

Using Descriptive Phenomenology to Explore the Lived Experiences of Elite Indian
Female Athletes

by
Kanishka Chawla

BA Psychology, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, 2019

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Sport and Recreation Studies

in the Graduate Academic Unit of Kinesiology

Supervisor: David Scott, PhD., Faculty of Kinesiology

Examining Board: Jonathon Edwards, PhD., Faculty of Kinesiology
Ryan Hamilton, PhD., Department of Psychology
Wayne Albert, PhD., Faculty of Kinesiology, Chair

This thesis is accepted by the
Dean of Graduate Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

August, 2024

©Kanishka Chawla, 2024

ABSTRACT

Despite the popularity of sports in India, female athletes have had to battle tooth and nail to establish a room for themselves and obtain the opportunity to compete (Arora, 2023). The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Indian female tennis players on tour using descriptive phenomenology and semi-structured interviews. Six participants contributed insights, which were analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step approach. The analysis revealed four key themes: the expectations of women, travel costs, emotional burnout, and preferred characteristics. The findings highlight fundamental challenges within the Indian sports system, including insufficient support infrastructure, a lack of transparency, and inefficient accountability. This study focuses on the mental health challenges that athletes endure, filling a gap in previous studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my committee for their invaluable guidance, support, and expertise throughout the process. Their insightful feedback, encouragement, and unwavering dedication has been instrumental in shaping the outcome of this work. I am truly fortunate to have had such a committed and knowledgeable committee, and I am immensely grateful for their contributions to my academic and professional growth. Thank you for your unwavering support and belief in my abilities.

Second, I would like to thank my family for constantly supporting me and encouraging me throughout the process. Your strength made me strong to face all challenges and I am grateful.

Table of Contents

<i>ABSTRACT</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>TABLE OF CONTENTS</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>LIST OF TABLES</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Literature Review</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Methodology</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Findings</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>References</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer for Potential Participants</i>	<i>166</i>
<i>Appendix B: Information Letter</i>	<i>167</i>
<i>Appendix C: Consent Form</i>	<i>170</i>
<i>Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule</i>	<i>172</i>
<i>Appendix E: Feedback Letter</i>	<i>174</i>
<i>Appendix F</i>	<i>176</i>
<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic of Study Participants.....	44
Table 2: Length of Interview Transcripts.....	46
Table 3: Examples of Significant Statements.....	49
Table 4: Examples of Process of Creating Formulated Meanings From Significant Statements	51
Table 5: Examples of Developing Clusters of Themes From Formulated Meanings	53
Table 6: Examples of Emergent Theme: Expectations of Women	64
Table 7: Examples of Emergent Theme: Cost of Travel.....	71
Table 8: Examples of Emergent Theme: Emotional Burnout	76
Table 9: Examples of Emergent Theme: Preferred Characteristics	79

Chapter 1

Introduction

The physical effects of elite sports engagement have been extensively documented; however, less attention has been given to elite athletes' mental health and psychological well-being (Purcell et al., 2019; Rice et al., 2016). Athletes face significant mental and physical strains that may make them more sensitive to mental health issues and risk-taking behavior (Rice et al., 2016). Moreover, athletes' prime competitive years seem to coincide with the peak age for the beginning of mental health problems (Rice et al., 2016). Among young people, mental disorders are more prevalent between the ages of 16 and 34 (Gulliver et al., 2012), which are considered prime competitive years for an athlete (Allen & Hopkins, 2015).

Elite athletes confront a distinct set of workplace strains along with physical and competition stress, such as the rigors of heightened public scrutiny through mainstream and social media and limited support systems owing to travel (Rice et al., 2016). Athletes must, therefore, learn to cope with stressors if they wish to continue a sports career (Holt & Dunn, 2004). This is because elite athletes face a variety of stressors that stem from competitive, organizational, or internal factors (Hanton et al., 2005). Furthermore, stressors can appear as environmental demands or stimuli an individual encounters (Kristiansen et al., 2012).

On the contrary, athletes might experience lower rates of specific mental disorders such as depression compared to the general population due to their inbuilt high levels of bodily activity and the potential connection between exercise and good mental health (Pluhar et al., 2019). However, there is presently little data to support this idea,

and the frequency of mental illness among athletes is still being debated (Glick & Horsfall, 2009). In contrast, it is possible that a variety of variables unique to top athletes may raise their vulnerability to certain mental conditions, which include travel for sport, exposure to sport-related stress, and injury (Jayanthi et al., 2013).

The mental strain of elite sports is compounded by external factors, including travel and safety concerns. Elite athletes' lives revolve around domestic and international travel for competition and training. Long-distance travel is associated with a set of transitory adverse effects called "travel fatigue," which are caused by worry about the trip, a change in one's everyday routine, and tiredness from prolonged time in the air (Waterhouse et al., 2004). International travel may be thrilling and exciting, but it can also be stressful and mentally and physically strain athletes.

Filosi (2016) talks about how elite athletes are constantly stressed about factors such as good flights, good connections between flights, no hold-ups at immigration, and easy travel to hotel rooms. Athletes have a surge of emotions as they travel and move from hotel to hotel while interacting with crowds and preparing for tournaments. From waking up at 5 am for fan-free practices to stepping out to refuel at restaurants, athletes are expected to gear towards peak athletic performance, keeping life on tour quite far from a prolonged holiday (Filosi, 2016).

Andre Agassi, an eight-time Grand Slam champion, wrote in his autobiography, *Open*, about the lonely life of a professional tennis player and the combative nature of the sport (Agassi, 2018). "In tennis, you stand face-to-face with the enemy, trade blows with him, but never touch him or talk to him, or anyone else," he wrote. "I have to laugh when people compare a track and field runner to a similar lonely figure. At the very

least, the runner is able to sense and smell his opponents. "They are only a few inches away." You are on an island in tennis; tennis is the game that comes closest to solitary confinement among men's and women's sports" (Agassi, 2018, p. 9). Agassi's remarks demonstrate how the unique nature of tennis may make a player's life lonely (Agassi, 2018).

According to Agassi (2018), the pressure to succeed in a team sport is spread among a group of players, whereas in tennis, each player must deal with the weight and criticism of their chosen sport on their own. While team players travel and work toward a shared goal, tennis players are more concentrated on their personal goals due to the sport's individualistic nature, which can add to feelings of loneliness (Filosi, 2016). The world's best players can manage to travel with an entourage of trainers, coaches, and relatives, but many players do not have this privilege (Filosi, 2016). Filosi goes on to say that those not at the pinnacle of their sport can find themselves traveling alone for prolonged periods due to the absence of support networks that make life on the road simpler for the top players (Filosi, 2016). Given the sport's intensely competing character, it is not astonishing that participants enjoy team tournaments like the Davis Cup (men's) and the Fed Cup (women's), which is an international team competition that provides them with a taste of the camaraderie seen in traditional team sports (Filosi, 2016).

Traditional sports psychology specializes in enhancing performance in a healthy community. Mental health issues in elite sports have recently come into focus, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive mental health continuum (Reardon et al., 2019). Differences in definitions and outcome assessments complicate comparisons

between studies. In terms of Mental Health Problems (MHP) prevalence, elite athletes appear to be similar to the general population (Rice et al., 2016). Diagnosis is shared between the general population and elite athletes, and women are more likely than men to experience mental health issues. In France, where elite athletes are mandated by law to undergo mental examinations and diagnostic interviews, it was reported that 17% had a psychiatric disorder in the previous six months (females: 20.2 %, males: 15.1%; Schaal et al., 2011). The majority of the studies are based on self-reported questionnaire data. In 2015, 46.6 % of Australia's best athletes (females: 53.4 %, males: 38.7 %) showed signs of a psychiatric disorder (Gulliver et al., 2015). Almost 48 percent of elite athletes (females: 54.1 %, males: 42.9 %) in the United Kingdom met the criterion for depression and anxiety disorder symptoms (Foskett & Longstaff, 2018).

Elina Svitolina, a former world-ranked number three player, was the subject of an ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network) article. In the piece, Svitolina opened up about her challenges as a tennis player, including dealing with the pressures of expectation, loneliness, extensive travel, and reliving past failures and losses while cooped up in a hotel room. She also called for better mental health protection for young tennis players, who often feel unsupported and vulnerable (Associated Press, 2022). Reflecting on her own experiences, Svitolina spoke candidly about the difficulties she faced early in her career. "As a young player, I went through some tough times," she told The Associated Press in an interview.

You're out there on your own, with just your coach for company. And when you're traveling for so many weeks each year, it can be a real struggle. You're

losing pretty much every week, so it becomes a real mental challenge
(Associated Press, 2022, para. 3).

Svitolina applauds the concept of having psychologists on hand for youth tennis players. She believes that is the correct path because traveling for weeks or months can be very challenging. She adds that the expectations of the media, parents, and coaches often lead to the player putting in much effort when the success is not as expected. Multiple individuals play an essential role in defining a female athlete's success within the sport; however, one of the most critical and powerful relationships mediating a woman's sports world experience is her coach (Kenow & Williams, 1999). The coach has, in many cases, tremendous power over the athlete.

Physical and sexual abuse are unfortunately common concerns in the sports sector, especially among female athletes. Tennis author Mewshaw claimed that some sources had told him that they "knew of coaches who made sexual remarks, fondled girls, provided unsolicited massages, and had sex with players when they could get away with it" (Mewshaw, 2001, p. 190). Mewshaw claims that some players confessed that this had occurred to them. None of them wanted to be cited by name for fear of embarrassment and retribution from coaches who were also on the tour. Mewshaw described one South American player as stating, "When I was 16, my father handed me over to a man and sent me out on the circuit." She further said, "He instructed me to do whatever the coach instructed. So, when he mentioned we were sleeping in the same hotel room and then walked over to my bed, I did not know what and how to respond." Meshaw reported an Eastern European player saying, "My coach has always been my lover," He continued to write,

She did not mean she'd always had the same coach; she simply meant that whoever trained her became her partner. It was a trend that began when she left home as a kid with a federation coach in charge of her fate. (Mewshaw, 2001, p.191)

According to an article in the *New York Times*, tennis success frequently begins in a player's youth. Traveling unsupervised is frequent. Coach-player interactions that are too intimate, sexual, and, in some cases, abusive have long been recognized as a part of the game (Futterman, 2022). The United States Tennis Association published a list of 81 tennis people who have been suspended or disqualified because they have been convicted or suspected of abuse. The long-running list is often the tip of the iceberg (Futterman, 2022). When issues concerning sexual abuse were raised during interviews, athletes, agents, and tour officials would frequently deny that it was happening (Mewshaw, 2001). However, in the next breath, they would admit that they were aware of one or two occurrences that they believed to be unusual instances (Mewshaw, 2001).

Even though some women are still furious and unhappy about what happened to them when they were young, they continue to play tennis (Mewshaw, 2001). They had either emerged from these incidents or had entered a series of destructive relations. However, other ladies had such traumatic encounters that they quit the game (Mewshaw, 2001). Svitolina handled things differently and probably more tenaciously in her younger years, as reported in her interview with ESPN (Associated Press, 2022). However, she also mentioned that juggling so much at such a young age harmed her emotional development and personality, and she believed that other players had gone through similar ordeals. She strongly believes misconceptions about athletes having

financial gain and public fame can make them immune from physical and mental strains must change (Associated Press, 2022).

"Athletes are supposed to be invincible," remarked WTA President Micky Lawler (Shaw, 2022). Shaw summarizes how a former world number 1 tennis player retired at the young age of 25 because she did not have the "emotional drive" to compete at the top levels. Ash Barty's unexpected retirement was when she was ranked number 1, less than two months after winning her third Grand Slam singles championship at the Australian Open. Other elite female tennis players have struggled with mental health issues, such as Naomi Osaka, who withdrew from the French Open due to depression. While all elite athletes are pressured to succeed, tennis may be challenging since players frequently lack the infrastructure and support that team sports provide (Shaw, 2022). Social media has added to athletes' feelings of being scrutinized, which may negatively affect athletes (Shaw, 2022).

Mental health should not be viewed as a weakness but should be considered alongside every other aspect of an athlete's health (Shaw, 2022). Whilst findings in a French study document a 6-month prevalence of anxiety disorders at 8.6% and depression at 3.6% of elite athletes from a variety of sports (Haller et al., 2009; Schaal et al., 2011), more research into the number of common mental disorders in top athletes would be beneficial to gain better knowledge regarding tennis players' mental health requirements.

Despite sports being played in every corner of India and the likelihood of athletes experiencing mental health issues, mental health remains a taboo subject (Patwardhan, 2022). Vinesh Phogat, a successful wrestler who has won gold medals in

both the Commonwealth and Asian Games, has been vocal about her struggles with mental health (Patwardhan, 2022). However, Phogat expressed her point of view by saying, "Itna bolna matlab aap ke liye sports khatam hi samjho (that would be like ending my sporting career)"; which means that speaking about mental health issues could potentially end her sporting career, as federations or other officials within the system may question her mental readiness to compete in future tournaments (Patwardhan, 2022). This concern is not baseless, as Phogat endured criticism by the Wrestling Federation of India for the way she performed in Tokyo, which they considered subpar after she opened up about her mental health challenges in preparation for the Olympics (Patwardhan, 2022). This ultimately took a toll on her, and upon returning from the quarterfinals, she was suspended for "indiscipline" (Patwardhan, 2022). "Mental health is a disregarded issue brushed under the carpet in Indian sport," says Chaitanya Shridhar, who worked with cricketers and has trained Indian athletes for the last three Olympics (Lokapally, 2021).

Competing at an elite level in sports is a difficult task that demands not just peak strength and conditioning but also strong mental resilience. Athletes are always under pressure to perform well, manage strong competition, and stay focused despite multiple distractions. The experiences athletes face are both unique and misunderstood. Several elite athletes have spoken publicly about issues related to their physical and mental health, such as playing with pain and injury, the commingling of pressures between private life and the sport's 'workplace,' and self-identity constraints that arise as a result of increased scrutiny of 'celebrity' athletes' performance (Roderick, 2012; Roderick & Gibbons, 2015). As a result, examining the consequences of these job demands on

athletes' health and well-being is essential. This study aims to investigate the issues experienced by elite female tennis players, with a special emphasis on how safety concerns and abuse affect their well-being and performance.

Purpose

Athletes go through multiple experiences that may affect their mental health. However, athletes are less likely to seek care for mental health issues for reasons such as it being taboo, a lack of awareness of mental health and its possible impact on performance, and the view of getting treatment as a show of weakness (Gulliver et al., 2012; Reardon & Factor, 2010). While efforts have been made to publicize sport-related mental health outcomes to help with the prevention, detection, and early treatment of mental illness in elite athletes, some sporting governing bodies have been accused of downplaying the importance of mental illness in this population (Reardon & Factor, 2010). This has severe implications because top athletes within such organizations may not receive timely or effective mental health treatment or may not feel safe discussing their mental health issues due to the athletic organization's culture.

This investigation aims to shed light on the specific challenges and difficulties faced by Indian women athletes competing in tennis tournaments and traveling alone or with a male coach. The lack of research on this topic highlights the need for this investigation to identify the stressors and safety concerns faced by elite Indian women athletes. By using a phenomenological approach, the study will focus on understanding the participants' lived experiences and gaining a deeper insight into the subjective nature of their travel experiences. The use of semi-structured interviews will allow the

participants to freely express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to tournament travel. The findings from this study will contribute to the existing literature on the mental health and well-being of athletes and will provide valuable insights for coaches, sports organizations, and policymakers on how to support and promote the safety and well-being of elite Indian women tennis players.

Research Question

How do elite Indian women's tennis players describe their lived experiences with tennis-related solo travel and travel with a coach?

Significance

There are only a handful of studies on the stresses women in tennis experience while traveling on tour. The proposed study has significance in several areas; firstly, it will provide empirical evidence to support the existing knowledge base. Secondly, the findings will either be consistent with or contradict current frameworks. Thirdly, the findings will aid professionals in the area of sports psychology and training with program development and players' needs. Moreover, the findings will benefit the various sports associations especially in India, and other developing countries, by providing better support to female athletes. This thesis aims to boost the awareness of the dynamics and nuances of Indian sports culture, with a special emphasis on the stressors that affect female athletes. By examining these challenges, this study will shed light on the problems female athletes in India experience. Lastly, the conclusions made from this investigation will directly benefit the participants and future athletes as

the upcoming athletes will be able to gain experience from the participant's past travel history.

The proposed study will contribute to academic discourse by examining a relatively underexplored area: the mental stress experienced by women tennis athletes while on tour. This study implements a qualitative design where participants will be interviewed. This study will facilitate the collection of new data and develop more informed conclusions regarding the impact of mental stressors on female athletes, eventually implementing policies to execute safety in sport.

Furthermore, developing a complete knowledge of elite athletes' mental health and psychological well-being offers the potential to develop therapeutic approaches and management for this group, which may allow performance advancements (Rice et al., 2016). Such comprehension is essential to guide sports practitioners, such as coaches, medical staff, and sports psychologists, in enhancing elite athletes' coping capabilities and, as a result, increasing their emotional well-being (Rice et al., 2016). The results of this study will provide new evidence on which to create concrete theory. It will also aid athletes and practitioners in constructing better training programs to practice SafeSport and make travel on tour easier and aid individuals in reaching personal and professional goals.

Literature Review

In this chapter, an extensive literature review is presented, which is relevant to the study and primarily focuses on the components of the phenomenon of interest. The literature review encompasses women in sports, an in-depth analysis of gender-based violence, and an exploration of the strains and stressors associated with travel. The topics were derived from the researcher's travels and experiences as a tennis player. As an athlete, the researcher had close understanding of the particular challenges that female athletes face, especially in a context where resources and support systems are frequently limited. The researcher's extensive knowledge of the sports sector led to a focus on crucial concerns that are typically neglected. Moreover, the review includes existing literature that delves into the mental health of women athletes in sports.

Women in Sport

Throughout the twentieth century, there was a widespread campaign for female equality. For a long time, women were refused the right to exercise because of perceived bodily "weakness" in women's bodies, detrimental impacts on women's fertility, chastity, or challenges to the "natural order" of sexes (Meier, 2020). It is argued that women's access to sports, as well as attempts to define and give meaning to sports experiences, have been consistently hindered, ranging from practices that define the sports world as a male realm to men's full ownership of women's sports to the dismissal, disregarding, and trivialization of women's athletic ability and achievements (Krauchek, 1999).

According to sports sociologists, despite this opposition, women's athletics flourished in the 1900s, with increased participation, enhanced skill, the implementation of physical education programs for women in schools, the establishment of national and international sports associations for women, and the growth of competitive programs (Krauchek, 1999). Authors have ascribed this rise to the insular nature of women's athletics. Fletcher (1987) investigates the establishment of women's colleges for athletic training, which occurred years before similar male versions, whereas Theberge (1988) and Hargreaves (1987) investigate the feminine transformations of sport, which include a slower and more restricted version of men's basketball, shortened race distances, and the encouragement of the philosophy of "activity for all."

Initiatives to promote women's sports might simply reflect the search for new customers in an increasingly saturated sports entertainment market (Meier, 2020). Nonetheless, there is evidence that similar promotional initiatives encouraged more women to participate in elite sports (Jacobs, 2014).

The first event was Title IX, which was established in the United States in 1972 to protect persons from sexual discrimination in academic programs or activities that received government financial aid (Kane, 2012). Following the passage of this initiative, female sports participation in the United States climbed from 300,000 in 1972 to 3 million by 2011 (Kane, 2012). Female athletes now have more opportunities to participate in both the interschool and intercollegiate systems in the United States (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008) and internationally (Smith & Wrynn, 2013); however, there is still room to improve in terms of providing equitable participation opportunities for girls and women around the world (Smith & Wrynn, 2013).

Despite the fact that more girls and women are participating in sports, stereotypes regarding their athletic talents could be addressed (Rasmussen et al., 2021). Unlike males, there is no expectation that a female will succeed when participating in a sport. Except for sports in which women are permitted to compete (e.g., gymnastics, track, and ice skating), the stereotype threat displays its ugly head and can take up unnecessary room in the minds of many girls who love sports (Chalabaev et al., 2013).

Choosing to show female athletes differently than male athletes promotes societal norms about what is acceptable for men and women. Many instances show a lack of recognition for the efforts of female athletes. The United States Women's Soccer Team won the 2015 World Cup three times, making it the first country to do so (Harwell, 2021). Carli Lloyd scored the first hat trick (three goals) at the 2015 World Cup since 1966 (Harwell, 2021). Despite the fact that the final game was the most-watched soccer match in history, no sponsorships were forthcoming (Harwell, 2021).

There has been a widespread movement for gender equality throughout the 20th century. It has led to better opportunities for women, especially in industrialized countries, but equality is still far from a reality in some developing countries. Sports have been a part of Indian culture for thousands of years. Archery, wrestling, swordsmanship, and boxing are all mentioned in ancient Indian texts (Shah, 2020). However, it was not until 1952, almost 50 years after women, in general, could participate in sports, that women in India started to participate in sports (Imtiaz, 2021).

