



PURVI MANGALA

## Women in Sports: Changing Mindsets and Breaking Barriers

For decades, sports in India were seen largely as a male-dominated arena. Girls were often discouraged from pursuing athletics, either due to social expectations, safety concerns, or the belief that sports offered little future for women. However, in recent years, Indian women have challenged these stereotypes and rewritten the narrative. Through determination, discipline, and exceptional talent, women athletes in India are not only winning medals but also changing mindsets and breaking long-standing barriers.

One of the most iconic examples of this transformation is P. V. Sindhu, whose achievements in badminton have inspired millions. From winning silver at the Rio Olympics to becoming a world champion, Sindhu's journey has shown that Indian women can compete and excel at the highest global level. Her success has encouraged families across the country to view sports as a viable and respectable career choice for girls.

Similarly, Mary Kom, the legendary boxer from Manipur, represents resilience against all odds. Coming from a modest background, Mary Kom faced social resistance and limited resources. Yet, her relentless pursuit of excellence led her to become a six-time world champion and an Olympic medalist. Beyond her medals, Mary Kom's story symbolizes courage, perseverance, and the power of self-belief. She proved that gender and background need not define one's destiny.

In wrestling, athletes like Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat have further reshaped perceptions. Sakshi Malik's bronze medal at the 2016 Olympics was a historic moment, as she became the first Indian woman wrestler to win an Olympic medal. Vinesh Phogat, despite injuries and setbacks, has consistently shown mental toughness and competitive spirit. Their success has challenged

need for equal recognition, pay, and infrastructure for women athletes. The growing popularity of women's cricket leagues and increased media coverage reflect a positive shift in societal attitudes.

Despite these successes, the journey for women in sports remains challenging. Limited access to training facilities, lack of financial support, safety concerns, and societal

communities in encouraging girls to pursue sports. When parents support their daughters' ambitions and educational institutions provide equal opportunities, barriers begin to dissolve. Media representation also plays a crucial role by highlighting achievements and telling authentic stories that inspire the next generation.

Women in sports are not just



traditional norms, especially in rural India, where girls participating in sports was once unimaginable.

Cricket, often considered a religion in India, has also witnessed a remarkable rise of women athletes. Mithali Raj and Harmanpreet Kaur have been instrumental in bringing women's cricket into the national spotlight. Their leadership and performances have drawn attention to the

pressure continue to hinder participation. Many girls are still expected to prioritize academics or domestic responsibilities over sports. However, initiatives like the Khelo India program and increasing institutional support are gradually creating more opportunities for young female athletes to train professionally.

Equally important is the role of families, schools, and

athletes; they are role models who challenge gender stereotypes and redefine strength. Their success sends a powerful message—that confidence, discipline, and determination are not bound by gender. Every medal won by an Indian woman athlete represents a victory not only on the field but also in society's mindset. Empowering women in sports is not just about equality it is about inclusive society.

# Sports Beyond Competition: Building Character, Health, and Leadership

## Play Hard, Live Strong: The Life-Changing Power of Sports



**AMIT SHARMA**  
EDITOR

Sports are often viewed through the narrow lens of competition—scores, trophies, medals, and rankings. While winning is celebrated and records are admired, the true value of sports lies far beyond the final scoreboard. For students and young people, sports serve as a powerful classroom where character is shaped, health is strengthened, and leadership is developed. In a world increasingly dominated by screens and sedentary lifestyles, the role of sports in holistic development has never been more important.

At its core, sports teach discipline. Regular practice, time management, and commitment to improvement demand consistency. An

athlete learns early that talent alone is not enough; effort, punctuality, and persistence are essential. These habits extend naturally into academic and professional life. Students who engage in sports often carry a sense of responsibility and self-control that helps them handle challenges beyond the playing field.

Equally important is the role of sports in building resilience. Every game includes moments of failure—missed goals, lost matches, injuries, and setbacks. Sports teach young minds how to lose without losing confidence and how to rise after defeat. This ability to cope with failure is crucial in life, where success is rarely linear. Learning to accept loss as part of growth prepares students to face academic pressure, career setbacks, and personal struggles with strength and optimism.

