness and success as she says:

The secret of my success is my fitness and I am very quick. I plan well before bouts. I am lucky that I can my opponents within seconds. I am able to read them very quickly....I have to train to keep myself calm. It is strong urge, it's a habit of training makes me happy. When I don't train I feel sick sometimes. <sup>(5)</sup>

But despite her achievements, she too was not spared of the criticism that 'boxing is a man's sports.' Mary Kom in a talk with starunfolded.com answers in critics as she says:

People used to say that boxing is for men and not for women and I thought I'll show them someday.

I promised myself and proved myself. <sup>(6)</sup>

In this way Mary has become an inspiration for the nation and a huge motivation for sports women in India particularly. She advises Indian women players to work hard till they goal achieve goal. She advises that there is no other option of hard work and success in life. Her suggestion for the young women boxers is to result oriented hard work and work for excellence.

Mary has been awarded with Arjuna Award, Padma Shree Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, Padma Bhushan for her magnificent success. Thus Mary Kom is one of the best and remarkable boxers in the world. The Central Govt. and various state governments gave her lakhs of rupees to honor her. She is also brand ambassador of many companies.

Indian Women and Rio Summer Olympics (05 August – 21 August 2016)

Sakshi Malik (b. 1992...) Indian woman freestyle Wrestler and Olympic Bronze Medalist

In Rio Olympic Sakshi Malik emerged as a wrestling star in India and one of the biggest wrestlers in the world. Sakshi is a big name in the history of wrestling not in India but in worldwide who won bronze medal in wrestling in the Rio Olympics. She was born at Mokhra village 12 km from Rohtak district (Haryana) which is famous for wrestling and that village has given many wrestlers. She comes from such a family in which her grandfather Sh. Badlu Ram Malik and her father Shri Sukhbir Malik have been wrestlers in their youth.

Her grandfather's Influence on Sakshi Malik

Sakshi as a child was greatly influenced by her grandfather who was the Sarpanch of Mokhra village and a PEHLEWAN of his times. So wrestling was in blood of Sakshi Malik. A retired school teacher Satbir Singh tells that People used to come and wish him, 'pehlewan ji Namaste'. It is possible that the words left and imprint on Sakshi's mind.

The Indian wrestling star Sakshi started wrestling from Rohtak at the age of 12 under Ishwar Singh Dahiya, the first wrestling coach. It was first time when Sakshi's mother Sudesh Malik took her in the wrestling hall at Sir Chotu Ram Stadium in 2004. She recalls the incident of Ishwar Dahiya as she says that he was a man of twisted years, broken fingers, torn kneecaps, and bruised backs, not to mention uprooted hair.

In the stadium, Sakshi was shown many games but the game of wrestling attracted Sakshi so much that she, at once indicating 'wrestling', said her mother. 'I'll do it.' But I (Mrs. Malik ) told her wrestling is a very tough sports but the girl (Sakshi) was adamant and she said in Haryanvi dialect: 'Karoongi to yehi karoongi' ( If I take up a game, this is it)

In this way Sakshi's journey starts from a village and to Rohtak city and at last reached to Rio Olympic 2016 in which she won bronze medal for the nation. Before Rio she has won many medals at junior and senior levels. She won bronze medal at the 2013 Commonwealth Championships and she followed it up with silver medal at the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Games.

Sakshi got the ticket of Rio Olympic by defeating DANGAL GIRL Geeta Phogat in 58 kg category and became the first Indian woman Olympian who won an Olympic medal for India in 58 kg category freestyle women wrestling. She guides Indian wrestlers through her incredible comeback performance at Rio where she wrestled her way comeback from the jaws of defeat to become the first female wrestler to win an Olympic medal.

Indian women in present times not only motivated by well wishers but they are supported by parents. Sakshi's mother Sudesh Malik shares a secret incident in which she tells that before leaving for Rio, Sakshi choose a photograph in which she is in tricolor national, got it framed and placed it prominently by writing the three following words: I will win

It shows how much passionate and strong desire was for Olympic medal to make the nation proud.

Sakshi, in Gurugram, before her leaving for Rio on August 19, 2016 made a mission statement with timesofindia.com as she states:

Beti Khilao will become a reality <sup>(8)</sup>

She won bronze medal at Rio Olympic 2016. The Govt. of India has awarded Sakshi with the awards like Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratana 2016, Padam Shri in 2017. She also has been given cash prizes by various departments and Political party INLD and Govt. of Haryana.