Today, almost 75% of the population in India believes sports and physical activity are essential in today's world, but only 36% of people participate in them (BBC, 2020). Based on the research, 42% of men and 29% of women play sports, which is a

significant difference (BBC, 2020). Moreover, focusing on the mentality towards female athletes, the numbers portray that sportswomen are regarded as equally good as men by 41% of people (BBC, 2020). Sportswomen, however, are viewed by a third of Indian respondents as less talented than sportsmen (BBC, 2020). The article also sheds some light on how female athletes were not considered feminine enough by 37% of respondents, and sports featuring women are not as entertaining as sports featuring men by 38% (BBC, 2020).

Two of the three reasons why the population in India believes sports are not for women are 1) "It is not safe for women to play" and 2) "29% believe women are not strong enough to play the sport" (BBC, 2020). While Indian men can play all kinds of sports (e.g., cricket, volleyball, and track and field), Indian women are restricted by the sexism and gender bias that has existed in India for decades (Pandey, 2020).

Despite these developments and notable achievements, female role models are few, and female athletes are severely underrepresented in the media. For example, while more girls and women have participated in sports in the last 20 years, media coverage has dropped. Elite female athletes do not earn the same salaries as males, and as a result, many rely on corporate and commercial sponsorships for financial success (Westberg et al., 2008). These commercials frequently emphasize a female athlete's femininity rather than her athletic prowess, frequently printing images of female athletes posing suggestively or dressed in a sexualized manner.

Female athletes account for 40% of all participants in sports, but just 4% of media attention (Cooky et al., 2013). However, the media continues to state that female sports do not have a large audience or interest but does not investigate the lack of

coverage of women's sports (Cooky et al., 2013). Women athletes are chosen for their sexual appeal rather than their physical ability (Hall, 2000). After all, sex sells; therefore, pictures of female athletes in suggestive stances are widespread (Hall, 2000). Overall, women athletes have succeeded more than men at times, but the recognition by the general population, media, and governing bodies has failed to acknowledge that. Stereotyping and biased perceptions toward female athletes continue to be a problem, with disastrous consequences for their perception of themselves and overall success.

Coaching and Gender

The coach is one of the most direct and powerful figures mediating a woman's sporting experience (Krauchek, 1999). A high-quality interdependent coach-athlete connection is essential for effective coaching and is a prerequisite for athletes' best performance (Gould et al., 2007; Jowett, 2005). The power dynamics are intensified, and an ideal environment for exploitation has been established, as argued by Zalk (1990). Zalk summarizes in his study that 1) there is a power imbalance in the dynamic between male coaches and athletes, 2) the athlete has none, but the coach possesses it all (1990). The coach-athlete connection is far from a relationship of equals. He further adds that power comes from knowledge and wisdom, both of which good coaches possess. Athletes typically follow their coach's recommendations without inquiry (Zalk, 1990). The coach's influence extends beyond performance challenges and into the lives of his athletes. The capacity to increase or lower athletes' self-esteem is the coach's most potent instrument.

Although numerous elements can influence athletes' mental health, the coach-athlete connection is one of the most important influencers on athletes' motivation and subsequent performance (Mazer et al., 2013). Coaches' behaviors significantly influence the satisfaction of athletes who participate on collegial sports teams. Negative coaching actions that players perceive as unsupportive or combative might decrease sports participation (Mazer et al., 2013). Furthermore, some studies on the influence of coaches' conduct on athletes demonstrate that negative behaviors might contribute to athlete burnout (Harris & Ostrow, 2008) and depression (Mouratidis et al., 2010). Moreover, experiences of emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship have been indicated to be "a danger to the psychological well-being of elite athletes" (Gervis & Dunn, 2004, p. 215) and have been documented to trigger emotional disturbance (Stirling & Kerr, 2008).

Several studies have been performed on how to avoid athlete burnout from the standpoint of individual characteristics and socio-psychological variables (Choi et al., 2017; Wilczyńska et al., 2022). Athlete burnout has been examined from two perspectives: the process that leads to burnout and the state that results from burnout. Recent research on athlete burnout from the aspect of motivation found that control and the autonomy-supportive degree in coaching behavior might predict athlete burnout, either directly or indirectly, via psychological requirements and motivation regulation (Choi et al., 2020).

While female athletes are neglected in much research, researchers have sought to make comparisons between male and female athletes. According to recent data, the ratio of male to female coaches in high-performance sports (HPS) has been about 10 to 1

throughout the previous four straight Olympic cycles (Norman, 2021). As a result, female athletes in HPS are more likely to have a male coach. According to research, coaches rely heavily on their experiences of coaching and competing (Blackett et al., 2018). As a result, a male coach will most likely draw on his own experience as a male athlete who was most likely instructed by a male coach. Thus, coaches are prone to perpetuate the gender and power relations that they were trained into throughout their sporting careers (de Haan & Knoppers, 2020).

While coaches may have many positive influences on young athletes, emerging literature also indicates problems of abuse (Stirling & Kerr, 2009). Furthermore, the power of the coach is thought to be a contributing risk factor in abusive relationships (Stirling & Kerr, 2013). According to research on abuse in the coach-athlete relationship, emotional abuse may be the most common type of abuse in the sports environment (Stirling & Kerr, 2013). However, few studies have shown evidence of emotional abuse. Gervis and Dunn, for example, investigated the emotional abuse of elite child gymnastics athletes, which they classified into eight categories: insulting, humiliating, screaming, demonizing, dismissing, isolating, threatening, and ignoring (2004). This abusive behavior left the athletes feeling foolish, useless, unhappy, insecure, and rejected, emphasizing the significance of emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship (Gervis & Dunn, 2004).

Overall, the coach-athlete relationship is one of the most effective relationships, where it holds the power to either make or break an athlete's life. The increase in interest in the coach-athlete connection over the last decade has been accompanied by a network

of theoretical frameworks and measuring techniques that have been diversified from psychosocial scientific fields into the setting of sport (Poczwardowski et al., 2006).

Sexual Offence/ Gender-based Violence

Interpersonal abuses may take four main forms: sexual, physical, emotional, or those arising from neglect (Crouch et al., 1995). Violence against women is a global issue that affects all areas, countries, civilizations, and cultures to varying degrees. It affects all women, regardless of wealth, class, color, or ethnicity (Fasting, 2005). Furthermore, most research focuses primarily on sexual violence (Bjørnseth & Szabo, 2018), failing to account for the reality that sexual violence frequently overlaps with other types of interpersonal violence (physical violence and psychological violence; Vertommen et al., 2016).

Within the last decade, sexual harassment in sports has emerged as an important research question (Brackenridge, 2001; Fasting & Brackenridge, 2009) and as the subject of public policy in several industrialized countries, including Canada (CAAWS, 1994), Australia (Australian Sports Commission, 1998a), and the United Kingdom (UK; as cited in Fasting & Brackenridge, 2009). A variety of techniques for sexual harassment research have been adopted, ranging from population-based studies (Fasting, 2005) to investigations examining athlete attitudes and responses (Volkwein et al., 1997). Sexual harassment in sports emerged as a concern for both coaches and athletes in the mid-1980s (Brackenridge, 1987; Crossett, 1986); however, very little research has been conducted about the characteristics of the harassing coach.

If an athlete wants to thrive in her respective sport, she feels almost unable to oppose the one person who can help her succeed (Brackenridge, 1998). As a result, the athlete with prospective skill is more likely to be sexually abused than the recreational athlete, who can quit the sport or club to find another (Brackenridge, 1998). The stakes seem to be highest for the athlete on the verge of top-level accomplishment, and the incentives to engage in risky behavior are the greatest. Incremental alterations in the coach-athlete border go unrecognized, unacknowledged, or ignored by the athlete until she is completely locked and unable to refuse the coach's sexual approaches (Brackenridge, 1998). Disclosure is extremely tough for the athlete, who risks losing support from her teammates and sports authorities, as well as her athletic career if she speaks out.

The possibility of sexual harassment and abuse of female athletes lies in the gender hierarchy of the sporting world and the positional power of (predominantly) male coaches (Krauchek, 1999). In the chapter "My Coach Says He Loves Me," describes how women often misinterpreted sexual harassment and sexual assault as messages of acceptance, believing that the coaches' attention was confirmation from a patriarchal environment of which they could be a part (Burton-Nelson, 1994).

Coaches may create strong connections with their players, foster trust as adult authority figures, and serve as resources for students because of the high degree of involvement (Côté et al., 1995). Coaches' sexual approaches and harassment were excused by promises of love and the fulfillment of sports fantasies, and the women's goals were supplanted by the coach's goals (Krauchek, 1999). Burton- Nelson reported that provocative remarks, fondling of players, unsolicited massages, and sexual

interactions with male coaches were entirely "normal" in women's tennis despite their negative impact on the athletes (1994). Athletes complained of a growing sexist setting in which verbal abuse was uncontrolled, sexual jokes and sexual references to what athletes were required to do to make the team were commonplace, and coaches tolerated homophobic and sexist attitudes (Kirby et al., 2000). The female athletes, despite feeling informed, lacked sufficient knowledge to handle such situations, or at least not to the extent required (Kirby et al., 2000).

Kirby et al. (2000) questioned 266 Canadian Olympic athletes and discovered the occurrence of emotionally abusive behaviors in sports, such as being insulted, humiliated, and verbally attacked; this sort of abuse was recognized as prevalent and harmful. Stirling and Kerr (2008) reported that the coach's emotionally abusive practices might manifest in three ways; the first method, physical and emotionally abusive actions, comprises aggressive activities such as punching and throwing items at or near an athlete. The second method involves yelling and shouting at one athlete or a group of athletes, as well as denigrating, name-calling, and making derogatory comments. The third consists of being ignored by the coach and being omitted from practices, which are examples of denial of attention and assistance.

Furthermore, Kirby et al. (2002) in their initial study of 1200 Canadian national team athletes, addressed four questions about sexual harassment and abuse: 1) Did athletes think these were important issues? 2) What had athletes seen and heard? 3) What had they experienced? 4) What did they think needed to be done about the problem? Female athletes are considerably more likely than male athletes to feel vulnerable, unsafe, or terrified when participating in sports, with over half reporting

feeling less than extremely safe (Kirby et al., 2002). Female athletes, in that order, are more likely to fear rape/sexual assault, sexual harassment, molestation, and physical harassment (Kirby et al., 2002). This data suggests that feelings of vulnerability, safety, and sexual assault are all very real components of many female athletes' lives (Kirby et al., 2002).

Ohlert et al. (2021) reported the estimates of sexual violence, with more than twice as many women reporting any episode of sexual assault in sports over males (41.6% vs. 19.3%). The study included samples of Dutch/Flemish athletes (231 from the Netherlands and 302 from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium) who stated in the survey that they had succeeded at a national or international level in their sport and German athletes (1132 from Germany) who were current members of the national team at the time of the poll and physical violence was estimated to affect 24.0% of males and 25.5% of females.

In terms of India, crime against women is on the rise and has crossed 400000 in the recent study in 2022 (Nigam, 2017; Pandey, 2022). Women's equality and dignity are grossly violated by sexual harassment. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, at least 26 crimes against women are registered per hour, with at least one complaint every two minutes (2015). National Crime Records Bureau underestimates these percentages because many occurrences go unreported because of stigma and a lack of understanding of rights (2015). One of the cases reported this year concerned sexual abuse from a renowned cyclist in India (Kalia, 2022). As per the accusation, the coach allegedly intruded into the athlete's room, proposed a massage after practice, pressured

her into having sex, and advised her to marry him since she had no prospects in athletics (Kalia, 2022).

In 2021, seven track and field female athletes lodged sexual harassment complaints against their coach, who already had an ongoing case (Kalia, 2022). The coach reportedly abused his athletes and threatened to stop training them if they rejected him. According to statistics acquired, the Sports Authority of India received 45 complaints of sexual harassment between 2010 and 2020, with 29 of these made against coaches (Vasvada, 2021). A case occurred in 1990 when Ruchika Girhotra, a promising tennis player aged 14, was sexually molested by the president of the Haryana Lawn Tennis Association / Inspector of General Police in Haryana, India (Sura, 2012). When the report was filed with the police, the accuser held political power, which he used to harass her family and eventually led her to suicide in 1993 (Sura, 2012).

Many incidents are swept under the rug and never reported for fear of repercussions (Kalia, 2022). Continual harassment and abuse cause some athletes to quit sports. Jiji Thomson, the SAI's (Sports Authority of India) director-general from March 2013 to January 2015, told the Indian Express, "The majority of these girls come from low-income families. As a result, they are influenced or pressured to amend their testimony or withdraw their complaints" (Koshie, 2021). Thomson stated that the female athletes recognized that their coaches held the key to their future in sports, which was a crucial opportunity to improve their financial situation. Consequently, this dependency often causes them to lose hope and give up on their athletic aspirations (Koshie, 2021). Finally, sports organizations and practitioners are not doing enough to identify issue regions and persons, as well as to safeguard their players from harassment and abuse.

Travel Stressors in Sports

Although physical exercise is generally acknowledged to benefit mental health (Hamer et al., 2009), research has shown that extreme physical activity at the elite athlete level may have adverse effects on mental health, including increased anxiety and depression symptoms due to factors such as overtraining, injury, burnout, and travel (Hamer et al., 2009). Some elite athletes have publicly shared their struggles with issues related to both their physical and mental health, such as playing through pain and injury, navigating the intersection of private life and the sport's 'workplace' pressures, and dealing with identity constraints resulting from increased scrutiny as 'celebrity' athletes (Roderick, 2012; Roderick & Gibbons, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the effects of these job demands on athletes' health and well-being.

Athletes often travel across multiple time zones to engage in national or international competitions. Competitive sport is now widely acknowledged on a worldwide basis, and athletes of all levels train and compete in foreign countries. International events are becoming more common (for example, the qualifying stages of the World Cup for soccer), and many sports, such as tennis, Formula 1 motor racing, and golf, feature international circuits (Waterhouse et al., 2004). Even teams that are confined to intracontinental competition face significant travel time (Waterhouse et al., 2004). Travel fatigue and jet lag cause a slew of common symptoms, including daytime tiredness, poor attention and focus, sleep disruption, and gastrointestinal issues (Arendt & Marks, 1982).

Travel fatigue impacts all traveling athletes and can be acute after a single lengthy journey or chronic (cumulative) as a result of frequent travel during a season (Reilly et al., 2009; Samuels, 2012). It is a multi-domain disruption that happens with any trip regardless of the direction or number of time zones traveled (Reilly et al., 2009; Samuels, 2012; Waterhouse et al., 2007). It is produced by travel demands such as confined settings, persistent mild hypoxia, changes in the external environment (trans-latitude travel, i.e., winter-summer/ summer-winter), and decreased physical activity (Reilly et al., 2009). Jet lag is episodic, with symptoms comparable to, but more severe and lasting than, travel fatigue, and occurs after fast travel over three or more time zones (trans-meridian travel, i.e., east-west/west-east; Reilly et al., 2009; Samuels., 2012). Athletes may be pushed to their physiological and psychological limitations by the repeated nature of the competition season, which is frequently mixed with the stress of travel. Long-haul foreign travel has been shown to have adverse effects on sleep (e.g., decreased sleep duration and sleep quality; Samuels., 2012).

Travel fatigue is often distinguished by a misalignment between the internal human circadian rhythm and the time at the new location (Reilly et al., 2009; Samuels., 2012; Waterhouse et al., 2007). As a result, the circadian cycle of various psychological, physiological, and behavioral variables is misaligned with the new local time, with a typical early-morning trough and late-afternoon high (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2021). This might have a direct impact on athletic performance depending on the training or competition period (Samuels, 2012; Waterhouse et al., 2007).

Short-haul air travel is one of a number of variables that are believed to influence match outcomes in football (soccer), particularly the predisposition for teams to play

better at home than away, known as a home advantage (Fowler et al., 2014). As a result, the media, coaching staff, and players commonly point to it as a reason for bad away-match performances. However, there is less evidence to back up this belief, mostly in football, revealing the acute effects of short-haul air travel on physical performance, physiological and perceptual reactions, and subsequent match outcomes or technical and tactical performance markers (Fowler et al., 2014). Symptoms of travel fatigue during short-haul flight travel include lethargy, disorientation, and headaches as a result of the circumstances faced during travel. Mild hypoxia, cramped settings with little exercise, and disturbance of habits such as eating and sleeping patterns are all examples of this.

Geographical mobility is not the norm in most professions; however, it is a commonplace in sports (Roderick, 2013; Williams et al., 2013). International travel can be exhilarating and full of adventure, but it is also stressful and places mental and physical demands upon all concerned—not only the athletes themselves but also the support parties of coaches, trainers, physicians, and physiotherapists (Waterhouse et al., 2004). Long-distance flights across many time zones may cause issues in addition to travel fatigue (Waterhouse et al., 2004). The issues arise as a result of the characteristics of the internal clock, and a knowledge of these aspects becomes important when attempting to reduce the challenges (Waterhouse et al., 2004). "Jet lag" refers to the undesirable symptoms and other consequences of this loss of synchronization between the body clock and the outside environment (Reilly et al., 1997). Any lengthy journey, usually a flight, can cause the traveler to experience a set of symptoms that might be grouped together as "travel fatigue" (Waterhouse et al., 2004). Effective methods of

sustaining performance in light of limited sleep have become a concern in these situations.

An athlete who does not feel in prime shape may perform sub-optimally in all situations, whether they are competing, training, or managing crucial responsibilities. Because of the vast range of negative effects, most individuals are likely to be impacted in a way that is particular to them. Athletes, for example, may be discouraged by poor results and a lack of desire to exercise consistently in the new time zone. Spitzer et al. took a more systematic approach to the problem, finding high internal consistency between assessments of the following items: "fatigue," "difficulty concentrating," "clumsiness," "decreased alertness in the daytime," "difficulty with memory," "general weakness," "dizziness," "lethargy, and daytime sleepiness" (1999). Waterhouse et al. (2003, 2003a) published studies that found comparable issues during jet lag evaluations.

Sleep quality and quantity (Walsh et al., 2020), travel strain (Fowler et al., 2014), and chronobiological disruption (Waterhouse et al., 2005) are frequently listed as performance-constraining variables in top-level athletics. Air travel adds an extra layer of stress to elite athletes' competition and training schedules. While domestic flights of up to 5 hours may be required for 'away' competition, particularly for athletes in America and Australia (Richmond et al., 2007), international flights to major sporting competitions or training camps can exceed 24 hours (Bullock et al., 2007).

A study investigated organizational stresses perceived by professional soccer players in the United States, and eight players (four female and four male) were interviewed during pre-season training camps (Kristiansen et al., 2012). It was reported that the most widely stated sources of stress were contracts, drafting, league and team

structure, coach-athlete relationships, and travel requirements. Travel was a major cause of anxiety for the individuals. Several players noted travel schedules and geographical differences as difficulties. One participant stated that exhausting lengthy seasons, along with travel, took up 40% of his time. Time differences, long flights, and protracted hotel stays were all rated as high stresses. Furthermore, time-consuming travel needs were regarded to have a detrimental impact on physical preparedness (Kristiansen et al., 2012). Many participants reported travel concerns as a cause of stress.

Research conducted on numerous athletes who traveled from the United Kingdom to Australia, which is ten time zones to the east, found that during the first six days after arriving in Australia, the intensity of jet lag was spread evenly throughout the entire day (Waterhouse et al., 2000). The athletes also kept track of their exhaustion, meal satisfaction, bowel habits, mental performance, and subjective responses to various components of sleep on a regular basis. Mean daily evaluations of all these variables' deviations from normal were most noticeable on the day of arrival, improved on consecutive days, and had recovered, or almost recovered, by day six. The recovery times, on the other hand, varied depending on the symptoms; while increased fatigue, decreased ability to concentrate, and issues with some aspects of sleep (waking too early and the increased number of waking episodes during sleep) all recovered at rates similar to that of jet lag; other variables (e.g., decreased hunger and increased irritability) recovered over shorter time periods.

Another factor to consider would be the cost of travel. Elite players from European and American countries travel with their team, i.e., coach, trainer, therapist, significant other, etc. An article broadcast by the BBC, "Olympic Losers: Why Is India

So Bad at Sports?" examined how India, as a country, has struggled to raise great athletes; one major reason for that is "money" (Rowlatt, 2016). A burgeoning population of billionaires and a space program does not change the fact that India remains very poor, according to Shiva Keshavan, who competes in luge, a kind of super-fast sled. He qualified as the only Indian to do so in two of the past five Winter Games (Rowlatt, 2016). In spite of this, his ticket to Sochi was not paid for by the Indian government but by a crowdfunding site (Rowlatt, 2016). Sports are frequently portrayed as a glamorous, carefree vacation, with significant cash prizes, foreign schedules, and celebrity lifestyles for the most successful athletes (Rowlatt, 2016). These perspectives are fostered by the media, which tends to glamorize and glorify athletes' lives (Roderick & Gibbons, 2015). Insecurities in sports include the regular possibility of failure, rejection, and (long-term) unemployment, all of which can have a negative impact on an athlete's well-being (Roderick, 2013).