From a health perspective, sports are a natural antidote to the growing physical and mental health concerns among youth. Regular physical activity improves stamina, strength, and immunity while reducing stress and anxiety. Sports also promote mental well-being by releasing stress,

improving focus, and boosting self-esteem. In an age where students are increasingly facing burnout, anxiety, and lifestyle-related issues, sports offer balance and emotional release. A healthy body nurtures a healthy mind, enabling better academic performance and personal satisfaction.

Sports also serve as a training ground for leadership and teamwork. Whether as a captain or a team member, students learn the importance of cooperation, communication, and trust. Leadership in sports is not about authority alone; it is about motivating others, taking responsibility, and setting an example through action. These experiences shape confident individuals who can work effectively in groups and lead with empathy—skills that are invaluable in professional and social life.

Another significant lesson sports impart is sportsmanship and ethics. Respecting rules, opponents, and officials instills fairness and integrity. Learning to win with humility and lose with dignity builds moral character. In a society where shortcuts and unethical

practices are often tempting, sports remind us that how we play the game matters more than the outcome.

Furthermore, sports foster inclusivity and social bonding. They bring together students from diverse backgrounds, breaking barriers of language, culture, and social status. Shared goals and collective effort create a sense of belonging and mutual respect. Sports thus act as a unifying force, strengthening community spirit within educational institutions.

In conclusion, sports are not merely physical activities or competitive events; they are powerful tools for personal and social development. They shape character, promote health, and cultivate leadership qualities that textbooks alone cannot teach. As students navigate academic pressures and future uncertainties, sports provide lessons in perseverance, balance, and integrity. Encouraging a strong sports culture in educational spaces is not about producing champions alone—it is about nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to lead, adapt, and thrive in every arena of life.





NIYATI BISHT

The concept of sports has evolved dramatically in the digital age. Traditionally associated with physical strength, stamina, and outdoor arenas, sports today have expanded into the virtual world through E-sports. Competitive gaming, once seen merely as entertainment, has now emerged as a global phenomenon, redefining competition, skill, and professionalism. For the younger generation, e-sports represent not just a pastime but a legitimate career path and a new-age sporting culture.

E-sports involve organized, competitive video gaming where individuals or teams compete in popular games such as Valorant, CS:GO, Dota 2, League of Legends, and FIFA. These competitions require high levels of concentration, strategic thinking, quick reflexes, teamwork, and discipline—qualities similar to those demanded in traditional sports. Professional players train for long hours, analyze gameplay, follow structured routines, and work with coaches and analysts to improve performance.

In India, e-sports have gained



## E-Sports and New-Age Competition: Sport in the Digital Era

significant momentum in recent years. With increasing internet penetration, affordable smartphones, and a tech-savvy youth population, competitive gaming has found a strong audience. Indian players and teams have started making their mark in international tournaments, while platforms like YouTube and streaming services have created new opportunities for gamers to showcase talent and build communities. The recognition of e-sports in multi-sport events and discussions around official sporting status further reflect its growing legitimacy.

One of the key attractions of e-sports is accessibility. Unlike traditional sports that often require expensive equipment or specialized infrastructure, e-sports can be pursued with relatively basic

resources. This has opened doors for students from diverse backgrounds to participate and compete. Additionally, e-sports promote inclusivity by reducing barriers related to gender, physical ability, or location, allowing talent to shine based on skill and strategy.

However, the rise of e-sports also brings challenges. Excessive screen time, sedentary lifestyles, and gaming addiction are genuine concerns, especially among young players. Without proper discipline and balance, gaming can negatively impact health, academics, and social life. This highlights the need to approach e-sports with the same seriousness and responsibility as traditional sports—structured schedules, physical fitness routines,

mental well-being practices, and ethical conduct.