## 2. Pursarla Venkata Sindu (P.V.) (b. 1995 ) Badminton Player and Rio Olympic Silver Medalist

P.V. Sindhu is a big name in the world history of Badminton and comes from Telangana. She was born in Nirmal district and brought up in Hyderabad. Her father P.V. Ramana belongs to Nirmal district of Telangana and mother Vijaya comes from Vijayawara (Andhra Pradesh. Both were Govt. employees and volleyball players. Ramana was a member of Indian Volleyball team that won the bronze medal in 1986 in Seoul Asian Games and he was an Arjuna Awardee which was given to him for his contribution to the sports. Although her father and mother both professional volleyball players but their daughter did not follow the game of her parents.

### *Pullella's influence on P.V. Sindhu*

The Indian shuttler and badminton star P.V. Sindhu was highly influenced by her coach Gopichand Pullela and she started playing Badminton at the age of 8 under the coaching of Pullela Gopichand. Pullela, as a coach was so much impressed by her performance, punctuality and dedication who in a talk to V.V. Sabramanyan, editor of The Hindu, says:

The fact that fact that she reports on time at the coaching camps daily, travelling a distance of 56 km from her residence, is perhaps a reflection of her willingness to complete her desire to be a good badminton player with the required hard work and commitment. <sup>(9)</sup>

In an interview in 2010 with V.V. Subrmanyan, Pullela again comments:

The most striking feature in Sindhu's game is her attitude and the never -say-die spirit.<sup>(10)</sup>

P.V. Sindhu at the age of just 17 years made her place into the top of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) in September 2012 and except 2015 she won medal in every world championships and became second woman to win five or more medals after Chinese Badminton player, Zahang Ning. During the course of her career Sindhu bagged many medals for India in various tournaments and world championships. She is the first Indian woman who became the Badminton World champion and only the second individual player from India to win two consecutive medals at the Olympic Games.

Two times Olympian and silver winner Sindhu has made her recognition after working very hard and after a very difficult journey of many years. She bagged a silver medal in Badminton in the Olympic game held at Rio in 2016 and 2020 at Tokyo and became the first Indian woman who won silver medal for the nation and made India proud. It is to be noted that sports was in her blood as her father P.V. Ramanna and her mother P. Vijaya Volleyball players. She became the youngest Indian woman who won an Olympic medal. She was on number player in Badminton in the entire world in the year 2017. It is also worth mentioning that she is the first Indian woman who became the Badminton world champion and the second only individual athlete from India who won medals two times in Olympic by creating a history and making the nation proud.

In the Olympic game held in Rio de Janero in 2016 two medals were won by India and even this time two girls made the nation proud. In that Olympic M.C. Mary Kom bagged Bronze medal for India. The third woman who won silver medal for the nation was P.V. Sindhu reached the final of the 2016 Olympics before losing to Saina's Carolina Martin in a feisty 83-minute duel. She is a role model and guide for millions of badminton loving Indian male and female players who have a spirit of sportsmanship in their heart and who are determined to make India proud by winning medals in international championships and particularly in the coming Paris Olympics at Paris in the year 2024.

She has been various awards like ...Arjuna Award (2013), Padam Shri (2015), Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna (2016), Padam Bhusan (2020)

### **Conclusion**

Thus the journey Indian women in participating started in 1952 but they got success in winning Olympic medal in 2000 with the winning of Malleswari's bronze medal in weightlifting. The first moment of glory ignited the fire in the body of millions of athletes, sports loving followers and sports fans. So we can say that the actual journey of Indian women for Olympics started in 2000 in Sydney when Indian weightlifter Karnam Malleswari bagged Bronze medal for India and became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic. Malleswari's Olympic medal inspired the next generation of Indian female athletes like M.C. Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal, P.V. Sindhu, Sakshi Malik, Lovelina and especially Mirabai Chanu and millions of other Indian young women. All Indian Olympic winners are brand ambassador of various companies and earning millions of rupees and name and fame not only in India but in all countries of the world.

In the end we can say that journey of Indian women towards Olympics is glorious in present times and they doing much better but it is just beginning of their journey and much is to be done in coming future. It is just start of journey and we have miles to go yet.

### References:

1. [www.telegraphindia.com](http://www.telegraphindia.com)
2. [www.m.timesofindia.com](http://www.m.timesofindia.com)
3. [www.in.yahoo.com](http://www.in.yahoo.com)
4. [www.deccanchronical.co](http://www.deccanchronical.co)
5. <https://www.sportskeeda.com>



6. [www.starunfolded.com](http://www.starunfolded.com)
  7. m.timesofindia.com
  8. www.timesofindia.com
  9. V.V. Subramanyam: Among for the Stars, The Hindu, Chennai India, 10 April 2008. P. 6, Print
  10. \_\_\_\_\_,Shuttler Sindhu is the Star to watch out for. The Hindu, Chennai, 20 October, 2010.p.4, Print.
-