In India, the players are not provided with enough funds to travel with a coach. Athletes in India travel around the world themselves. An article focused on the average expenses of an elite tennis player in India (Sawai, 2017) explained that Ramkumar Ramanathan, who played a key role in India's Davis Cup victory, incurs annual costs totaling INR 50 lakh, roughly \$100,000. However, it is not simple to manage these costs in a sport that relies on government support and in a country where businesses are hesitant to invest in non-cricket sports. "The average for a coach is \$1,000 per week as well as fees, travel and hotel expenses, and 10-15% of the prize money," Ramkumar explains. However, it fluctuates depending on the size of the event." In an ideal world, elite players would travel with not only a coach but also a trainer (Sawai, 2017).

Previously, Kovacs and colleagues showed that lengthy, unsupervised time away from the coach and support facilities results in losses in various physical capacities. As a result, coaches provide extra training to losing players in order to reduce the severity of physiological decrements when matches no longer provide physical excitement. Tour success will also influence individual athlete training attitudes.

There are a variety of experiences at various levels. Still, almost all interviewees in a study done by Fry and Bloyce (2017) spoke about the personal anxieties and vulnerabilities that arise because of their line of work, such as feelings of loneliness and isolation, poor work-life balance, and difficulties with social relationships. However, the perspectives and experiences of athlete migrants on the influence of work on their mental health and well-being are mostly ignored and understudied (Butler & Dzikus, 2015; Roderick, 2013). Instead, sports figures are presented in the media as carefree travelers, adding to the anxiety of actual athletes, who imagine these are realistic portrayals (Cutmore, 2014), which may add an additional weight of self-doubt and worry to the 'real lives' of athletes who are "supposed" to be living a carefree life in their dream career (Roderick & Gibbons, 2015).

Fry and Bloyce (2017) noted that many golfers addressed the word "lonely" in their interviews. Loneliness is defined as an unpleasant experience; studies have been dedicated to examining the relationship. Loneliness has been identified as a crucial element in the development of depression and anxiety (Hughes & Leavey, 2012). However, the absence of group participation has received less attention, along with a lack of social support and relationships with others (Perlman & Peplau, 1981). As an European Professional Golfers' Association (EPGA) tour player with 21 years of

experience and a past tournament champion remarked, traveling between events required learning to appreciate one's own company because there is a lot of time spent in airports and airport lounges waiting for flights (Fry & Bloyce, 2017). Players also mentioned that staying away from home for weeks in various hotel rooms led to extended amounts of emotions of loneliness, isolation, and impressions of being cut off from the 'real world' during travel time and even at the tournament itself (Fry & Bloyce, 2017).

Tennis tournaments require elite players to travel significantly in order to obtain or retain ranking points. Due to a lack of access to suitable facilities, trainers, and professional assistance, such travel always disrupts the training process, particularly among elite athletes (Baron et al., 2013; McDuff, 2014). Furthermore, due to the uncertain nature of tournament scheduling, opponent draw, and match results, the training load (TL) gained on tour is very variable, potentially contributing to physiological maladaptation (Glick et al., 2009). There is a need for the government and various sports facilities and organizations to acknowledge that athletes, especially Indian athletes, compete less against their sporting rivals and more against the circumstances. The dream of universal accessibility of sports can only become a reality if all athletes are provided with a favorable environment.

The Mental Health of Female Athletes

Sports research suggests that athletes have been subject to physical abuse (Stafford et al., 2013), sexual abuse (Brackenridge et al., 2008; Fasting et al., 2011; Parent & Demers, 2011); emotional abuse (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling & Kerr, 2008,

2009, 2013, 2014); neglect, and bullying (Kavanagh, 2014). Athletes have also indicated that their feelings of being upset in reaction to emotional abuse became more intense throughout the course of their sporting careers (Stirling & Kerr, 2007). Studies have indicated that elite athletes may also be at a heightened risk for suicide, citing these possible risk factors (Rice et al., 2016). Studies suggest that a range of exploitative and abusive practices take place in the context of organized sports that threaten athletes' physical and emotional well-being (Hartill, 2009; Rhind et al., 2014).

As women's sports are growing, one can now learn that mental struggles are not unique to men. Naomi Osaka's decision to withdraw from the US Open to focus on her mental health, as well as Simone Biles' decision to withdraw from numerous Olympic competitions, has drawn attention to some of the challenges that female athletes sometimes encounter (North, 2021). In reality, athletes, as a group, are prone to anxiety and depression, and females are more likely than males to experience these symptoms, regardless of age (Walker et al., 2022). The frequency of mental illness in top athletes ranges from 25% to 35% every year, which is comparable to the rate in the overall adult population (Gorczyński et al., 2017). Sports researchers suggest, however, that elite athletes face specific mental health and mental disease risk factors, such as extreme performance demands, intense training programs, media attention, injury, and fear of de-selection (Rice et al., 2016).

However, not all sports have the same effect on mental health. Kajbafnezhad et al. identified a "substantial difference in terms of psychological abilities and motivation of physical achievement between team sports and individual sports" (2011. p. 1904). Recent findings on a sport-related impact revealed that depressive symptoms differ by

sport type; it has been repeatedly demonstrated that athletes participating in solo sports were more prone to depressed symptoms than athletes participating in team sports (Nixdorf et al., 2013; Schaal et al., 2011). Nixdorf et al. (2013) discovered that athletes playing individual sports had more depression symptoms than those competing in team sports, whereas Schaal et al. (2011) discovered inequalities in athletic disciplines, with higher results in aesthetic sports (24%) and fine motor skill sports (18%) compared to team ball sports (8%). Wolanin et al. (2016) discovered that athletes competing in track and field had the highest rate of depression scores in North America, but lacrosse players had much lower levels of depression. Playing on a team promotes health while also allowing people to acquire key mental and social abilities (Boone & Leadbeater, 2006). Team sports teach individuals how to communicate with others and contribute successfully to a group (Sabiston et al., 2016).

The accompanying sensation of acceptance and support is expected to play an important role in lowering depression symptoms and fostering good relationships with adults and peers (Boone & Leadbeater, 2006). Positive team experiences with training, skill development, and peer support, according to Boone and Leadbeater, correlate to emotions of social acceptability, fewer image concerns, and, ultimately, fewer depression symptoms in individuals (2006).

Individual sports athletes may have higher anxiety not just as a result of how they internalize failure but also as a result of their proclivity to establish hard personal objectives for themselves (Nixdorf et al., 2013). Individual sports in which judges determine success, such as gymnastics, figure skating, dance, and tennis, are associated with the highest rates of anxiety in elite athletes; these athletes are under enormous

pressure to distinguish themselves from the competition in the pursuit of perfection and a judge's approval (Schaal et al., 2011). Team sports participants exhibit perfectionist tendencies; however, they do not reach the same level as individual sports competitors (Nixdorf et al., 2013). A higher frequency of depression diagnoses was also discovered in a small cohort (n=50) of swimmers competing for spots on the Canadian Olympic and World Champions teams (Du Preez et al., 2017). Rugby league players, on the other hand, exhibit fewer depressive symptoms but greater indications of generalized anxiety and alcohol abuse (Zhou & Heim, 2014). Excessive alcohol use has been documented, particularly among collegiate athletes (Brisola-Santos et al., 2016). Contrary to popular belief, marijuana appears to have surpassed tobacco as the second most often used substance among athletes (Schaal et al., 2011).

Elite female athletes, on the other hand, have greater rates of mental illness compared to men and the general population (Kuettel & Larsen, 2019). Castaldelli-Maia et al. hypothesized that a lack of acceptance of female athletes in certain cultures, unfair training opportunities, restricted financial support, sexual objectification, sexual identity stereotypes, and societal and personal expectations around gender stereotypes would all have a negative impact on this population's mental health (2019). The majority of the quantitative studies also looked at one or more of the following factors: physique or social physique anxiety (Haase, 2009; Hausenblas & Mack, 1999), sexual harassment (Fasting et al., 2003), personality traits/qualities (e.g., perfectionism; Brannan et al., 2009), psychosocial skills (e.g., emotional regulation; Shriver et al., 2016).

Women's cricketers face mental issues, but they are lost inside underfunded and under-resourced support structures (McCabe et al., 2021). Gender stereotypes of anxiety

and depression in women and drug misuse in males may reinforce social stigma and limit access to treatment. The withdrawal of Simone Biles midway through the women's team competition at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games turned what appeared to be a sporting controversy into a broader cultural conversation about mental health (Walker et al., 2022). The stories of athletes struggling to perform at the highest level, with mental health issues compounding their difficulties, have inevitably prompted much reflection within medical education, among both teachers and students, about parallels in our domain regarding assessment, feedback, and support (Walker et al., 2022).

Unfortunately, in our modern society, elite athletes are expected to deal with any adversities that they may face in their career without showing any signs of weakness, with the risk that some may deny or hide their mental disorders for fear of potential consequences on their professional path (Gulliver et al., 2012). Tennis players are among the most stressed-out athletes; they are forced to cope alone and for an extended period with high psychological pressures associated with performance expectations, the danger of losing games and enforced career termination, as well as the risk of recurring traumas and injuries (Grove et al., 1997; Schiphof-Godart & Hettinga, 2017).

The stories show that mental health issues impact everyone, including people who are physically at their top and among the best in the globe in terms of physical and sports abilities. In the instance of Naomi Osaka, who wanted to underline the impact of being asked about performance in the aftermath of defeat as a trigger for bad mental health, her statements demonstrate that mental health is still not a priority in the world of elite sports (Bero, 2021). In particular, Naomi Osaka believed that getting a flood of

questions about her performance after a defeat was equivalent to "kicking someone while they are down" (Bero, 2021).

Rationale of Research

Mental health signs and problems among elite athletes have received more attention during the last decade (Purcell et al., 2019). More than 640 separate stressors can cause mental health symptoms and illnesses during a professional or elite athletic career (Rice et al., 2016). Emotional abuse is known to have a detrimental impact on athletes' well-being and is linked to a variety of long-term consequences such as depression, inappropriate eating behavior, anxiety, and social disengagement (Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2008, 2014). However, in high-performance systems, this sort of abuse is rarely addressed (Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Stirling & Kerr, 2013).

A Norwegian study found that female elite athletes face more sexual harassment inside sports (from authority figures) than their non-sport peers (from teachers or supervisors) outside sports (Fasting & Brackenridge, 2009). However, studies on the prevalence estimates of sexual violence in sports (especially in elite sports) are still rather scarce. Researchers have identified factors of empathy between athletes and coaches using qualitative methods, but more research is needed (David & Larson, 2018).

It is important to consider the impact of feelings of loneliness on traveling athletes' well-being, particularly given the large amount of research that identifies a strong relationship between loneliness, isolation, and psychological health in relation to depression (Alpass & Neville, 2003; Di Tommaso & Spinner, 1997; Luanaigh & Lawlor, 2008). Unsurprisingly, research on loneliness tends to focus on elderly

populations; however, given that loneliness is a large feature of the lives of athletes in this study, it is important to consider the links to mental health and well-being within sports lives.

Women athletes will reach their full athletic potential if they can train and compete feeling safe. However, many female athletes face less-than-ideal conditions (Brackenridge, 1998). They experience pain, sickness, or injury not as a result of the usual stresses and strains of training and competition but as a result of others' violations of inter-personal boundaries - in other words, as a result of sexually harassing or abusive behavior (Brackenridge, 1998). Furthermore, in countries like India, where sports are still considered upcoming for women, the authorities and government have not been contributing to assisting sportswomen in need. The Indian sports arena, like other organizations and agencies, is administered by men (Arora, 2023). Women in the Indian sports industry have had to battle relentlessly to build a place for themselves and acquire the opportunity to compete (Arora, 2023). The bottom line is this: It is challenging for a woman athlete to survive in a male-dominated industry. To be able to speak out about their complaints of sexual harassment against men in power in a patriarchal society like India is another story entirely (Arora, 2023).

In summary, little research has been done in the fields of mental health, effects of travel, and treatment by coaches and organizations to understand what Indian female tennis players go through mentally and the consequences of poor mental health. The purpose of this study is to add some knowledge within the field of sports psychology in order to create safe environments for female athletes.

Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define the analytical aspect of qualitative inquiry as "a situated action that locates the observer in the world. It is made up of interpretative and material actions that make the world visible" (p.3). Learning to perform qualitative research entails adaptations as well, but they are of the researcher's knowledge rather than the data. Qualitative research collects data involving more than words. Attitudes, feelings, voice and facial expressions, and other actions are included. Qualitative research was utilized to collect narratives of the overall experience. There has been very little large-scale quantitative research that investigates the occurrence or prevalence of these experiences in sports (i.e., stress, anxiety, sexual violence). The primary goal of this research was to learn about the experiences of Indian female tennis players on tour. For this goal, a qualitative research technique seemed appropriate.

When considering research design, a range of approaches were considered including case study, narrative, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Thus, the philosophical and methodological framework selected for the study is phenomenology. Because the focus of the research was on understanding lived experiences of the athletes, phenomenology was chosen as the most appropriate.

Phenomenology is an approach started by Edmund Husserl and subsequently expanded by Martin Heidegger, who worked to examine the lived human experiences in addition to how things are experienced and resemble in one's mind. "Phenomenon" comes from the Greek verb *Phaenesthai*, which means to be seen, reveal oneself, or flare up (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). The phenomenological methodology aims to enlighten the

specific and recognize a phenomenon based on how a participant sees it under a certain circumstance.

Husserl proposed that to explore experience, one must evaluate the influence of the "taken for granted" aspects of experience (Smith et al., 2009, p. 13). In order to focus on the core human experience, Husserl believed that an individual must pull away from the ordinary assumptions that would normally influence their behaviors and cognitive processes (Smith et al., 2009). The technique of separating the obvious is known as bracketing (Smith et al., 2009). It should be noted that Husserl's philosophical idea of 'pure' bracketing can never be fully realized (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). As a result, it is expected that the researcher would endeavor to become conscious of their own biases, prior knowledge, positivist inclinations to look for causation in data, and personal experience while dealing with accounts of the participants' current experiences (Ashworth, 1999; Giorgi, 2009).

Research Design

The researcher chose descriptive phenomenology as the technique of qualitative inquiry. The rationale for using the descriptive phenomenological qualitative methodology was to gain an in-depth understanding of women's lived experiences on tour. Douglas and Carless (2009) advocate such an approach, stating that it is critical in sports research to include athletes' voices in the data. This approach was distinct in that it provided the researcher with methodological flexibility while still requiring an emphasis on understanding and analyzing the participants' experience (Larkin et al., 2006).

Interviews were used to attempt to "generate data which gives authentic insights into peoples' experiences" (Miller & Glassner, 2001, p.126). The absence of research on this subject emphasizes the importance of this research initiative, which aims to uncover the stresses and safety issues affecting elite Indian women tennis athletes. The interview questions for the research were developed through a combination of brainstorming sessions and discussions with experts in the field. This creative and unconstrained method aided in the identification of significant areas of interest, such as the impact of traveling alone compared to with a coach, as well as the difficulties these athlete's encounter.

This subjective explanation of the athlete's experience may not only improve and progress sports psychology literature, but also practitioners' capacity for comprehending the reality in which the athletes live. Sport psychologists can employ phenomenological methodologies to effectively serve athletes along their complicated, personal, and ever-changing journey through elite sport (Nesti, 2004).

Researcher Positionality

I played tennis for more than a decade and a half and was fortunate enough to play on the national and international circuits. My coach had drafted a "route to success." This "route to success," in reflection, was a toxic loop created by my coach because I was treated like a robot. Starting at 7 am and going home at 8 pm, Monday through Sunday, there were no timeouts even when I had a "bad" day on the court, was being ignored or hit with tennis balls until bruised by my coach. For me, everything my

coach said was exactly what I did, and I felt it was okay to get abused physically or emotionally because he was doing it out of love for me.

A friend who was on a similar journey with me was so traumatized by how we were being treated by the coach that she quit the sport. The power/control that the coach held over his players was toxic because, in order to get his attention, the female players were willing to satisfy his needs, including his sexual needs. A 16-year-old who played at another academy in the city was in a sexual relationship with the coach only so she could get his attention on the court. Later, when it became public, the coach absconded to another country, leaving all of his players to fend for themselves.

My experience as an athlete in India is that sports coaches make challenging physical demands on players, and if the results do not match their expectations, the players are kicked out of the academy and usually quit. Thus, a lot of the players I have interacted with were stressed about not achieving their goals or wondered whether they are good enough or not, which decreased their mental health and increased their vulnerability.

Furthermore, another factor about the "route of success" was travel. My coach required me to play for India and travel as much as I could. I was 13 when I started traveling to some tournaments alone. I was on tour for about 30-35 weeks a year and roughly traveled more than half of these alone all over India. Since traveling was expensive, I could not afford to travel with a coach or a parent. I would go weeks and sometimes months without meeting my family, and I missed out on numerous birthdays, anniversaries, and deaths of loved ones, too.

The strains of missing my train/bus or flight to travel overnight may have helped develop my confidence to travel alone, but the negative effects were more when compared to the positive side. I was often anxious about being followed, anxious about late-night transportation from the hotel for late-night matches, and anxious about early morning practice sessions, and all of this impacted my mental health. Back when I played tennis, mental health was never spoken of; it was a phrase that never existed, and if accidentally spoken of, then the consequences made it worse.

I have observed that the constant pressure from coaches and travel has caused many female athletes to quit the sport or become victims of abuse. Furthermore, it seems nothing has changed because some of these experiences are now repeating with other female athletes, and unfortunately, minimal research has been done on how the mental pressures of traveling alone or with a male coach affect female athletes who compete in individual sports.

Participants

In general, the sample size in phenomenological research might range from two to 25 (Alase, 2017). However, there is no widely agreed sample size specified as a research guideline within descriptive phenomenology (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Purposive sampling was utilized because it allows the researcher to concentrate on the experiences and phenomena that are important to the inquiry (Dane, 1990). To assist in connecting with participants, the researcher identified multiple potential candidates who have trained under multiple coaches in India and who are also connected with the Indian Tennis Instagram page. For phenomenological research, Giorgi (2008) advises at least three participants, Noon (2018) used five, Morse (1994) recommends at

least six individuals, and Creswell (1998) recommended between five and 25 participants. The current study consisted of six participants. Participants met the following criteria:

- were female,
- of Indian Nationality, and
- were former or current elite tennis players.

Athletes who compete or train at the national and/or international level(s) were considered to be elite (Tofler et al., 1996). An athlete is considered retired when they no longer compete in the sport.

All participants signed a consent form to participate in the study and were informed that they could voluntarily withdraw at any point. They were also informed that all data would be anonymous and confidential. Included in the consent form were questions regarding their details such as age, years in the sport, and on tour, along with the coach's age and years on tour with the coach. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants, including their age, years in the sport, number of countries travelled and other relevant background information.

Ethical considerations were featured during the data collection process. Given the sensitivity of the research area, a strict protocol was adhered to in order to minimize psychological risk to participants. The participants' protection and welfare were the main priorities (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014; McMahon & McGannon, 2021), and as a safeguard, contacts for local counseling services were put in place for referral. Furthermore, confidentiality was maintained throughout the study process, which allowed them to communicate their experiences in the manner that they felt most

appropriate (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014; McMahon & McGannon, 2021). This means that the participants could choose what they wanted to share with the audience and how they wanted to communicate it.

Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Number of Years Playing Tennis	Number of Years on Tour	Number of Countries Travelled	Gender of Current Coach	Years Trained with Current Coach
Navya	24	15+	5-10	15+	Male	0-5
Avani	23	15+	5-10	10-15	Male	0-5
Leela	26	15+	10-15	5-10	Male	5-10
Aastha	23	15+	10-15	0-5	Male	0-5
Diya	26	15+	5-10	0-5	Male	0-5
Laxmi	30	15+	15+	15+	Male	0-5

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher conducted one semi-structured interview with each of the six participants. The interviews occurred via Zoom, a video conferencing website. Zoom has software that transcribes the interview in the present moment, which benefits the researcher as the transcripts are available within 10-15 minutes of the interview. The interviews ranged from 32 minutes to 47 minutes, with interview times varying

depending on participant responses. Demographic information was collected from each participant. Each interview was divided into three categories, with the objective of each category being

1. to build rapport by asking the participants what got them into the sport and how their first-ever tennis tournament went,
2. to focus on training experiences with a coach, and
3. to focus on the athlete's experiences while traveling alone, or with a male coach.

The interview guide consists of questions that the participants answered.

Expanded and additional probing questions were occasionally used to gather additional details. All participants gave thorough responses to the questions. However, some participants elaborated in much greater depth and detail than others; therefore, the interview times varied. Table 2 includes information on the length of the interview time per participant and the combined number of transcribed data per participant.

The participants were notified that the interview was being recorded and then deleted once the study is over. Following data collection, the interviews will be precisely transcribed. Other relevant audio elements (e.g., laughing, coughing, misspoken phrases, and extended pauses), will be transcribed as well. Table 2 provides breakdown of the duration of each interview conducted for the study.