Another important aspect is the expanding ecosystem around e-sports. Beyond players, there are career opportunities in game design, event management, commentary, coaching, content creation, marketing, and analytics. Students

interested in technology, media, or business can find meaningful roles within this growing industry. Educational institutions and training academies are gradually recognizing the need to guide and mentor aspiring professionals in this field.

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E-sports also reflect a broader cultural shift in how competition is perceived. The digital era values adaptability, innovation, and rapid decision-making—skills that e-sports naturally cultivate. For today's youth, virtual arenas are as significant as physical fields, and competition extends beyond geography into global networks.

In conclusion, e-sports symbolize the transformation of sports in the digital era. They challenge traditional definitions while introducing new possibilities for competition, career growth, and community building. When approached responsibly, e-sports can coexist with physical sports, offering young individuals a platform to develop skills, discipline, and ambition. As technology continues to shape the future, e-sports stand as a testament to how sports, like society itself, evolve with time—embracing innovation while redefining excellence.





ANJALI KUMARI

In the world of sports, winning often steals the spotlight. Trophies, medals, records, and celebrations define success, while losing is frequently seen as failure. However, the true spirit of sports lies not merely in victory, but in sportsmanship—the ability to compete with integrity, respect, and grace, regardless of the outcome. For students and young athletes, understanding the real

## Winning and Losing: The Real Meaning of Sportsmanship

meaning of sportsmanship is as important as developing physical skills.

Winning is naturally rewarding. It reflects hard work, discipline, and teamwork. Yet, how one wins matters more than the win itself. True sportsmanship teaches athletes to celebrate success with humility, acknowledging the effort of teammates and opponents alike. Arrogance, disrespect, or unethical behavior after victory undermines the values that sports aim to instill. A gracious winner inspires others and sets an example of character beyond the scoreboard.

Equally important is the ability to handle losing with dignity. Defeat is an inevitable part of any competitive journey. Even the greatest athletes have faced setbacks, failures, and disappointing moments. Sportsmanship encourages acceptance of loss as an opportunity for learning and growth. Instead of blaming referees, teammates, or circumstances, athletes who practice sportsmanship reflect on their performance, identify areas for improvement, and return stronger. This mindset builds resilience and emotional maturity.

Respect for opponents is

central to sportsmanship. Every competitor invests time, effort, and dedication into the game. Recognizing this shared commitment fosters mutual respect. Shaking hands after a match, applauding good performance, and acknowledging fair play are simple gestures that reinforce the spirit of the sport. These actions remind players that rivalry exists only within the game, not beyond it.

Sportsmanship also extends to respecting rules and officials. Fair play ensures that competition remains meaningful and just. Cheating, foul play, or bending rules to gain an advantage may offer short-term gains, but they damage trust and credibility. True athletes value integrity over instant success. Learning to follow rules and accept decisions—even when unfavorable—instills discipline and accountability, qualities that extend far beyond sports.

For students, the lessons of sportsmanship apply directly to everyday life. Academic competition, career challenges, and personal goals all involve moments of success and failure. The ability to remain grounded during success and composed during setbacks is a skill nurtured through sports. Sportsmanship

teaches empathy, patience, and respect—qualities essential for teamwork and leadership in any field.

In today's competitive environment, where pressure to succeed is intense, sportsmanship becomes even more relevant. Media attention, social comparisons, and expectations can overshadow the joy of playing. It is crucial to remember that sports are not solely about outcomes, but about the journey—training, teamwork, effort, and growth. When athletes focus on improvement rather than comparison, competition becomes healthier and more meaningful.

Coaches, teachers, and institutions play a vital role in promoting sportsmanship. Encouraging ethical behavior, recognizing effort alongside achievement, and addressing unsporting conduct help create a positive sporting culture. Parents also influence young athletes by emphasizing values over victories.

In conclusion, winning and losing are two sides of the same coin, but sportsmanship is the foundation that gives sports its true meaning. It transforms competition into character-building experiences and athletes into responsible individuals.

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