Table 2

Length of Interview Transcripts

Participant Name	Length of Interview (minutes)	Single-spaced pages of Transcripts
Navya	32 minutes	8 pages
Avani	44 minutes	11 pages
Leela	43 minutes	11 pages
Aastha	47 minutes	15 pages
Diya	42 Minutes	15 Pages
Laxmi	45 Minutes	15 Pages
Total Participants- 6	Total Time- 253 Minutes	Total Pages- 75

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the component of qualitative research that most distinguishes it from quantitative research methodologies. It is not a technical exercise like quantitative approaches, but rather a dynamic, intuitive, and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing (Basit, 2003). Unlike quantitative research, which uses statistical methodologies, qualitative research focuses on the examination of the values, meanings, beliefs, ideas, experiences, and feelings associated with the subject under inquiry (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The purpose of data analysis in descriptive phenomenological research is to reduce the information down to the most essential aspects of the phenomena (Sadala & Adorno, 2002).

Using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step data analysis method, this study attempts to describe the experience of Indian elite female athletes. The following are the seven steps of Colaizzi's Approach (Colaizzi, 1978) -

1. Each transcript must be read and reread to get a basic sense of all the content.
2. Significant statements about the phenomena under research should be retrieved from each transcript. These remarks must be documented on a separate sheet with page and line numbers.
3. From these significant statements, meanings should be established.
4. The formed meanings should be sorted into groupings, clusters of themes, and themes.
5. The study's findings should be included in a comprehensive description of the phenomena under investigation.
6. The fundamental structure of the phenomena should be described.
7. Finally, validation of the findings should be gathered from the participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results to their own experiences.

Transcribe and familiarize- According to Giorgi (2012), since descriptive phenomenological research is holistic, the researcher must, therefore, grasp all the data before proceeding. Furthermore, Giorgi (2009) suggested that the researcher must read the transcripts with a clear and open mind for interesting and insightful information to emerge from the content. This objective is aided by bracketing, an essential stage in phenomenological research. Bracketing helps the researcher acknowledge and suspend judgment as it relates to prior experience so that data analysis is not hampered (Giorgi,

2009). Consequently, the researcher became acquainted with the data by going over each transcript several times until she had a thorough comprehension of the topic.

Extract significant statements- The researcher examined the transcripts for significant information and collected important words and phrases on the lived experience of the female tennis players. These statements were written on a separate sheet and categorized by "participant, page, and line numbers." Six semi-structured interview transcripts generated a total of 109 notable statements. Table 3 contains significant comments found and retrieved from participant data.

Table 3*Examples of Significant Statements*

Significant Statement	Participant Name	Page Number	Line Number
<p>So his approach was very like, he was more like very tough. Be very tough on me and say things which are like, you know, you're not fit to play tennis. You could only like sit at home and like cook or clean stuff like that. So it's not a very positive environment to be in. Not an environment where you could grow, I felt. So, yeah. I didn't know that it was affecting me. I thought maybe it was my, you know, I had to work on myself and I don't think that kind of environment kind of helps your confidence.</p>	Navya	2	46-52
<p>But after a while, I started feeling like I wasn't being prioritized. There was a male player that was the same ranking as me, same level as me, same age as me, but like obviously he got a lot more attention than the than me.</p>	Avani	5	187-190
<p>And what that translated for us was that if we perform, only then we're going to get our coaches' attention. Whereas thinking back on it now, it shouldn't be like that. It should be that, you know, we should get their attention no matter how we perform because that's what's really going to help us perform, right? That's what's gonna raise our confidence so this favoritism of sorts did create sort of confidence barriers in your head.</p>	Leela	4	166-170
<p>I would see him give other students attention and I felt like I needed, uh, to be looked at as much and I wasn't given that. So I think that made me want to change academies because there was a time when I was ready to quit, quit tennis, uh, because of how poorly I was performing</p>	Aastha	4	171-175

Meaning Formulation- Colaizzi (1978) suggests that the researcher aims to generate more general interpretations for each significant statement within the data in this stage. Colaizzi highlights the researcher's role in discovering and illustrating hidden meanings, in addition to considering the various settings and complexities of the phenomenon, as stated in the transcript. Colaizzi also advocates for the researcher to practice bracketing to avoid the misunderstanding of a participant's views. These formulated meanings were analyzed and classified into potential cluster themes based on the significance of their statement, generating 109 formulated meanings. Table 4 illustrates how significant statements were converted into formulated meanings.

Table 4

Examples of the Process of Creating Formulated Meanings From Significant Statements

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<p>So his approach was very like, he was more like very tough. Be very tough on me and say things which are like, you know, you're not fit to play tennis. You could only like sit at home and like cook or clean stuff like that. So it's not a very positive environment to be in. Not an environment where you could grow, I felt. So, yeah. I didn't know that it was affecting me. I thought maybe it was my, you know, I had to work on myself and I don't think that kind of environment kind of helps your confidence.</p>	<p>The participant was emotionally hurt because of the words used by the coach. It was breaking her confidence, and she felt like she could not grow in such an environment.</p>
<p>So sometimes you do get that, like people sometimes think, oh, like, you know, we all get to travel to so many places and everything. But at the same time, we also like have to be really tough mentally to be able to go to so many places and still, you know, just go out there and compete and put aside all the other thoughts that we have.</p>	<p>The participant thinks people misjudge travel, especially from an athlete's perspective, and that the athlete must be mentally strong to travel and compete.</p>
<p>It's always been, oh, men's tennis and then women's tennis. It's always been there, that discrepancy of that men's tennis is better or women's tennis is easier or whatever it is. You always hear a lot of comments about that. And it always is there at the back of your head.</p>	<p>The participant realized how women's tennis was being perceived and the comments were always in her head.</p>
<p>You stay in a slightly more expensive hotel just because it's on the main road and not in the middle of the middle of nowhere.</p>	<p>The participant states how she prefers a slightly expensive hotel due to its locality than others for safety.</p>
<p>I haven't really traveled much with a coach because it's too expensive.</p>	<p>Traveling with a coach is expensive and not affordable.</p>

Thematic Clustering- Following the collection of established meanings from significant statements, cluster themes were developed by grouping or clustering the formulated meanings that reflected similar experiences the participants experienced. The researcher pursued patters and commonalities. Fifteen cluster themes were identified as follows:

1. Neglect
2. Low-Self Esteem
3. Dissatisfaction
4. Pressure
5. Frustration
6. Toxic
7. Physical Stress
8. Taunts
9. Humiliation
10. Less Exposure
11. Financial Strain
12. Feeling Unsafe
13. Extra Cautious
14. Expectations from coaches
15. Positive characteristics

All these themes are internally aligned and externally different, implying that each "formulated meaning" came from a single theme cluster. Table 5 shows how coded "theme clusters" were formed.

Table 5

Example of Developing Clusters of Themes From Formulated Meanings

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Theme Clusters
I feel like coaches in academies are very commercial, like they don't, they're not really invested in you, like as a player, they just, see it as a commercial thing that they're doing.	Coaches care more about money than the participant	Neglect
There were also certain negatives, which were, there was always a lot of, you know, like they had their favorites, I would say. And they were usually the players who were naturally talented. Or you know who probably like we worked equally hard but somehow the game just came much more easily to them. So those were the coaches' favorites, is what I observed as a kid.	The coaches paid more attention to some players. Players were judged on talent, not hard work.	Neglect
I would see him give other students attention and I felt like I needed, uh, to be looked at as much and I wasn't given that. So I think that made me want to change academies because there was a time when I was ready to quit, quit tennis, uh, because of how poorly I was performing and I was not able to derive that confidence from myself. And then my coach did not really help me with that either.	The coach was giving more attention to others which made the participant feel like quitting the sport.	Neglect

Thorough Description- After the clusters were established, the researcher grouped similar clusters together to form themes. Four themes were formed from the data i.e., 1: Expectations of Women, 2: Cost of travel, 3: Emotional Burnout and 4: Preferred Characteristics. The researcher included all the generated insights into a comprehensive account of the phenomena in the fifth phase of analysis. The next section describes the emergent themes based on participant narratives from interview data.

Trustworthiness

When participants contribute rich, extensive, and complicated data, trustworthiness increases (Stewart et al., 2017). By choosing a diverse group of participants and asking each one an identical introductory question, participants detailed their lived experiences through providing comprehensive and extensive interviews on the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009). Qualitative research involves identifying and addressing potential challenges to the research's trustworthiness. As a result, trustworthiness is comprised of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Stewart et al., 2017). The researcher established credibility by participating in activities such as journaling and meditation, which allowed the researcher to consider their prejudices and opinions. This self-awareness enabled you to maintain objectivity during data collection and analysis, ensuring that your results correctly reflected the participants' perspectives. Consistency in reflective techniques increased the study's reliability by ensuring that the research process was systematic and well-documented. Journaling and listening to podcasts helped the researcher identify and reduce their own biases.

In qualitative research, credibility demonstrates depth and rigor in the data-gathering and analysis processes (Stewart et al., 2017). Using the semi-structured interview method resulted in rich, thorough, and detailed narratives of lived experiences. In order to acquire rich data on lived experiences related to the phenomenon, phenomenological research needs the researcher to be present and employ greater awareness during the interview process. Throughout the research process, field notes were taken to create a clear audit trail and evidence that the study was carried out in accordance with philosophical assumptions.

Purposive sampling further increased rigor in this phenomenological study by ensuring that all participants experienced the phenomenon and, could offer information relevant to the phenomenon itself (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, confirmability refers to the ability of other researchers to confirm or verify the results of the study (Foskett & Longstaff, 2018).

Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Indian female tennis players on tour using descriptive phenomenology and semi-structured interviews. Four key themes emerged from the dataset following an extensive analysis. These topics encapsulate the essentials of the participants' experiences and opinions, and they will be expanded on in depth in the findings section.

The four themes are:

Theme 1: Expectations of Women- This theme highlights the participants' unsatisfied expectations, gender bias and mistreatment.

Theme 2: Cost of Travel- This theme focuses on financial and psychological strains of travel.

Theme 3: Emotional Burnout- This theme examines how the expectations along with travel on tour emotionally drains the participants.

Theme 4: Preferred Characteristics- This theme captures the participants perception and positive characteristics of their coaches.

In the results section, each of these themes will be discussed in detail, supported by illustrative quotes from the interview transcripts. This detailed analysis will provide a comprehensive understanding of the key findings and their implications.

Expectations of Women

Expectations of women as athletes can encompass various forms of unmet expectations such as neglect, demeaning comments, physical strains, gender discrimination and mistreatment. In addition to managing the rigors of their sport, the

participants have encountered numerous challenges, including coaching dynamics and limited opportunities within the women's tennis field.

One of the major factors the participants faced was neglect. Specifically, the neglect was based on factors such as athletic level, culture, language, body, and gender. Avani struggled with this as she was not being prioritized. She said, “There was a male player that was the same ranking as me, the same level as me, the same age as me but like obviously he got a lot more attention than me.” She continued:

In fact, like he was on the player panel, I was on the player panel. He won the nationals, I won the nationals. He won a South Asian medal, I won two South Asian medals. And yet, I was not feeling like I was a priority. (Transcript Avani, Page 5, Lines 193-196)

She felt neglected and disappointed. She continued to speak about how she had traveled to another country for a few months for tournaments and she did not hear from her coach at all while she was away. This made Avani feel like she was always on the backburner. For Laxmi, the neglect and comparison with other students was similar to Avani's. In her interview, Laxmi shared her experience of training for seven years in an academy where she trained under several top coaches. However, as time went by, Laxmi felt that she was not being given the attention she deserved. She said:

So with one of the coaches, I faced this where initially like, I was given like the correct amount of attention and and guidance and then it kind of shifted and like he took interest in one of the other trainees and then all the attention went there and then I felt neglected. (Participant Laxmi, Page 6, Line 231-234)

Being the youngest player in the academy, she felt as though she was being compared constantly to other female players who were not only older than her, but also physically more mature than her. Laxmi was left feeling physically and mentally drained.

Moreover, Leela trained under multiple coaches; however, one constant thing between all the coaches was that she had one-on-one sessions with each coach. She stated, “When it came to personal coaching, most of the time when we couldn't get enough personal attention in the academy was the main whole sole reason to go towards personal coaching.” Leela felt like the coach had their favorites on the court. She continued to speak about how all players worked hard, and that some players got more attention from the coach than others:

If we perform, then only we're going to get our coaches' attention. Whereas thinking back it now it shouldn't be like that it should be that you know we should get their attention no matter how we perform because that's what's really going to help us perform right that's what's gonna raise our confidence, so this favoritism of sorts did create sort of confidence barriers in your head. (Transcript Leela, Page 4, Lines 166-170)

Aastha preferred traveling with her mom or a coach although she felt that her coach did not help when needed. She said, “It felt like he had his little favorite that he...like he, he saw he would watch my match, but I didn't get any substantial feedback.” She felt that her confidence was being affected as she was not getting attention or proper feedback from her coach during travel. She also felt that she performed better when she travelled with her mom than the coach. Aastha also

mentioned how she faced neglect as she said, “I would see him give other students attention and I felt like I needed, uh, to be looked at as much and I wasn't given that.” Aastha spoke about how the coaches charged her more money than other players at the academy because they did not speak the common language of the state. She said:

I think that reflected in, like coaches as well and not to say that they would discriminate against us or anything but um I think after a certain point like yeah they would just we would just get charged a lot more it seemed. (Transcript Aastha, Page 4, Lines 154-156)

Diya, on the other hand, mentioned that her coach had favorites and that the list of favorites did not include her and that made her feel neglected. Diya did not travel as much as other participants, but she explained how one learns to be independent while traveling. During group travel, Diya felt that her coach did not give her enough attention or feedback during her matches. She said:

I was very young back then, so 14 years old, you, you just feel like, oh, what can you you do, you know, get their attention so that you are also considered a favorite of a coach or, or just to be at that level where they give you that kind of importance. (Participant Diya, Page 12, Lines 485-487)

She also mentioned that this particular coach was very strict. She reported that her coach would say, “You know you have to not talk while playing, you only mind your own business.” She expressed how coaches usually behaved by saying:

There were some who you know, like just felt like they had to impose their, way of thinking, their decision, how they felt I should be training, I should or like,

you know, some lack of discipline, habits and some, some form or the other. Instead of just being like, okay, yeah, you should know why this is important. They were like ready to just punish you directly or, you know, tell you to get out or something. (Transcript Diya, Page 6, Lines 221-226)

Diya mentioned how scared she was during practice whereas Laxmi shared how she used to get yelled at and called out during practice. The taunts and demeaning comments from coaches took a toll on her. Laxmi said, “They (coaches) used to hit (the ball) really far, like even though they could have hit it right next to me, they hit it really far and I would not be able to get it and I would get yelled at.” Laxmi felt neglected, and for years, she was told directly and indirectly that she was not strong enough, good enough, or fast enough. Furthermore, Diya feared being called out in practice and she recalled a particular scenario where she was not playing her best and the coach stopped the drill midway through, called her out, and asked her to leave the practice. In addition, Navya, in her interview reflected on how she had some bad experiences with coaches in training. She mentioned how the coach’s approach was “very tough” which was affecting her confidence. She said:

So his approach was very like, he was more like very tough. Be very tough on me and say things which are like, you know, you're not fit to play tennis. You could only like sit at home and like cook or clean stuff like that. So it's not a very positive environment to be in. Not an environment where you could grow, I felt. So, yeah. I didn't know that it was affecting me. I thought maybe it was my, you know, I had to work on myself and I don't think that kind of environment kind of helps your confidence. (Transcript Navya, Page 4, Lines 47-52)

Navya said, “If I'm not 100% playing my best, he'd (coach) be like, then you don't get on the court, you don't respect the sport, you have to be 100%, and things like that.” Navya had another experience with the coach where she revealed that the coach would watch her play in tournaments, would taunt her about losing, which eventually led to her losing multiple matches.

For Leela, the issue was not so much the comments, but rather the punishments and the constant physical strain. Leela spoke about how strict her coaches were, and that if anyone came in late for practice, they were punished. Furthermore, she talked about how public these events were: “Everybody could see that, you know, you're late, you're running or you're behind a lap, you're getting yelled at, you know, you miss a ball, you're getting yelled at.” Leela seemed to take this personally and believed that she was being singled out by the coach:

Like if you are a little bit behind than the other kids, it was like, no, you have to put more effort. That means you will stay back for longer and you will run or you will do all of those things. I remember staying back at that time with the floodlights were on. No, there was nobody on court, but I was running like for 30 minutes, although nobody was there. (Transcript Leela, Page 6, Lines 259-263)

She spoke about how she's been a 'broad' woman and that was the first thing that coaches observed. Consequently, every practice concluded with running which led Leela to believe that 'there was something wrong with her'. Moreover, Leela reported a gap in knowledge by expressing how the running regime was an action that the coach took without consulting a nutritionist, dietician, or trainer.

Leela also felt uncomfortable with traveling with coaches as she stated that there are no regulations in place regarding traveling coaches. This included big academies that had no designated travel coach and no female coaches at all. Along with this, she expressed how multiple male coaches do not have the experience of traveling with females.

Avani fortunately had no incidents with demeaning comments or physical strain. However, after spending over 12 years training under the one coach, and being one of his youngest players, she reported enjoying it less and less because of her coach. She said:

I was feeling a little bit like, suffocated with how much my coach was on me because everybody else had left. If that makes sense, because yeah, yeah. I was always the youngest and I felt like my coach always kind of had like a little bit of an extra hold on me compared to everybody else. (Transcript Avani, Page 4, Lines 161-164)

Avani continued to train there and when she started traveling and performing, she realized that she had more potential and was lagging at the academy because she was not getting valuable training with the coach. The academy could not offer what was needed to get to the next level in tennis and that made Avani feel dissatisfied. Avani also felt dissatisfaction and frustration due to the limited exposure for female athletes, and disappointment that there were no female coaches in the field. Avani shared her insights on how for every five men's tournaments, there is one women's tournament. She expressed observing the gender inequality by organizations through sharing that if there were a men's and women's tournament happening at the same location, the men were

found playing on the popular front courts while the women were placed on the back courts.

Regarding coaches, Avani strongly felt that there should be more “female energy” in the team, such as female trainers and coaches, who can better understand what female athletes are going through and how to assist them. However, she thought that they are hard to find. Leela too spoke about how it was “very, very, rare” it was to have female coaches handle up-and-coming players. As unique as the experiences were for the participants, the emotion of feeling drained was common. Table 6 provides examples of some significant statements from the Expectations of Women theme.

Table 6

Examples of Emergent Theme: Expectations of Women

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
So I trained with another coach in India, but I didn't have like a very great experience with him.	The participant had a challenging time with the previous coach.
It was like with the coaches also, like, you know, being told every single day that you're not good enough, not especially using those words, but it comes in other forms as well	Negative words and actions from coaches was affecting the participant negatively
And if sometimes that I'm not, I mean, if I'm not 100% playing my best, he'd (coach) be like, then you don't get on court, you don't respect the sport, you have to be 100% and things like that.	The participant believed that if she was not at her very best, the coach would not play her.
I don't know why, but I just, he just uh stopped the drill midway and he called me out and he said that I uh, do like, you know, do I not want to be here? Why am I behaving like this? Why am I not giving my, energy? And I, in that moment I felt like I was just taken aback 1st to be called out in front of everyone, 2nd to like just be told that I'm not giving my hundred percent and I felt like I was doing it with, you know, But maybe in his viewpoint I was in and then he asked me to just leave the court and I could not continue practice.	The coach called the participant out and did not let her continue practice because she wasn't playing her best.
I was kind of told that, indirectly or directly, told that like, you know, I'm not strong enough, I'm not good enough, I'm not fast enough and things like that for like many months together, years probably.	The coach commented constantly saying how the participant is not good enough or strong enough. Participant was compared and judged by coaches.
When I say rough and tough, I can start from the beginning of the practice. If you were a minute or two minutes late, then it's sort like the we had a couple of punishments of going and running for 15-20 minutes or doing jumping jacks. It could be anything.	The coaches were strict, and punishments were used against the participant.

Cost of Travel

The nature of sports often requires athletes to embark on journeys across regions, countries, and even continents, exposing the participants to a range of challenges. From navigating unsafe environments to dealing with financial strains and anxiety of travel, the participants shared their experiences from their travel journeys.

Aastha initially felt excited when she traveled alone. She felt independent and had control of her actions. She spent her time socializing with other players, although she shared one instance which made her feel unsafe.

I was with a bunch of guys and none of them helped me walk back to my hotel room. And I walked back by myself at night in Delhi. So I was really freaked out in that sense. You know, it was like, that was a scary experience, especially being in Delhi at night. (Participant Aastha, Page 7, Lines 273-276)

In addition, Avani explained that initially, she traveled with her mother, but in the last few years, she started traveling alone. Avani shared how, with her mother, there were not many things to worry about, but that traveling alone has been a challenge.

Avani said:

The first thing that I realized when you're traveling alone is that you have to be on all the time. You have to be on. You have to watch your back all the time. You have to hold on to your bag. And you have to check your surroundings all the time. (Participant Avani, Page 7, Line 285-287)

Avani shared a conversation she had with a male friend, where she was expressing how the drive to the hotel from the airport was three hours long, and her

friend recommended sleeping in the cab to rest. However, she pointed out that female players do not get that privilege. Traveling alone with a driver requires female athletes to be alert, which results in less rest time when compared to men.

Leela, on the other hand, did not have any experience of traveling alone, and occasionally traveled with a coach. One of the experiences she shared was when she traveled to an Arab country with other girls and a male coach. The coach did not know about the customs and rules of the country and when the girls were traveling around in their tennis attire i.e., shorts, skirts and t-shirts, they felt unsafe.

Another experience Leela shared where she felt unsafe was when she was traveling with her mom. She said:

In a certain country I went, it was a stadium full of men trying to record me play with another player, just because I was wearing a skirt. I was 14 years old, so that was quite an experience. For that age and what is my mother going to do against a stadium full of men, right? She can't do much. (Transcript Leela, Page 9, Lines 360-365)

Leela expressed having an awareness that most female tennis players in India have gone through a similar experience.

Navya traveled alone for the first time when she was 14. However, she felt that the more she traveled, the more she wondered if it was worth it. She said:

You do have a lot of, like, I feel like you do have a lot of thoughts, whether you belong there, whether you can do this, like whether it's, you know, um, how do I say it? Like, whether it's worth taking this trip. Um, sometimes you do have those thoughts, but you just have to trust yourself and not let those thoughts stay

too long. So sometimes you do get that, like people sometimes think, oh, like, you know, we all get to travel to so many places and everything. But at the same time, we also like have to be really tough mentally to be able to go to so many places and still, you know, just go out there and compete and put aside all the other thoughts that we have. (Participant Navya, Page 3, Lines 121-128)

Navya frequently felt a rush of thoughts and she observed that this usually happened when she was traveling alone. She could not put into words precisely what these thoughts were but felt that they were related to mental health and traveling alone. Navya keeps herself distracted when she is traveling to keep her mind off these thoughts, and she tries to remain mentally strong.

To ensure safety, Leela preferred to travel with her mom, but the expenses of travel was her biggest fear. The pressure of winning, so as to be able to travel, also affected her. She said, “Although I was quite highly ranked comparatively, there is no scholarship through the government or anything of that sort.” She also mentioned how there is no system or assistance when it comes to travel from the tournament organizers, thus leaving parents, guardians, and players to cover the expenses.

On the contrary, Avani used specific travel tips to ensure her safety while continuing to travel alone. She picked flight timings that were during the day rather than late in the evening and pick hotels on the main road rather than in the outskirts. These strategies were not cheap, and she shared an example of how a late evening flight was roughly 8000 rupees cheaper, but she preferred the more expensive one because she would arrive in the daytime. She continued to share:

You take a cab because it's 100 rupees and you don't take an auto (a three-wheeled small, open doors motor vehicle used as public transport) because if you're in a skirt in this in an auto you will get looked at or stuff like that so you're always on you always have to pack extra clothing to cover yourself up or not to get attention. (Participant Avani, Page 8, Line 311-313)

In India, cabs (Ubers/taxis) are costlier than autos. However, autos are open and occupants can be seen. This made Avani uncomfortable and resulted in her spending more money to ensure her safety. She further stated:

Sometimes you have to travel with someone else with you so it's twice the costs. So you always have to have a male coach with you just for protection, even if it's not for their skill or whatever. (Participant Avani, Page 8, Line 320-322)

Avani continued to relay how she did not travel much with a coach for several reasons. Firstly, it was very expensive, and secondly, it was mentally stressful. Avani states:

So the way the tour works for girls is very different from the way it works for guys because every step of the way, there are like three or four more things for us to think about than it is for them. (Participant Avani, Page 8, Line 334-336)

She expressed her frustration of how her trip for a tournament along with some other girls was going to get cancelled because their travel coach was unsure of his availability to travel. Avani preferred to do everything alone whilst traveling with her coach as she only preferred him to watch her play tennis.

As for Navya, she traveled with her coach on multiple occasions, however she did not enjoy traveling with him, as he was “too much.” She shared an experience she had with the coach while traveling. She was playing in a match and was winning. However, the coach approached her during the game and expressed doubts about her winning the match which took a toll on her. Consequently, it started hampering her performance.

Laxmi expressed herself as a confident traveler. She was not scared of travel as she had done it so much that she knew the rules and regulations of travel within various countries. However, during her travel with coaches, she shared that in the junior circuit, the money for expenses was given to the coaches and that there were several occasions when she and other players did not have money to buy food. She said, “We had to wait like four or five hours for him to come and give us money to eat food or like buy juice or whatever water or whatever it was.” She reported that players’ food supplies were limited, as the coach used the money to buy gifts for his family.

Whilst traveling on the elite tour, Laxmi shared her experience on how there is sexual tension when coaches from other places are around. According to her, “It is frowned upon to date a coach.” She has never dated a coach and stated:

I was like, are they being friendly, are they being flirty? If I don't if I don't reciprocate it, like, not like in a flirty way, but if I don't engage in conversations with them, will this, you know, be a downfall to my career? (p.8)

She reported that she constantly had multiple things on her mind, with her main concern being that she did not want anything negative to occur especially between her

and a coach. Therefore, she was always doubting or second-guessing herself. Table 7 provides examples of significant statements from the theme.

Table 7

Examples of Emergent Theme: Cost of Travel

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
<p>I think especially when you're alone, you get a lot of thoughts, right? The mind is not, cannot, it just, it just, you know, that's how the mind is. When you're alone, especially when you're traveling alone, sometimes you get a lot of thoughts.</p>	<p>The participant describes the thoughts that run in her mind while traveling alone. She felt anxious and struggled to elaborate the feeling.</p>
<p>And the first thing that I realized when you're traveling alone is that you have to be on all the time. You have to be on. You have to watch your back all the time. You have to hold on to your bag. And you have to check your surroundings all the time.</p>	<p>The participant is talking about how she must be focused on everything around her. Hyper-awareness is needed.</p>
<p>You take a cab because it's 100 rupees and you don't take an auto because if you're in a skirt in this in in an auto you will get looked at or stuff like that so you're always on you always have to pack extra clothing to cover yourself up or not to get attention.</p>	<p>The athlete describes how taking a cab is a safe decision even though it's expensive. Athlete talks about packing extra clothes to cover their body Concern about the 'gaze' of others</p>
<p>I had to get my room or I was waiting for someone who's going to join me as my roommate. They were coming two days after me or something. But I was with a bunch of guys and none of them helped me walk back to my hotel room. And I walked back by myself at night in Delhi. So I was really freaked out in that sense. You know, it was like, that was a scary experience, especially being in Delhi at night.</p>	<p>The participant shared her traumatic experience of walking alone late in the night.</p>
<p>But imagine how much more mentally stressful it is for you that your life hangs in the balance just on whether a random person (coach) can make it or not. So the way the tour works for girls is very different from the way it works for guys because every step of the way, there are like three or four more things for us to think about than it is for them. So yeah.</p>	<p>Female athletes must worry about whether or not their coach can travel, and how females, when compared with males, have additional things to be mindful of. Cognitive and emotional load for female athletes.</p>

Emotional Burnout

Emotional burnout is a pressing concern in the field of sports, and this was the case for those participants in the study who were dedicated to turning professional. From wrestling with the demands of the sport, managing mistreatment from coaches, to coping with travel, the participants shared their dissatisfaction, self-esteem levels, pressure, and frustration.

With constant neglect from coaches during practice and tournaments, Diya believed that her confidence was being affected, and she started losing more matches. She tried to push herself and work on her skills, thinking the coach would realize this and help. Even after moving on from those situations, she still felt that this contributed to her low self-esteem. Aastha felt the same as she said, “I think it made me doubt myself in a way to the point where I felt like am I not good enough to receive more training.” She felt that she was missing out. She claimed:

I always felt like I could always use guidance. Like even it was, I don't need like a nagging thing, like every two seconds someone tells me something, but you know, after a match, I would like to sit down and reflect upon it. And I always wanted my coaches back home to come watch me play, but it seemed like I didn't get enough, like, like good feedback, which I felt like a lot of my peers who traveled with coaches or, you know, who had that special team or attention like they got. (Transcript Aastha, Page 5, Lines 202-207)

In addition, Leela took the yelling and punishments personally and believed that she was being singled out by the coach. The constant running after practices because Leela was

“broad” made her feel judged and led Leela to feel that something was wrong with her. Diya recalled an incident during practice, where a coach commented on her facial structure. She said:

I don't know where he (coach) was trying to go with it or if he was just trying to humiliate me or to tell me like, you know, like because I wasn't probably listening to kind of thing he wanted me to do, for a specific drill, so. I just feel like you could have avoided those comments and just said what I'm not doing wrong, like there's no need to humiliate someone or point, their looks or appearances. In that moment and like two, three people laughed and that moment I just felt like, okay, that's really uncalled for, you know, so that's probably yeah.
(Participant Diya, Page, Line 563-573)

Diya described how such an instance made her feel angry and humiliated, where her coach and other individuals around laughed at her due to her face being structured differently.

For Navya, she did not enjoy traveling or playing tennis due to the constant pressure from the coach of always being at 100%. Navya feels that the coach was using an old approach (which has been portrayed in movies) where the coach is hard on the athlete, which in turn motivates the athlete to get better. However, Navya disagreed with this strategy and thinks that such an approach does not work in real life. Navya reported that she thought it was her fault, that she had to do better, and that ultimately led to her doubting herself.

Additionally, after training at the same academy for over a decade Avani felt suffocated and she further reported that confronting the coach would be a challenge as he “would not take it well.” Eventually, Avani switched academies, however, at the new academy she was left feeling neglect and disappointment. After travelling for tournaments and being ignored by the coaches for months, she expressed her frustration:

You (females) need to earn your spot and you always have to like consistently remind that you're relevant and that you deserve more and all of that and I feel like boys never really have to do that it's always understood that they are a priority which is pretty frustrating. (Transcript Avani, Page 6, Lines 243-246)

Avani constantly felt that women’s tennis was looked down upon by individuals in general when compared to men’s tennis and that this belief was affecting her career. In the interview, she outlined her belief that women tennis players have different needs:

To coach a men's player, you are not really there to help them with their mental and emotional strength. But for a women's player, more than the tactical and technical aspects, it's more about the mental and emotional aspects when they are playing the tour. So, I felt like my needs weren't being met then and it was quite frustrating. (Transcript Avani, Page 6, Lines 231-235)

Avani expressed how irritating it is to see sexism and lack of support, but that she is trying to fight for her rights. Furthermore, Aastha also mentioned lack of support towards language barriers within her academy:

I didn't speak Kannada and it was very unfortunate like to the point where there was one time when they uh when one of the guys said like oh I wish she had died

yesterday or something like that so that became a little toxic it was uh there were times where I did feel like there was a little like toxicity in our academy.

(Transcript Aastha, Page 9, Lines 383-386)

When this situation reached the coach, he did not do anything about it and the behavior from peers continued.

Additionally, for Laxmi, along with constant comparison, taunts and yelling, she felt mentally drained. Laxmi switched academies and traveled to other countries, but when she got injured, she took a break of five years, as she could not afford to play the sport. She mentioned, “I feel though, I've had more of these challenges with sponsors, a little bit less with coaches.” Laxmi was highly ranked in the country and in the world as well, however, getting sponsorships was tough. She expressed “I feel as a female player, most of them want you to sleep with them before they give you money. And I've come across this a few times and it was really, really, scary.” Such instances where Laxmi was approached to sleep with someone to get sponsors made her feel like there was no solution. Table 8 provides examples of emotional burnout.

Table 8

Examples of Emergent Theme: Emotional Burnout

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
<p>I didn't speak Kannada and it was very unfortunate like to the point where there was one time when they uh when one of the guys said like oh I wish she had died yesterday or something like that so that became a little toxic it was uh there were times where I did feel like there was a little like toxicity in our academy.</p>	<p>An individual spoke ill of the participant and the situation was not handled by the coach properly making her feel like the academy was getting toxic.</p>
<p>You need to earn your spot and you always have to like consistently remind that you're relevant and that you deserve more and all of that and I feel like boys never really have to do that it's always understood that they are a priority which is pretty frustrating.</p>	<p>The participant expressed frustration because she feels like she has to work hard to earn a spot whereas a boy is naturally given that. She has to remind herself what she deserves constantly.</p>
<p>I don't know where he was trying to go with it or if he was just trying to humiliate me or to tell me like, you know, like because I wasn't probably listening to kind of thing he wanted me to do, for a specific drill, so. I just feel like you could have avoided those comments and just said what I'm not doing wrong, like there's no need to humiliate someone or point, their looks or appearances. in that moment and like two, three people laughed and that moment I just felt like, okay, that's really uncalled for.</p>	<p>The participant could not understand why the coach was humiliating her as others started laughing on her as well.</p>
<p>I feel as a female player, most of them want you to sleep with them before they give you money. And I've come across this. A few times, and it was really really scary.</p>	<p>Females face more challenges when searching for sponsors. Sex for money -> money to compete.</p>
<p>I think it made me doubt myself in a way to the point where I felt like am I not good enough for receiving more training?</p>	<p>The participant felt unfair that she was not getting attention in group sessions, and she felt like she was not good enough.</p>
<p>To coach a men's player, you are not really there to help them with their mental and emotional strength. But for a women's player, more than the tactical and technical aspects, it's more about the mental and emotional aspects when they are playing the tour. So, I felt like my needs weren't being met then and it was quite frustrating.</p>	<p>Female athletes need more emotional and mental assistance than male athletes do. The participant felt like her needs were not met, and was making her frustrated.</p>

Preferred Characteristics

When it comes to coaching, certain characteristics stand out as valuable and effective in an athlete's journey. The participants shared their expectations, appreciation, and positive characteristics in this theme.

Every participant overcame different challenges, and their expectations are different, but attention seems to be common throughout. Navya's expectation concerning her coach and the characteristics that she expects the coach to have. She said:

For me, I feel like trusting me. Like, you know, like, firstly, like, trusting that basically trusting that I can do it myself. Yeah, maybe like how they like, like having the trust, like not having to say every single thing, like letting the player lead. (Participant Navya, Page 2, Lines 76-78)

Navya believes encouragement and appreciation are key factors, as they will make the player feel more positive. She prefers her coach to be invested in her with his attention and energy. As for Leela, she is not competing anymore, but she wishes coaches were made more aware of how to care for female athletes, especially young teenage girls. Leela had a great experience with a coach from another country, and she wished that other coaches in India would have understood what kind of training would work best for her. She believes that trust and rapport were key factors between a player and a coach.

Avani supports Leela's point of view as she too thinks female athletes should have different coaches than male athletes. Avani thinks, "More than the tactical and

technical aspects, it's more about the mental and emotional aspects when they are playing the tour.” Along with having different coaches, Laxmi believes it is important for male coaches to be educated on how to train female athletes. She believes there are certain lines (i.e., judging and commenting on outfits or personal choices) that must not be crossed when training female athletes, especially young athletes

Additionally, Aastha expected her coach to sit down with her and provide her with feedback, whereas for Diya, she hoped for the coach to understand her way of learning. She was motivated by coaches who “had a lot of passion for tennis, that they were thinking more about, you know, like really helping students learn because they want to just, you know, help you improve and grow.” Diya enjoyed learning and another essential factor was empathy. Diya prefers coaches who understand the level of the player and coaches them without judging. She admires coaches who are willing to grow with the athlete. Table 9 provides examples of the theme preferred characteristics.

Table 8

Examples of Emergent Theme: Preferred Characteristics

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning
I've always been attracted to coaches who understand my way of learning and playing style.	The participant prefers coaches who understand her way of learning and playing.
They have a lot of passion for tennis that they were thinking more about, you know, like really helping students learn because they want to just, you know, help you improve and grow	The participant's expectations from coaches are that they have a passion for tennis and genuinely want to help students grow.
Could you (coach) sometimes understand where they (athlete) are coming from And if I'm not really responding in a manner they expect, could they still just be understanding and and see like, okay, why, what's wrong, what's troubling you, you know, instead of just going around saying no, you are doing this wrong, you should do it like this. So, I think arrogant coaches have always been a big turn off for me.	The participant shares what she expects from coaches. She does not like coaches who are arrogant and don't understand the player's perspective.
For me, I feel like trusting me. Like, you know, like, firstly, like, trusting that basically trusting that I can do it myself. Yeah, maybe like how they like, like having the trust, like not having to say every single thing, like letting the player lead. And yeah, that's what I meant. So, and also being encouraging, because everyone needs encouragement and appreciation. So I think that's kind of key. Yeah, just encouraging, being positive, like pointing out the positives.	The participant is expressing how trust, encouragement, and positivity are characteristics she looks for in a coach.
He actually trains a lot of girls and especially for girls it works well. That's one of the main reasons I'm training with him.	The current coach trains more girls, which is a comfort for the athlete.
That's something that a lot of people, just in general, a lot of people don't understand that when a woman's having a bad day and she's ranting, she doesn't want a solution, she just wants comfort.	The participant is expressing how female athletes are misjudged when they need emotional guidance.

Summary

The collection of interview data produced the findings of this phenomenological investigation. For the purpose of this research, an in-depth description of the lived experience of female Indian tennis players has been developed through extensive data collection, interpretation, and analysis.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to present a detailed description of the lived experience of elite Indian female tennis players. This chapter reviews the present study. Each participant's lived experience will be examined through a conceptual lens, and the findings will be compared to relevant literature. Finally, the implications, future research recommendations, limitations, and conclusions will be presented.

The treatment of female athletes within India and the Indian sports culture has evolved over time but still faces several challenges. Numerous individuals in the rural, conservative environment continue to view a baby girl as a burden and a baby boy as a blessing (Samanta, 2020). Cultural expectations force an obedient daughter to follow predetermined paths to becoming a devoted wife and mother, including how she should dress and behave (Samanta, 2020; Shashwati et al., 2023). Despite the progress, female athletes are still not given the same respect and opportunity as men. The Indian women's hockey team's coach, Marijne, said in an interview, "We haven't had too many games since 2019 and haven't played as much as the men. Even without all that, we did what we did. So, imagine if we get all that support like the men's team" (Shukla, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure and the shortage of female coaches have only served to exasperate the situation for female athletes (Shukla, 2021). Indian female athletes, including Sania Mirza and P.V. Sindhu, have voiced their concerns about the unequal training and assistance they received compared to their male counterparts (Imtiaz, 2020). Their experiences serve as a reminder of the continuous fight in India for gender parity in sports (Imtiaz, 2020).

Synthesis of the Phenomenon and Suggestions

One major question emanating from the study concerned the vulnerability of female athletes in India. Participants described dealing with an array of obstacles, which were outlined in the themes presented in the findings section.

The first theme identified the expectations of women. Participants mentioned experiences of neglect throughout their interviews and alluded that it occurred at all stages of their athletic journey (i.e., from beginner to elite). It is evident that neglect is a sign of a larger problem of gender discrimination in sports rather than being a single occurrence. Sadly, the unsupportive perception towards a female athlete in the patriarchal sport culture in India restricts her exposure to various training methods and competitive settings (Chakrabarti, 2020). This kind of disregard is a symptom of a larger problem in which female athletes are not given the same opportunities for growth and support as male athletes and are instead treated with less respect. For example, in the present study, participants struggled to get attention during practice if male participants were training. Moreover, participants faced challenges to get sponsorship or funding of any kind regardless of their tennis ranking within the country. One major reason why female athletes in India receive negative and below-average treatment may have to do with the lack of recognition that they receive in comparison to male athletes (Alvarez, 2019).

Prior to 2017, research found that one-third of the Indian population did not realize that India had a women's international cricket squad (Rehani & Thakur, 2018). This is stunning as not only is cricket the most popular sport in India, but in many ways, it is treated almost as a religion. Most people in India are aware of male Indian cricket,

where the best players are revered, but very few are aware that there is also a strong, competitive women's team. Furthermore, when considering other sports involving female athletes, the media and, by extension, the general population either seem either ignorant of the participating athletes or unaware that the sport actually exists. Thus, the media can play a crucial role in promoting women's sports (Rehani & Thakur, 2018; Rashid et al., 2022). Indeed, it is still essential to remind media reporters to cover female athletes with the same standards as their male counterparts, even female athletes as celebrated as Serena Williams (Sijapati, 2019).

Because of the disparity in coverage, female athletes' accomplishments are frequently disregarded and underappreciated (Alvarez, 2019). It is essential to encourage equal coverage of women's sports in the newspaper, television, and digital media (Rehani & Thakur, 2018). Findings from within the current study would lead one to suggest establishing partnerships with media outlets to ensure that women's sports events and players are well covered. In media coverage, highlighting the accomplishments and success stories of female athletes may draw public support and recognition to the athletes' challenges and victories.

With the aim to ensure that female athletes receive the credit and support they deserve and to encourage the next generations of female athletes, equal media coverage is crucial. Sijapati writes that not only does the lack of representation of female athletes in the media degrade them, but it also puts girls who want to play sports at a disadvantage (2019). In order to overcome these obstacles, the current study suggests developing initiatives to educate individuals about the importance of equal opportunities for women and men in sports. It is important to challenge biases and promote the

accomplishments of female athletes through the media, educational institutions, and community initiatives. Thus, highlighting and promoting accomplished female athletes would seem to be imperative. Furthermore, the current study suggests that in order to motivate aspiring young female athletes and modify cultural stereotypes, successful female athletes need to be promoted as role models and participate in community activities and public speaking engagements.

Female athletes not receiving the recognition they deserve could be due to various factors. One of the reasons from the findings states that male athletes were preferred over female athletes. Tomlinson and Yorganci (1997) reported that coaches considered females considerably less important than males and were not permitted to train with males despite their comparable abilities. The commonality between the study conducted by Tomlinson and Yorganci (1997) when compared to the current study is gender discrimination and neglect. A similar situation was found in the current study, where athletes reported facing discriminatory scenarios, with male athletes being preferred and given preference with regard to training and practice. Indeed, the commonality between the findings of the present study and those of Tomlinson and Yorganci (1997), with regard to gender discrimination and neglect, is striking. Low self-esteem, devaluation, decreased motivation, and emotional tolls were common outcomes in both studies, with fear, pressure, and demeaning comments being additional features in the present study. It should be noted, however, that similar traits were reported in a study conducted by Stirling and Kerr (2007) on emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship.

Stirling and Kerr (2007) discuss how the participants in their study had reported feeling abused and neglected. This, in turn, led to a reported decrease in athletes' self-confidence and sense of self-worth, leading to an increase in emotional turmoil and a decreased motivation to train and compete. Indeed, this sense of rejection can discourage young female athletes from pursuing a career in sports. The participants in the current study reported facing similar emotions to those described by Stirling & Kerr (2000), which would serve to indicate that India still fails to recognize males and female athletes as being on an equal plane.

Another factor discussed in the current study was the culture behind the notion that women belonged in the house rather than on the sports field. Understanding the athletes' life experiences requires an awareness of their cultural contexts. Pressures to meet social norms can have an impact on anything from resource availability to emotional assistance for female athletes. A survey that took place in 2015 suggested that 52% of the survey participants thought that women belonged in the kitchen (FP Staff, 2015). This perception is a deeply embedded stereotype that is a reflection of cultural norms and long-standing gender prejudices. This viewpoint supports constrictive positions that restrict women's possibilities and rights in addition to undermining the potential and contributions of women in sports (FP Staff, 2015). Thus, the future for female athletes in India is daunting as the athletes are not only competing against the opposing team, but also competing against all the misperceptions, actions, and lack of support of the community and country.

In India, gendered misconceptions about femininity and masculinity frequently have a direct influence on how females can participate. For example, teenage girls in

India are typically discouraged from participating in athletics and strength- or muscle-training programs because it is believed that they would develop characteristics similar to men (Mutatkar, 2018). Moreover, according to Hindustan Times, one of the reasons why an athlete in India discontinues a sport is due to "There is no future in sports," "This is the time for academics" (*Retired early – how we are failing our future sports*, 2017). A common perception of sports is that sports demand physical stamina and strength, qualities traditionally associated with males, and this reason also contributes to why females refrain from participating in sports (*Retired early – how we are failing our future sports stars*, 2017). These results of current study can help create awareness and help organizations promote female engagement in sports and develop programs that inform parents about the advantages of sports for young girls and feature the experiences of successful female athletes who have managed to juggle their athletics, schooling, and other commitments.

Over the last few years, there have been numerous reports of alarming sports behaviors, such as mistreatment, around across the globe (MacPherson et al., 2022). Research on athlete mistreatment in India revealed significant patterns of abuse in the country's sports sector (Singh et al., 2020). Currently, there is little research that studies the effects of sports culture in Eastern countries or even India. Singh et al. (2020) researched the experiences of top athletes in India and discovered several cases of physical and mental abuse by coaches, officials, and athletic administrators, especially among athletes from underprivileged backgrounds. To address these concerns, policies and instructional programs have been developed and put into effect under the term ' SafeSport' (MacPherson et al., 2022). SafeSport protects athletes from abuse,

harassment, and harm in athletic environments. It includes policies, instructional programs, and processes that aim to provide an environment of security and encouragement for athletes across all levels (International Olympic Committee, 1997).

The United States Center for SafeSport is the important organization in charge of promoting sports safety (*Preventing and addressing abuse: U.S. center for SafeSport*).

The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) established the Center for SafeSport in 2017 to prevent all types of abuse in sports, including physical, emotional, and sexual assault (*Preventing and Addressing Abuse: U.S. Center for SafeSport*). The SafeSport initiatives were established by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) in 2019 (*IOA SafeSport Policy - Indian Olympic Association*), however females are still hesitant to report assault. While India has been attempting on prioritizing safety, the authoritarian systems do not give athletes a voice to report maltreatment (Krishnan, 2022). Thus, regardless of the sport, female athletes are hesitant to report negative treatment or any sexual encounters for a variety of reasons (Krishnan, 2022). Athletes are under significant pressure from coaches and officials, and reporting abuse can have serious repercussions, such as being denied opportunities to train and compete and, in certain cases, being forced to quit their sport (Maniyar, 2023). Furthermore, being a victim of abuse carries a stigma in society that can result in victim shaming (D’Cunha, 2022).

Indian sports, like other organizations and agencies, are majorly managed by men (McLeod et al., 2021). In the Indian sports field, women have had to battle tooth and nail to establish a room for themselves and obtain the opportunity to compete (Arora, 2023). Most of India's sports federations, as are its coaches and trainers, are led

by men. The bottom line is that it is tough for a female athlete to thrive in a male-dominated sector but being able to speak out about sexual harassment against men in authority in a patriarchal nation like India is a completely different issue (Arora, 2023). "There has been no deterrent action as inquiries dragged on. Some of the coaches were allowed to continue working with young athletes. Abuse is still part of the Indian sporting ecosystem, especially in team sports," a top sportswoman told DW (Deutsche Welle) on condition of anonymity (Krishnan, 2022). Many players acknowledge that sexual exploitation is widespread in Indian sports; however, coming out and identifying offenders after years of suffering can be tough (Krishnan, 2022). According to statistics acquired, the Sports Authority of India received 45 complaints of sexual harassment in 2010 and 2020 where more than half of these have been directed at coaches, and all have resulted in "punishments" such as an insignificant wage decrease or a stern warning (Prakash, 2022). The predatory coaches continue to work.

In India, approximately one-third of female athletes have experienced sexual assault, harassment, or inappropriate behavior by male coaches (*Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls in Sport*, 2023). Payoshni Mitra, CEO of the Global Observatory for Gender Equality and Sport, told DW that athletes are particularly vulnerable because of the hierarchical structure of the coach-athlete relationship in sports (Krishnan, 2022).

India's outdated national sports policy, launched years ago, has hindered the development of the country's sport system by failing to learn from past mistakes and successes (Khasnis et al. 2021). The case of sexual assault on female wrestlers in India led to protests around the country. Vinesh Phogat, one of India's best wrestlers, stated,

"The accused (renowned politician) is free; he is being sheltered by the government, and we athletes who won medals for the country are now being put in jail for demanding justice for the country's daughters " (Arora, 2023).

In Canada, violations of SafeSport policies involve the law and various sports organizations such as national sport organizations (NSOs), multisport service organizations (MSOs), Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute (COPSI) Network members, and the Canadian Sport Helpline (*Sport Integrity Commissioner*, 2022). Canada has created a thorough system for dealing with offenses of SafeSport regulations. These systems ensure comprehensive investigations, a fair verdict, and appropriate repercussions, with measures in place to safeguard the rights of all those involved and preserve the integrity of the sporting environment (*Sport Integrity Commissioner*, 2022). In India, sports and politics appear to have a complicated relationship (Khasnis et al. 2021). The central government agency formed a working group to create a strong sport governance code, however implementation is being hampered by politicians from the same organization (Khasnis et al. 2021). Indian women think twice before reporting a sexual assault is because they are often the ones blamed (Banerjee, 2024). Under Indian law, police must immediately record complaints, file reports, and conduct investigations into events of sexual violence (Banerjee, 2024). However, there are exhausting, lengthy processes and countless unwanted questions: What did the victim wear? What time was it? Were they alone? The survivor, who hardly understands the procedure, has to endure leering comments from officers and is frequently blamed for the incident in the first place. Moreover, the woman's attire or presence in a particular area at a specific time is frequently and shamelessly blamed for

sexual aggression against her (Banerjee, 2024). Simultaneously, the participants chose to change academies rather than communicate with the coach about various negative treatments as that option seemed less hurtful and perhaps saved them from more trouble, blame, and humiliation.

According to D'Cunha (2022), female athletes also worry that speaking out with details of abuse would harm their chances of getting married in the future. Moreover, females refrain from reporting it. This social pressure keeps abusers in the clear and further silences their victims. According to Suman Nalwa, a deputy police commissioner in New Delhi who leads a team focusing on crimes against women, women dread being labeled as "morally loose" (Rama, 2012, para. 21). "They know if they speak up, nobody would support. They internalize it to the point that it affects their life choices about where they will go to study, where they will work and when they will go out" (Rama, 2012, para. 22). Moreover, filing a report might quickly turn the female into a "victim," resulting in humiliation and counteraccusations (Rama, 2012). Her family or companion may also stop her from raising her voice to "save face" (Rama, 2012).

In addition to this, the fear of retaliation from the perpetrator might be a barrier to reporting sexual harassment (Banerjee, 2024). In a rape case in India, a 16-year-old girl was gang-raped on October 26, 2014, and after filing a police report, she was gang-raped again the following day. On December 23, she was reportedly set on fire. The police reported death by suicide, but her family claimed she was murdered. Her father also stated that the police had urged them to return to their hometown (Banerjee, 2024). The police's apparent incompetence in such situations could discourage women from reporting violence. It is inevitable that the athlete would rather keep quiet and continue

to play the sport than face public humiliation. The findings of the current study show the hesitancy of the participants to travel alone and willingness to spend more money to have company while traveling.

The findings of this study shed light on women's experiences within the Indian sports system and sports community. This study highlights the need for female participation in sports and in coaching, and it should be noted that it was not until 2022 that the Sports Authority of India started an initiative to help in the process of transitioning female athletes into coaching (Judge, 2022). This transition is made challenges by a number of obstacles that female coaches face. One such obstacle involves the marital status of female coaches. Judge points out that in many cases, married female coaches are coerced into fulfilling a more culturally acceptable female role, something that does not arise in the case of the male coach (2022). Such circumstances may well explain why participants have trained only under male coaches and continue to train under male coaches. When the participants were asked about the coach they trained under, answers such as "a male coach obviously" and "there aren't female coaches" were used. The last four Olympic cycles have had a male and female coach ratio of 10:1 in the world (Norman, 2021), and when comparing these stats to India, it is almost impossible to spot female coaches. For example, the lack of female coaches and mentors in Indian tennis is more than just a logistical issue; it has a direct relationship to cultural views about women in positions of leadership and authority. This lack of representation could deny female athletes of their vital role models and support frameworks, making their route to success even more challenging. This myopic vision

towards the role of females in coaching was hard to swallow for some of the study participants, and a change must occur.

Though India has established SafeSport, ensuring continuous execution of SafeSport regulations can be challenging, especially with little infrastructure and knowledge (Khasnis et al., 2021). Inconsistency can create gaps in protection and enforcement (Khasnis et al., 2021). Establishing and continuing initiatives requires significant funding, including financing for training, instruction, and support services (Khasnis et al., 2021). Prioritizing sports efforts in nations with low finance can be tough (Khasnis et al., 2021). This present study served to highlight the lack of female coaches, inadequate support systems, a lack of transparency, and inadequate accountability mechanisms within the Indian sports system. Encouraging the development of networks and associations for women's sports that offer an environment for sharing knowledge, support, and advocacy is imperative. Based on the findings of this study, it would seem prudent to recommend establishing mentoring programs that link aspiring female athletes with experienced mentors who can offer direction, encouragement, and guidance. Moreover, encouraging former female athletes to step into leadership positions in sports organizations so that they may shape regulations and open opportunities for present and upcoming athletes would seem to be worth pursuing. With regard to these challenges, this study may serve to help open more doors for female athletes as they transition into coaching and use their experience to help mentor future generations of athletes. At the very least, this study can encourage female athletes to voice their concerns.

Another aspect reported by the study participants involved physical stress. Studies suggest that physical stress in elite athletes can have a negative impact on performance with a long duration of intense training without proper recuperation, leading to decreased power production, diminished endurance, and poor skill execution (Halson, 2014). Furthermore, the physical stress of training, competition, and travel may lead to an increase in cognitive stress, anxiety, and mood swings (Morgan et al., 1987). This, in turn, can cause mental exhaustion and psychological distress, which can not only negatively influence athletes' performance but can result in a decline in overall health (Morgan et al., 1987). The findings of the current study can help raise awareness and assist in creating programs that provide proper training methods, in addition to strength and conditioning regimens geared specifically toward female athletes.

A final aspect of negative treatment that arose from the study involves gender discrimination, which can lead to underinvestment in female sports across all levels, including youth, college, and elite. The findings portray gender discrimination to be problematic, with tournament exposure and priority in training for females continuing to be low compared to males. Based on the population, India should produce many more female athletes than it currently does. The traditional perception of women in India as caretakers and homemakers has made these issues increasingly challenging (Samanta, 2020). Women were not often encouraged to participate in sports, and when they did, they frequently encountered negative social attitudes and little encouragement. Females think twice before participating in sports due to gender discrimination, safety, and cost. An initiative started by a number of sports organizations in India, "Khelo India," assists athletes in developing their talent and moving forward in their sport ("What Is Khelo

India Games? Know History and Winners", 2024). Khelo India, which translates to "Let's Play India," was proposed by the Indian government in 2017 as a way to reinvigorate the country's sport culture by involving youngsters at the grassroots level ("What Is Khelo India Games? Know History and Winners," 2024). The scheme was also intended to improve infrastructure and academies around the country for various sports. The Sports for Women component of the Khelo India Scheme aims to empower and inspire girls and women to actively participate in sports (*Sports for Women*). It aims to provide a friendly atmosphere that promotes their physical and mental health while also developing their athletic ability.

A few of the participants from the current study stated how they thought of quitting the sport owing to negative treatment and a lack of resources. Shukla and Joshi found examples of prejudice and inconsistent treatment of female athletes in India, such as lower earnings, fewer sponsorship deals, and less media attention than male athletes (2017). However, in many Western nations, there have been significant improvements in gender equality in sports, including stronger support networks, increased media attention, and more fair funding for female athletes. For example, countries like the US have passed laws like Title IX and implemented gender equity initiatives, which have greatly increased the opportunities and accessibility for female athletes (Hogshead-Makar & Zimbalist, 2007). This author suggests that establishing similar initiatives, such as the American Title IX, to provide equal opportunities for female athletes in India would be a worthy initiative. Continued collaboration with government agencies and community organizations so as to push for policy changes and investments that improve women's sports safety at the local, national, and international levels should

also be vigorously pursued. It is essential to help develop initiatives that target and nurture young women who have athletic abilities in sports. Young women must be encouraged to participate in competitive sports by offering scholarships along with additional incentives. Furthermore, insightful information about the elite tennis tour that can assist players in their elite journey should be widely available.

A number of studies have examined the impact that a coach's behavior has had on the emotional well-being of female athletes (Walton et al., 2022). It has been noted that female athletes report greater rates of mental health symptoms and lower rates of mental well-being than males (Walton et al., 2022). Moreover, studies have suggested that female athletes experience larger rates of emotional harm than males (Willson, Kerr, Buono et al. 2022). Indeed, punishment in sports may have a substantial impact on individual and team performance. Coaches' punishment can cause players to feel humiliated, ashamed, and anxious (Walton et al., 2022). Unfortunately, some participants in the current study felt that their experiences with negative treatment had been normalized as a component of the elite female sports culture. This conclusion is consistent with earlier research that depicts an elite sports culture where the emphasis on winning and the willingness to do whatever it takes to win justifies questionable coaching practices (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling & Kerr, 2007). Social stigma and discrimination are widespread for female athletes, both in their sports and in their communities. They may feel alone as a result, which may deter them from achieving their sports dreams. Furthermore, damaging preconceptions and the notion that women are less capable or deserving of success in athletics can be reinforced by the normalizing of unfavorable treatment in sports culture (Gervis & Dunn, 2004).

One notable aspect of the Indian sports culture is the high regard in which coaches are held. Coaches are uniformly worshipped, and every action, positive or negative, received from the coach is considered a blessing. However, this would seem to underly an occur of abuse that has only recently emerged. The Indian women's field hockey coach, Sjoerd Marijne, mentioned in an article in the *Times of India* that the high amount of respect given to coaches in India has led to a situation where coaches are never questioned, and athletes always answer by saying, "Yes sir" (Veerappa, 2019). The participants in the present study expressed similar experiences when they mentioned that the coach had a "hold" on them but that with proper boundaries and strategies, such experiences could be minimized. It can, therefore, be suggested that coaches should receive training through workshops and seminars that help educate them with regard to the best practices for coaching female athletes. This is important in order to reduce the neglect and lack of attention that female athletes are reporting, and this could be facilitated through the establishment and implementation of policies against gender discrimination in athletic associations. In India, it is important to ensure that female athletes are given the same opportunity, funding, and treatment as men, that the training and playing environments are safe, and that coaches and staff should establish a welcoming and safe atmosphere for women.

The second theme that emerged within the study was the cost of travel and related safety. Four of the six participants experienced feelings of being unsafe while traveling on tour. Experiences of solo travel and constant feelings of anxiety were reported by the participants. Females, particularly those traveling alone or in new environments, may be more vulnerable to gender-based violence, such as harassment,

assault, or exploitation. Participants from the current study preferred 'buying safety' during travel by spending extra money on daytime flights and better hotels.

Implementing travel safety measures can assist in preventing such events and keep female travelers safe (Fisher & Cullen, 2010). A study by Singh and Gupta (2018) on travel in India revealed safety challenges such as a lack of suitable infrastructure, poor security measures, and fears about harassment or violence. Needless to say, all of these factors can have a negative influence on female athletes' sense of safety. Pascoe et al. (2022) reported that young female athletes not only faced sexism in sports but experienced unsafe and discomfort whilst traveling, which served to underline the importance of addressing gender-specific safety issues in sporting environments. Similarly, findings from the current study pointed out several experiences of unsafe travel within the country and internationally.

Studies suggest that Asian women face increased risks due to their gender identity being viewed differently (Yang et al., 2017). According to Zhang and Hitchcock (2017), societal stigmatization has a major impact on women's travel experiences, with unwelcomed attention from men making many women afraid to travel alone. Studies also revealed that solo female travelers experienced psychological stress, such as worry, fear, or discomfort (Fisher & Cullen, 2010). Women may experience anything from mild curiosity to forceful approaches, which leaves them feeling exposed and vulnerable. The freedom to travel may be limited by the persistent feeling of being observed. Furthermore, participants in the current study suggested that they are often bound to particular roles and behaviors, thus making traveling alone seem an unorthodox or unsuitable act. Women who choose to travel alone may encounter

comments or criticism over their decisions, which might worsen their experience and reinforce cultural stereotypes. The participants in the current study shared similar emotions of vulnerability while traveling and indicated that they would like to see an initiative that would make travel easier for female athletes.

Willis (2023) has suggested that a sport like tennis is considered a sport for the rich, and in India, where the population is high and tennis space is limited, tennis is not a sport everyone can afford. For many female athletes, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, the financial burden of travel is a major problem (Supekar, 2023). Travel expenses, which include not only travel but food and accommodation, can be costly, requiring athletes to make compromises between affordability and safety. This was one of the significant findings in the current study; that is, there seems to be a relationship between travel safety and financial limitations.

The literature frequently highlights the financial difficulties that athletes encounter, but it seldom draws the connection between these challenges and the broader implications for athlete safety and well-being. This study highlights that the lack of funding limits access to necessary resources and training opportunities and exacerbates fears and safety issues during travel. This is especially troubling in India because women are perceived as objects of the “male gaze” rather than as equals. This, in turn, is associated with high rates of crime towards women coupled with inadequate safety regulations when compared with Western countries (Mangoli & Tarase, 2009). The participants in the study mentioned how the pressure of planning safe trips was high and that some had tried traveling with coaches, which in turn increased the cost of travel and occasionally exasperated the coach/athlete relationship.

In addition, participants from the current study mentioned situations where travel coaches were unaware of various customs in different countries, which led to uncomfortable situations. Two participants mentioned intrusive sexual glances while traveling, and one told of a "sexual innuendo" between an athlete and a coach. Whilst none of the participants mentioned a direct sexual encounter with a coach, one participant referred to sexual encounters that another athlete may have had. The female athlete puts her trust in her coach when traveling as she is alone and has no family with her. This trust creates an expectation that the athlete needs a safe and supportive environment where she can focus on performance alone. It is essential to provide cultural understanding and training to travel coaches to avoid uncomfortable or dangerous situations when traveling. The current study reports that female athletes frequently visit numerous locations with different customs and social norms, thus to prevent cultural miscommunication or inappropriate conduct towards female athletes, travel coaches must be aware of these differences and must be able to provide a safe environment for the athlete. Currently, there is little to no research on experiences encountered by female athletes whilst traveling in India, and correspondingly, there is a lack of guidelines and protocols that govern, regulate, and promote travel safety for female athletes. The findings revealed in this study highlight the need to develop emergency support networks for female athletes and include such things as, but not limited to, phone lines, contact points, and rapid response teams. Such measures can help provide female athletes with peace of mind, knowing that assistance is close at hand when needed.

Other issues mentioned by participants involved the financial strain of travel and how no help is being offered by organizations to ease the expense of travel. The government sporting authorities' funds approved certain foreign competitions where, until 2023, athletes were given 150 USD per day with which they were expected to eat, sleep, travel, and compete (Supekar, 2023). The payment has now increased to 250 USD; however, the probability of getting the funding and still managing the budget is challenging (Supekar, 2023). Participants in the current study mentioned various financial struggles, with below-average to no help from tennis authorities. Some even considered quitting the sport as the expenses were too much. Furthermore, female athletes travel at various times of the day, and sports outfits can be challenging, resulting in the need for extra steps and money to be spent on safety.

The findings that have been revealed in the study can serve as a catalyst for governmental agencies and athletic associations to establish and implement regulations that guarantee female athletes' safe, secure, and comfortable travel. This could involve suitable financial allowances that would permit female athletes to invest in safer accommodation and travel options, in other words, to "buy" a sense of security and thus alleviate some of the resulting fear. Furthermore, the results of this study may serve to motivate sports organizations to spend resources more efficiently on improving athlete safety by recognizing and catering to the unique travel requirements of female athletes.

The third theme that emerged was emotional burnout. Experiencing mistreatment during coaching sessions and while traveling on tour led to multiple emotions that the participants shared. Research findings have suggested that various types of maltreatment may affect performance, increase the desire to cheat, and lead to athletes quitting.

Furthermore, there is the potential for the development of psychosomatic problems, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorders, substance misuse, self-harm, and suicide (Willson, Kerr, Battaglia, et al., 2022). In addition, Lemyre, Stray-Gundersen et al. (2007) reported that athletes with lower levels of self-esteem were more likely to experience burnout, emphasizing the significance of intrinsic motivation in preventing emotional tiredness.

All participants mentioned how their self-esteem had been eroded through mistreatment from coaches and from lack of positive exposure. Significant cultural and gender-based demands have been placed on female athletes in India, and this can lead to emotional burnout. The findings of this study may encourage sports organizations to prioritize players' mental health first and foremost by giving them access to mental health support programs including emotional resilience training, stress management classes, and counseling. Organizations may assist in minimizing emotional exhaustion and enhance overall well-being by making sure athletes have access to these programs.

Some participants indicated that they felt helpless, with no one to turn to if they wanted to discuss their mental health issues. Mental health challenges are frequently stigmatized in Indian society (Mathur Gaiha et al., 2014). There is a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding mental health, which leads to unfavorable attitudes and judgments toward persons who freely disclose their challenges (Mathur Gaiha et al., 2014). Athletes, who are frequently viewed as mentally and physically strong, might fear being considered weak or inadequate. According to the National School of Journalism, mental health issues continue to be condemned in Indian society generally, and unfortunately, athletes are not immune to this" (Nivetha, 2023). Out of all the

participants from the current study, only one spoke openly about participating in therapy.

Athletes often fear admitting to working with a mental health professional as they believe it may have a negative impact on their career (Castaldelli-Maia et al., 2019). Concerns also include sponsorships, being rejected for teams, or being neglected by coaches and officials who question their ability to perform. There is concern that coaches, colleagues, and even family members may misinterpret or reject their mental health issues (Nivetha, 2023). The fear of being criticized or misunderstood often deters athletes from sharing their problems. When discussing the challenges faced by female athletes, sports psychologist Ms. Keerthana stated in an interview, "There is a belief that sports psychology is for ill-athletes and not for developmental athletes. This is not true. Right awareness is essential to address the issue" (Nivetha, 2023). She further stated that, like physiotherapists, dieticians, and other medical professionals, it must be mandatory that sports psychologists accompany athletes. The current study understands the need for sports psychologists and would encourage government organizations to create such a supporting environment for athletes.

Research has revealed how athletes may be dissatisfied if coaches exhibit dominating or overly critical behavior that impairs confidence, self-determination, and the fun of sports (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). The same can be said about the current study, as participants changed academies several times due to such reasons. Similarly, athletes who do not receive appropriate feedback and interaction from coaches may also be unsatisfied (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). The findings from the current study also recognized a lack of both feedback and two-way communication. It can, therefore, be

concluded that in certain situations, female athletes can encounter significant barriers such as low self-esteem, dissatisfaction, and frustration, which can have an impact not only on their performance but also on their mental health. This is certainly the case in India, where female athletes are more prone to burnout due to cultural, societal, and gender-based expectations. Indeed, the "win at all costs" mentality is something that the Indian sports culture is proud of (Mandapaka, 2020). The development of technical skills and physical training are the primary focus areas of emphasis, frequently taking precedence over the athletes' mental health (Mandapaka, 2020). Participants in the present study were concerned about the lack of mental health services for athletes, and one hopes that the findings of this study may encourage Indian sports organizations to provide coaches and athletes with mental health services, such as counseling, stress management sessions, and emotional resilience training.

The findings from the study suggest that receiving negative comments can negatively impact an athlete's mental health and impair their performance. The distinct challenges faced by top Indian female athletes, however, indicate that the preconceptions and gender-based norms they encounter amplify these effects even more. There is also the extra pressure to constantly prove oneself in a setting where males predominate. This study also highlights the complex decision-making process in which elite female athletes engage. The constant competition against male peers or comparison with older female players played on the minds of the participants from the current study which, in turn, added to the pressure of performance. Research frequently addresses the value of mental resilience and coping mechanisms, but it rarely explores the decisions these athletes must make concerning their performance and safety (Purcell et al., 2022;

Berntsen et al., 2019). The findings of the current study indicate that these athletes must take and manage major risks in order to succeed in their sports. These dangers include experiencing discrimination in society, experiencing unsafe travel, and receiving unsatisfactory coaching support. Despite these limitations, there is still a great deal of pressure on female athletes to succeed, and the issue becomes especially challenging because of coaches' and institutions' lack of support. This study contributes to the literature by shedding light on how these hidden constraints impact the athletes' performance and mental health.

The final theme was preferred characteristics, which referred to the skills and qualities the athletes were looking for from their coaches. Specifically, this theme includes trust, communication, commitment, and positive coaching styles, majorly focusing on how the athlete-coach bond can be strengthened.

The relationship between athletes and their coaches is critical in sports since it influences athletes' growth, performance, and overall experience. Based on the participant's responses, trust was a common expectation, which supports a previous finding of Zhang and Chelladurai (2013) who reported that trust in the coach influences commitment and willingness to cooperate, leading to enhanced performance. A successful coach-athlete relationship is built on trust (Zhang & Chelladurai, 2013). A female athlete who has confidence in her coach is more likely to follow training regimens, communicate openly about any issues she may have, and respond well to constructive criticism. In the current study, those participants who were still competing reported feeling comfortable around their coaches and being able to discuss a variety of topics. Trust creates a secure atmosphere where athletes feel appreciated and

understood, allowing them to give their full attention to their performance. According to research, trust between female athletes and their coaches relates to increased satisfaction, communication, and collaboration, which leads to better athletic results (Davis et al., 2018). This was a feature of the current study as a number of the participants had changed their coaches' multiple times, owing to general dissatisfaction with them, but reported being happy with their current coach. Female athletes frequently turn to their coaches for emotional assistance and guidance, particularly during challenging times or failures (Jowett & Nezlek, 2012). Trust in the coach promotes transparency, empathy, and comprehension, allowing players to seek help and deal with pressure more efficiently (Jowett & Nezlek, 2012).

Communication was another key factor participants expected from their coach, along with attention and understanding. Participants mentioned their need for honest communication and an environment where they felt safe to communicate their needs to their coaches and vice versa. Collaborative communication enables coaches and female athletes to establish individual and team objectives and develop strategic methods to accomplish them. For example, goal-setting discussions have been shown to improve athletes' drive, dedication, and performance outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2002). Jowett and Shanmugam found that open, transparent, and honest communication between athletes and their coaches is critical to establishing trust, increasing motivation, and encouraging progress in skills (2016).

Bloom et al. (2014) found that coaches' supporting actions, such as encouragement, positive reinforcement, and emotional support, had a significant impact on players' confidence, resilience, and drive. Furthermore, athletes value coaches who

acknowledge effort, celebrate accomplishments, and offer guidance and encouragement through both successes and losses (Bloom et al., 2014). The findings of the current study indeed suggest that communicating expectations, objectives, and feedback requires effective communication. Clear and compassionate communication may address the needs and concerns of female athletes, increasing their involvement and dedication to the sport. Athletes who are understood and valued are more willing to talk about their challenges freely (Bloom et al., 2014). Trusted coaches and former athletes can assist young athletes in managing their careers (Bloom et al., 2014). Moreover, findings from the current study suggest that mentors offer crucial advice and support, leading athletes through challenging situations and assisting them in making effective choices. Indian sports organizations must establish conditions that would enable female athletes to succeed. Developing effective athletes requires putting techniques into practice that improve trust, communication, and encouragement.

Three of the six participants continue to play tennis and are currently content with their present coach, where expectations have been clearly communicated. However, the other three participants have retired from tennis, indicating that multiple coaches, lack of trust, and unfulfilled expectations are factors.

In order for the occurrence of negative experiences to decrease in India for female athletes, gender-based and cultural expectations need to be redressed. The findings of this study lend support to those who advocate for gender equality in sports and oppose traditional gender norms that impose restrictions on female athletes. Sports organizations may assist female athletes in reaching their full potential, minus the extra pressure of social expectations, by fostering a more welcoming and encouraging

atmosphere. The findings contained within this study can encourage the creation of workshops and training sessions for coaches so that they can develop their interpersonal skills so as to be of more assistance for female athletes. The findings of this study can be used to support the creation of specialized policies and programs that cater to the distinctive needs of female athletes. In addition, findings from the current study can aid coaches and organizations in developing programs where coaches are trained to optimally support the athlete, regardless of gender.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

Currently, there is little to no research on Indian female tennis players, and this study serves to create a spark and to give voice to the described lived experiences of female tennis players in India. The study reveals how female athletes have been feeling overwhelmed with a variety of challenges and have nowhere to turn for support. This fight for recognition has been going on for years but change on the part of the sports authorities has been slow. While there have been improvements in the system, there still have a long way to go. The results and conclusions of this study can have an impact on sports organizations in the country and promote the development of a safer environment for female athletes.

A crucial aspect of the players' experiences, as revealed in the study, is the existence of invisible limitations, which are frequently overlooked by the larger sports community. These limitations include the lack of attention and support from coaches, inadequate resources for training, and cultural norms around gender roles. The athletes in the current study demonstrated incredible perseverance and desire to succeed despite

these obstacles. Through recognition and resolution of these invisible barriers, sports associations may establish a healthier atmosphere for female athletes. This can be aided through more inclusive and supportive regulations from the sports industry.

One of the main findings from the study includes the relationship between safety concerns and financial limitations. The athletes' statements demonstrated how insufficient financing impacts their sense of safety in addition to making it challenging for them to compete and receive high-quality training. The findings can strengthen the tennis literature by providing a detailed description of experiences faced by athletes during training and travel. Implementing obligatory training programs for coaches, authorities, and teams so as to increase awareness of women's safety concerns and ensure proper responses to cases of harassment, abuse, or discrimination is needed. Moreover, past research supports findings from the current study, and this study emphasizes the importance of establishing interventions and guidelines to promote the protection and well-being of female athletes by shedding light on their unique issues and vulnerabilities. Ignoring these concerns jeopardizes not just female athletes' safety and rights but also the integrity and inclusion of the whole sports community.

According to Hindustan Times, one of the reasons why female athletes in India retire or drop out is that "There is no future in sports," a common perception within sports in India is that they demand superior physical stamina and strength, qualities traditionally associated with males (*Retired early – how we are failing our future sports stars*, 2017). For this erroneous reason, females may refrain from participating in sports and may prematurely drop out. In India, gendered misconceptions about femininity and masculinity frequently have a direct influence on how and where females can

participate. For example, teenage girls in India are typically discouraged from participating in athletics and strength or muscle-training programs because it is believed that they would develop characteristics similar to men (Mutatkar, 2018). This study helps support those who provide resources that promote female engagement in sports and develop programs that inform parents about the advantages of sports for young girls.

The culture of sports media in India is such that it fails to recognize the talent and hard work of female athletes, who have won various awards and recognitions from the country. Regardless of their athletic success, they continue to struggle to pay bills, and some are driven to work as trash collectors ("National level boxers turned Garbage Collector & Sweeper – they are Kamal Kumar & Krishna Routh!", 2015). Recognizing the importance of growing female involvement in sports is imperative. Currently, there is progress within the Indian sports culture, but due to various other factors such as politics, money, and favoritism, female sporting talent is being discouraged and ultimately lost. By promoting a culture of dignity, equality, and openness within sports organizations, female athletes will feel respected, encouraged, and empowered to engage completely and safely in sports.

The findings of the study provide descriptive data that can be used to guide future areas of research. The specific experiences of elite Indian female athletes indicate that the negative effects are further amplified by the expectations, treatment, and stereotypes they face. Expanding this research may lead other researchers to develop new hypotheses and formulate theories to broaden the research in the Indian tennis industry. The study emphasizes how essential it is to have more extensive support networks and a better comprehension of the challenges these athlete's encounter. By

addressing these problems, female athletes' mental health and performance may improve, creating a more equal and encouraging sports environment.

Recommendations from this study lend support towards implementing athlete educational programs that are specifically adapted to the Indian sports environment. India must practice safe sport consistently. These programs should promote awareness of abuse, harassment, and exploitation, with a focus on female athletes' rights, accessible support services, athlete-safe training, and cultural awareness. Of course, in developing these programs, one needs to consider the cultural norms and the dynamics of gender in eastern countries to guarantee significance and effectiveness. In addition, open communication, trust, and camaraderie among athletes and staff so as to foster a culture of safety and well-being needs to be encouraged (Mountjoy et al., 2015). Additional research is needed to assess the efficacy and impact of sports policies and programs in India.

Future studies in these areas will help to establish culturally sensitive and inclusive protection measures. The findings from the current study suggest that the coach-athlete relationship may have a variety of negative psychological implications for female athletes. Although women's sports have witnessed some extraordinary performances in the last few years, female athletes still require stronger care and support. There is enormous scope to build better programs for female athlete well-being, retirement, and injury management transitions. Better guidelines with regard to support from elite athletes' parents, guardians, and significant others would also be of value.

Limitations

There are inherent challenges in qualitative research, and this study has several limitations that must be addressed. One limitation was participant self-reporting. This might occur if the participant tries to recollect a specific incident or experience to share with the researcher. The participants may be unable to recollect a specific occurrence or provide details with accuracy. Participants may underreport or overreport specific events or actions, which might lead to data mistakes. Additionally, mental health is still not openly discussed in India due to culture, fear, and inhibition. Furthermore, cultural norms, morals, and social expectations all have the potential to affect athletes' experiences in various manners.

The limitations of purposive sampling should also be considered when reviewing the findings of the study. The data from the study reflect the perspective of specific individuals who volunteered to share their experiences; however, the study does not represent other individuals who chose not to participate in the study, perhaps individuals with traumatic experiences of assault. Another limitation of this study was the small sample size, although in this study, the sample size was sufficient to conduct a descriptive phenomenology investigation and get an in-depth knowledge of women's lived experiences on tour in India. A larger sample size or a different methodological perspective could have revealed a deeper analysis. Furthermore, this study did not focus on athletes with disabilities (a population relatively unknown and under-researched in Indian sports). A larger sample size may have included more variety with regard to results.

This research focused on elite female athletes of the same nationality. Further study is necessary to ensure that the findings apply to different populations. This study solely reflects the athlete's perspective, which the researcher does not reject. Future studies could examine the male coach's perspective while training female athletes in India. Coaches may have unique perspectives and can offer insights on various experiences.

Conclusion

Using descriptive phenomenology, the study highlighted four major themes based on a thorough literature analysis and expert opinions, shedding light on the obstacles that Indian female athletes experience. The findings suggest that these athletes have encountered significant mental, physical, and emotional challenges that limit their ability to participate in sports. Despite the established psychological and physical advantages of participating in sports, cultural expectations in India frequently dictate that women are not suitable to pursue sports. This cultural norm greatly limits their abilities to participate in sports and reach their full potential as athletes.

This study addressed the challenges that elite Indian female tennis players encountered, particularly in light of cultural and societal limits within India's sports system. This study emphasizes the strong effect of cultural norms, an abundance of possibilities, and the critical need for structural changes in India's elite female tennis industry. Female athletes have a distinct set of challenges due to cultural limits based on traditional gender roles and societal expectations. These norms not only determine the amount of support these women receive from their families and communities, but they

also shape cultural views on women in sports. Moreover, this frequently deprives them of the support and encouragement they need to flourish in sports, adding to a shortage of options for growth and progress within their careers. The shortage of high-quality coaching, as well as limited access to sporting resources and facilities, have had a significant influence on these athletes' growth and performance. The lack of female coaches and mentors exacerbates the issue, leaving many athletes without the advice and support they require to navigate the complexities of sports. Furthermore, cultural expectations and societal conventions in India, which frequently impose additional obligations on female athletes, make their journey challenging.

The findings highlight the need to overcome these hurdles to establish a more supportive environment for female tennis players. Improving access to coaching and training options and cultivating a culture that encourages and supports female involvement in sports is critical. This study not only provides insights on these athletes' lived experiences, but it also advocates for institutional changes to ensure that future generations of Indian female tennis players may achieve their full potential without being hampered by cultural and resource restrictions.

Implications from the study include understanding the barriers encountered by female athletes which sports associations have allowed to develop; and secondly, to encourage sport associations to create and execute more inclusive and supportive policies for women. These solutions might include expanding women's sports programs, enhancing access to training facilities, and fostering a more supportive and encouraging atmosphere for female athletes.

Finally, the ultimate goal is to transform the cultural narrative so that women feel confident to pick up a bat or racquet and represent India across a range of different sporting stages. Addressing social challenges and increasing access to resources can create a more equitable and encouraging environment for female tennis players in India. Change must come from sports organizations, educational institutions, and sports authorities of India. A cultural shift that values and promotes female involvement in sports, together with increasing investment in resources and infrastructure, has the potential to bring in a new era for Indian tennis. This study is a call to action to promote the development of women-oriented sports endeavours and strive toward an inclusive sporting environment in which female athletes may thrive and contribute to the nation's athletic success.

References

- Acosta, R. V., & Carpenter, L. J. (2008). Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal, national study thirty-one-year update: 1977-2008.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.13.1.62>
- Agassi, A. (2018). *Open: An autobiography*. HarperCollins.
- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 5(2), 9-19. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9>
- Allen, S. V., & Hopkins, W. G. (2015). Age of peak competitive performance of elite athletes: A systematic review *Sports Medicine*, 45(10)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-015-0354-3>
- Alpass, F., & Neville, S. (2003). Loneliness, health and depression in older males. *Aging & Mental Health*, 7(3), 212-216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360786031000101193>
- Alvarez, A. (2019, May 9). *I thought the main issue in women's sports was equal pay. I was wrong*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/may/09/i-thought-the-main-issue-in-womens-sports-was-equal-pay-i-was-wrong>
- American Psychological Association. (n.d.). American Psychological Association.
<https://dictionary.apa.org/sexual-abuse>

- American Psychological Association. (n.d.). APA dictionary of psychology. American Psychological Association.
- American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Sexual assault and harassment. American Psychological Association.
- Amorose, A. J., & Horn, T. S. (2000). Intrinsic motivation: Relationships with collegiate athletes' gender scholarship status, and perceptions of their coaches' behavior. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 22(1), 3-84.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.22.1.63>
- Arendt, J., & Marks, V. (1982). Physiological changes underlying jet lag. *British Medical Journal*, 284(6310):144–146. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.284.6310.144>
- Arora, T. (2023, June 3). *Battling the Indian sports industry: The cries for justice by women*. SabrangIndia. <https://sabrangindia.in/article/battling-indian-sports-industry-cries-justice-women/>
- Arnold, R., Fletcher, D., & Daniels, K. (2016). Organisational stressors, coping, and outcomes in competitive sport. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 35(7), 694703.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2016.1184299>
- Ashworth, P. (1999). “Bracketing” in phenomenology: Renouncing assumptions in hearing about student cheating. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(6), 707–721. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095183999235845>
- Associated Press. (2022). *Elina Svitolina calls for stronger mental health protection for junior tennis players*. ESPN.

https://www.espn.com/tennis/story/_/id/33901685/elina-svitolina-calls-stronger-mental-health-protection-junior-players

Australian Sports Commission. (1998a). Harassment free sport: guidelines for sport administrators (ACT:ASC).

Australian Sports Commission. (1998b). Harassment free sport: guidelines for sport organisations (ACT:ASC).

Australian Sports Commission. (1998c). Harassment free sport: guidelines for athletes (ACT:ASC).

Australian Sports Commission. (1998d). Harassment free sport: guidelines for coaches (ACT:ASC)

Banerjee, K. (2024, April 29). *10 shocking reasons why women don't report sexual violence in India*. Youth Ki Awaaz.

<https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2014/11/violence-against-women-in-india-2/>

Baron, D., Reardon, C., & Baron, S. (2013). *Clinical sports psychiatry: An international perspective*. Wiley

Basit, T. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*, 45(2), 143–154.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0013188032000133548>

BBC. (2020). *New BBC research shows less than 30% of Indian women play any sports - media centre*. BBC News.

<https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/latestnews/2020/indian-women-play-any-sports>

Bero, T. (2021, June 18). *Mental health struggles are ubiquitous. We are all Naomi Osaka now*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/18/mental-health-struggles-naomi-osaka>

Berntsen, H., Ivarsson, A., & Kristiansen, E. (2019). Need-supportiveness and athlete well-being: Coaches' competence-support at risk in the elite sport context throughout the season. *Current Issues in Sport Science (CISS)*, 4, 010. https://doi.org/10.15203/CISS_2019.010

Bevan, M. T. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research* 24(1), 136–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732313519710>

Bjørnseth, I., & Szabo, A. (2018). Sexual violence against children in sports and exercise: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 27(4), 365–385. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1477222>

Blackett, A. D., Evans, A. B., & Piggott, D. (2018). “They have to toe the line”: a Foucauldian analysis of the socialisation of former elite athletes into academy coaching roles. *Sports Coaching Review*, 8(1), 83–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21640629.2018.1436502>

Bloom, G. A., Falcão, W. R., & Caron, J. G. (2014). Coaching high performance athletes: Implications for coach training. In Gomes, A.R., Resende, R., &

- Albuquerque, A. (Eds.) *Positive human functioning from a multidimensional perspective: Promoting high performance* (Vol. 3, pp. 107–132). Nova Science.
- Boone, E. M., & Leadbeater, B. J. (2006). Game On: Diminishing Risks for Depressive Symptoms in Early Adolescence Through Positive Involvement in Team Sports. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *16*(1), 79–90.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2006.00122>
- Brackenridge, C. (1987). Ethical problems in women's sport, *Coaching Focus*, *6*, 5-7.
- Brackenridge, C. (1997). "He owned me basically": Women's experience of sexual abuse in sport, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *32*(2), 115-130.
- Brackenridge, C. (1998). Healthy sport for healthy girls? The role of parents in preventing sexual abuse in sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, *3*(1), 59-78.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1357332980030104>
- Brackenridge, C. H. (1998, June). Women and sport: social issues - ensuring a safe environment for the female athlete. *XXVI FIMS World Congress of Sports Medicine*. Orlando, FL.
- Brackenridge, C. (2001). *Spoilsports: Understanding and preventing sexual exploitation in sport*. Routledge.
- Brackenridge, C., Bringer, J., & Bishopp, D. (2005). Managing cases of abuse in sport. *Child Abuse Review*, *14*(4), 259-274. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.900>

- Brackenridge, C., & Fasting, K. (2005). The grooming process in sport: Case studies of sexual harassment and abuse. *Auto-Biography, 13*(1), 33-52.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/0967550705ab016oa>
- Brackenridge, C. H., Bishopp, D., Moussalli, S., & Tapp, J. (2008). The characteristics of sexual abuse in sport: A multidimensional scaling analysis of events described in media reports. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 6*(4), 385–406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2008.9671881>
- Bradbury-Jones, C., Taylor, J., Kroll, T., & Duncan, F. (2014). Domestic abuse awareness and recognition among primary healthcare professionals and abused women: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 23*(21–22).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.12534>
- Brannan, M., Petrie, T., Greenleaf, C., Reel, J., & Carter, J. (2009). The relationship between body dissatisfaction and bulimic symptoms in female collegiate athletes. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, 3*(1), 103-126.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.3.2.103>
- Brawner, C. E., Camacho, M. M., Lord, S. M., Long, R. A., & Ohland, M. W. (2012). Women in industrial engineering: Stereotypes, persistence, and perspectives. *Journal of Engineering Education, 101*(2), 288-318.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2012.tb00051.x>
- Brisola-Santos, M. B., Gallinaro, J. G. D. M. E., Gil, F., Sampaio-Junior, B., Marin, M. C. D., de Andrade, A. G., ... & Castaldelli-Maia, J. M. (2016). Prevalence and

correlates of cannabis use among athletes—A systematic review. *The American journal on addictions*, 25(7), 518-528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajad.12425>

Budgett, R. (1998). Fatigue and underperformance in athletes: The overtraining syndrome. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 32(2), 107-110. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.32.2.107>

Bullock, N., Martin, D. T., Ross, A., Rosemond, D., & Marino, F. E. (2007). Effect of long haul travel on maximal sprint performance and diurnal variations in elite skeleton athletes. *British journal of sports medicine*, 41(9), 569–573. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.2006.033233>

Burton, L. J. (2015). Underrepresentation of women in sport leadership: A review of research. *Sport Management Review*, 18(2), 155–165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2014.02.004>

Burton- Nelson, M. (1994). The stronger women get, the more men love football: Sexism and the American Culture of Sports. *The Women's Press*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0031-9406\(05\)66316-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0031-9406(05)66316-x)

Burton-Nelson, M. (1998). *Embracing victory: Life lessons in competition and compassion*. Morrow.

Butler, B. N., & Dzikus, L. (2015). Sport labour migration: Understanding leisure activities of American professional basketball players abroad. *Leisure Studies*, 34(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2014.964292>

- CAAWS (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport). (1994). *Harassment in sport: A guide to policies, procedures and resources* (Ottawa, CAAW+S)
- Castaldelli-Maia, J. M., Gallinaro, J. G. d M E., Falcão, R. S., Gouttebauge, V., Hitchcock, M. E., Hainline, B., Reardon, C. L., & Stull, T. (2019). Mental health symptoms and disorders in elite athletes: A systematic review on cultural influencers and barriers to athletes seeking treatment. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 5(1), 46.
- Chalabaev, A., Sarrazin, P., Fontayne, P., Boiché, J., & Clément-Guillot, C. (2013). The influence of sex stereotypes and gender roles on participation and performance in sport and exercise: Review and future directions. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 14(2), 136-144. <https://10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.10.005>
- Chakrabarti, S. (2020). *New BBC research shows less than 30% of Indian women play any sports - media centre*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/latestnews/2020/indian-women-play-any-sports>
- Chen, Y., Buggy, C., & Kelly, S. (2019). *Winning at all costs: A review of risk-taking behaviour and sporting injury from an occupational safety and Health Perspective*. Sports medicine - open. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31049736/>
- Choi, H., Jeong, Y., & Kim, S. K. (2020). The relationship between coaching behavior and athlete burnout: Mediating effects of communication and the coach-athlete

relationship. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(22), 8618. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17228618>

Choi, J., Lee, M., Lee, J. K., Kang, D., & Choi, J. Y. (2017). Correlates associated with participation in physical activity among adults: a systematic review of reviews and update. *BioMedicine Central Public Health*, 17(356).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4255-2>

Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In Vale R. S., & King M. (Eds.) *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for Psychology* (pp. 48-71). *Oxford University Press*.

Cooky, C., & Messner, M., & Hextrum, R. (2013). Women play sport, but not on TV: A longitudinal study of televised news media. *Communication & Sport*, 1(3). 203-230. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479513476947>

Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153>

Côté, J., Salmela, J. H., Trudel, P., Baria, A., & Russell, S. J. (1995). The coaching model: A grounded assessment of expert gymnastic coaches' knowledge. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 17, 1–17.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.17.1.1>

- Coyne, I. T. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; Merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26(3), 623–630. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.t01-25-00999.x>
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. SAGE Publications
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 4th Edition, SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Crossett, T. (1986). Male coach/female athlete relationships, paper presented at the First International Conference for Sport Sciences, Sole, Norway, 15-16th Nov.
- Crouch, J. L., Milner, J. S., & Caliso, J. A. (1995). Childhood physical abuse, perceived social support, and socioemotional status in adult women. *Violence and Victims*, 10(4), 273–283.
- Cutmore, C. (2014). *Join golf's jet set with a hop across the sea to Madeira's undiscovered little brother*. The Daily Mail. <https://doi.org/10.1177/101269021559765>
- Dale, G. A. (2000). Distractions and coping techniques of elite decathletes during their most memorable performances. *The Sport Psychologist*, 14, 17–41.

- Dane, F. C. (1990). *Research methods*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- David, S., & Larson, M. (2018). Athletes' perception of athletic trainer empathy: How important is it? *Journal of Sport Rehabilitation, 27*, 8–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsr.2016-0085>
- Davis, L., Appleby, R., Davis, P., Wetherell, M., & Gustafsson, H. (2018). The role of coach-athlete relationship quality in team sport athletes' psychophysiological exhaustion: Implications for physical and cognitive performance. *Journal of Sports Sciences, 36*(17), 1985–1992.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2018.1429176>
- D’Cunha, Z. (2022, July 17). *Why is it hard for young Indian women footballers to complain about sexual misconduct?* ESPN.
https://www.espn.co.uk/football/story/_/id/37630150/aiff-alex-ambrose-india-football-u17-women-coach-hard-complain-sexual-misconduct
- de Haan, D., & Knoppers, A. (2020). Gendered discourses in coaching high-performance sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 55*(6), 631–646. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690219829692>
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative research* (pp. 1-32). Sage Publication.
- Dhanaraj, S., & Mahambare, V. (2019). Family structure, education and women’s employment in rural India. *World Development, 115*, 17–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.11.004>

- Di Tommaso, E., & Spinner, B. (1997). Social and emotional loneliness: A re-examination of Weiss' typology of loneliness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 22(3), 411–421. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0191-8869\(96\)00204-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0191-8869(96)00204-8)
- Douglas, K., & Carless, D. (2009). Abandoning the performance narrative: Two women's stories of transition from professional sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 21(2), 213–230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200902795109>
- Du Preez, E. J., Graham, K. S., Gan, T. Y., Moses, B., Ball, C., & Kuah, D. E. (2017). Depression, anxiety, and alcohol use in elite rugby league players over a competitive season. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine: Official Journal of the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine*, 27(6), 530-535. <https://doi.org/10.1097/jsm.0000000000000411>
- Eastman, C. I., & Burgess, H. J. (2009). How to travel the world without jet lag. *Sleep Medicine Clinics*, 4(2), 241–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsmc.2009.02.006>
- Fasting, K. (2005). *Research on sexual harassment and abuse in sport* - idrottsforum.org. Institutt for Samfunnsfag, Norges idrettshøgskole. <http://idrottsforum.org/articles/fastings/fastings050405.pdf> https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-13098-5_12
- Fasting, K., & Brackenridge, C. (2009). Coaches, sexual harassment and education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 14(1), 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573320802614950>

- Fasting, K., Brackenridge, C., & Sundgot-Borgen, J. (2003). Experiences of sexual harassment and abuse among Norwegian elite female athletes and nonathletes. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 74(1), 84–97.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2003.10609067>
- Fasting, K., Brackenridge, C., & Walseth, K. (2007). Women athletes' personal responses to sexual harassment in sport. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 19(4), 419-433. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200701599165>
- Fasting, K., Chroni, S., Hervik, S. E., & Knorre, N. (2011). Sexual harassment in sport towards females in three European countries. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 46(1), 76-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690210376295>
- Filosi, M. (2016). *The Lonely Life of the Tour*. Tennismash.
<https://tennismash.com/2016/03/10/the-lonely-life-on-tour/>
- Fisher, B. S., & Cullen, F. T. (2010). Measuring the sexual victimization of women: Evolution, current controversies, and future research. *Criminal Justice Research: An International Journal*, 1(1), 35-57.
- Fletcher, S. (1987). The making and breaking of a female tradition: Women's physical education in England, 1880-1980. In J.A. Mangan and Roberta J. Park (Eds), *From Sex to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-industrial Eras*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 145-1 60.
- Fletcher, D., & Arnold, R. (2017). Stress in sport: The role of the organizational environment. In C. R. D. Wagstaff (Ed.), *The Organizational Psychology of*

Sport: Key Issues and Practical Applications (pp. 83–100). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Foskett, R. L., & Longstaff, F. (2018). The mental health of elite athletes in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 21(8), 765–770.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2017.11.016>

Fowler, P., Duffield, R., & Vaile, J. (2014). Effects of domestic air travel on technical and tactical performance and recovery in soccer. *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, 9(3), 378–386.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/IJSPP.2013-0484>

FP Staff (Ed.). (2015, January). <https://www.firstpost.com/india/52-of-young-india-thinks-a-womans-place-is-in-the-kitchen-shows-survey-2059039.html>. Firstpost.
<https://www.firstpost.com/india/52-of-young-india-thinks-a-womans-place-is-in-the-kitchen-shows-survey-2059039.html>

Fritsch, K. (2015). Gradations of debility and capacity: Biocapitalism and the Neoliberalization of disability relations. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 4(2), 12–48. <https://doi.org/10.15353/cjds.v4i2.208>

Fry, J., & Bloyce, D. (2017). ‘Life in the travelling circus’: A Study of loneliness, work stress, and money issues in touring professional golf. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 34(2), 148-159. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2017-0002>

Futterman, M. (2022). *Her tennis coach abused her. Could the sport have prevented it?* The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/sports/tennis/tennis-predatory-coaches.html>

Gervis, M., & Dunn, N. (2004). The emotional abuse of elite child athletes by their coaches. *Child Abuse Review, 13*(3), 215-223. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.843>

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 28*(2), 255–260. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916297x00103>

Giorgi, A. (2008). Concerning a serious misunderstanding of the essence of the phenomenological method in psychology. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 39* (1), 33-58. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916208x311610>

Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Duquesne University Press.

Giorgi, A. (2012). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 43*(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156916212X632934>

Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glick, I. D., & Horsfall, J. L. (2009). Psychiatric conditions in sports: Diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life. *The Physician and Sports Medicine, 37*(3), 29–34. <https://doi.org/10.3810/psm.2009.10.1726>

- Glick, I. D., Kamm, R., & Morse, E. (2009). The evolution of sport psychiatry, Circa. *Sports Medicine*, 39(8), 607–613. <https://doi.org/10.2165/00007256-200939080-00001>
- Gorczynski, P. F., Coyle, M., & Gibson, K. (2017). Depressive symptoms in high-performance athletes and non-athletes: a comparative meta-analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51(18), 1348–1354. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2016-096455>
- Gould, D., Collins, K., Lauer, L., & Chung, Y. (2007). Coaching life skills through football: A study of award winning highschool coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 19(1), 16–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200601113786>
- Gould, D., Horn, T., & Spreeman, J. (1983). Sources of stress in junior elite wrestlers. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 5(2), 159-171. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsp.5.2.159>
- Graue, M. E., & Walsh, D. J. (1998). *Studying children in context: Theories, methods, and ethics*. Sage.
- Grove, J. R., Lavalley, D., & Gordon, S. (1997). Coping with retirement from sport: The influence of athletic identity. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 9(2), 191-203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413209708406481>
- Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K. M., & Christensen, H. (2012). Barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking for young elite athletes: A qualitative study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 12, 157. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-12-157>

- Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K. M., Mackinnon, A., Batterham, P. J., & Stanimirovic, R. (2015). The mental health of Australian elite athletes. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, 18*(3), 255–261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2014.04.006>
- Gustafsson, H., Kenttä, G., Hassmén, P., & Lundqvist, C. (2007). Prevalence of burnout in adolescent athletes. *The Sport Psychologist, 21*(1), 21-37. <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.21.1.21>
- Haase, A. (2009). Physique anxiety and disordered eating correlates in female athletes: Differences in team and individual sports. *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, 3*(3), 218-231. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.3.3.218>
- Hall, S. (2000). Encoding/Decoding. In Marris P., Thornham S. (Eds.), *Media studies* reader (pp. 51–61). New York: New York University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367809195-6>
- Haller, D. M., Sanci, L. A., Sawyer, S. M., & Patton, G. C. (2009). The identification of young people's emotional distress: A study in primary care. *The British Journal of General Practice, 59*(560), e61–e70. <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp09X419510>
- Halson, S. L. (2014). Monitoring training load to understand fatigue in athletes. *Sports Medicine, 44*(Suppl 2), 139-147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-014-0253-z>
- Hamer, M., Stamatakis, E., & Steptoe, A. (2009). Dose-response relationship between physical activity and mental health: The Scottish health survey. *British Journal of Sports Medicine, 43*(14), 1111–1114. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.2008.046243>

- Hammond, T., Gialloreto, C., Kubas, H., & Davis, H., 4th (2013). The prevalence of failure-based depression among elite athletes. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine: Official Journal of the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine*, 23(4), 273–277. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JSM.0b013e318287b870>
- Hanton, S., Fletcher, D., & Coughlan, G. (2005). Stress in elite sport performers: A comparative study of competitive and organizational stressors. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 23(10), 1129–1141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410500131480>
- Hardin, M., & Greer, J. D. (2009). The influence of gender-role socialization, media use and sports participation on perceptions of gender-appropriate sports. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 32(2), 207-226.
- Hargreaves, J. (1987). Victorian Familism and the Formative Years of Female Sport. In J.A. Mangan and Roberta J. Park (Eds), *From Fair Sex to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-industrial Eras*. London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 130-144.
- Harris, B., & Ostrow, A. (2008). Coach and athlete burnout: The role of coaches' decision-making style. In: Bakere SR, ed. *Hot topics in sports and athletics*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 143-157.
- Hartill, M. (2009). The sexual abuse of boys in organized male sports. *Men and Masculinities*, 12(2), 225-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X07313361>
- Harwell, D. (2021, November 25). *Why hardly anyone sponsored the most-watched soccer match in U.S. history*. The Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/07/06/the-sad-gender-economics-of-the-womens-world-cup/>

Hausenblas, H. A., & Mack, D. (1999). Social physique anxiety and eating disorder correlates among female athletic and nonathletic populations. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 22*(4), 502- 513.

Hays, D. G., & Singh, A. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in clinical and education settings*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hodge, K., Lonsdale, C., & Ng, J. Y. (2008). Burnout in elite rugby: Relationships with basic psychological needs fulfillment. *Journal of Sports Sciences, 26*(8), 835-844. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410701784525>

Hogshead-Makar, N., & Zimbalist, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Equal play: Title IX and social change*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Holt, N., & Dunn, J. (2004). Toward a grounded theory of the psychosocial competencies and environmental conditions associated with soccer success. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 16*(3), 199-291. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200490437949>.

Hughes, L., & Leavey, G. (2012). Setting the bar: Athletes and vulnerability to mental illness. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 200*(2), 95–96. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.111.095976>

- Imtiaz, M. (2020). *5 Indian sportswomen who voiced their thoughts on equal pay*. Indian Sports Home - Latest News, Results, Olympics Stories.
<https://thebridge.in/featured/5-indian-sportswomen-voiced-thoughts-equal-pay/>
- Imtiaz, M. (2021). *1952 was a landmark year for women's sports in India*. Indian Sports Home - Latest News, Results, Olympics Stories.
<https://thebridge.in/featured/1952-was-landmark-year-womens-sports-india/>
- International Olympic Committee. (1997). *Olympic Charter*. Lausanne: IOC Sport for All Commission.
- IOA Safe Sport Policy - Indian Olympic Association*. IOA Safe Sport Policy. (n.d.).
[https://olympic.ind.in/public/pdf/IOA Safe Sport Policy.pdf](https://olympic.ind.in/public/pdf/IOA%20Safe%20Sport%20Policy.pdf)
- Jacobs, J. C. (2014). Programme-level determinants of women's international football performance. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *14*(5), 521–537.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.945189>
- Janse van Rensburg, D. C., Jansen van Rensburg, A., Fowler, P. M., Bender, A. M., Stevens, D., Sullivan, K. O., Fullagar, H. H. K., Alonso, J. M., Biggins, M., Claassen-Smithers, A., Collins, R., Dohi, M., Driller, M. W., Dunican, I. C., Gupta, L., Halson, S. L., Lastella, M., Miles, K. H., Nedelec, M., Page, T., ... Botha, T. (2021). Managing travel fatigue and jet lag in athletes: A review and consensus statement. *Sports Medicine (Auckland, N.Z.)*, *51*(10), 2029–2050.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-021-01502-0>

- Jayanthi, N., Pinkham, C., Dugas, L., Patrick, B., & Labella, C. (2013). Sports specialization in young athletes: Evidence-based recommendations. *Sports Health, 5*(3), 251–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1941738112464626>
- Josselson, R., Lieblich, A., & McAdams, D. P. (2003). *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research*, (pp. 259-274). American Psychological Association Press.
- Jowett, S. (2005). On repairing and enhancing the coach–athlete relationship. In S. Jowett & M. Jones (Eds.), *The Psychology of Coaching* (pp. 14–26). Leicester: The British Psychological Society.
- Jowett, S., & Cockerill, I. M. (2003). Olympic medallists' perspective of the athlete–coach relationship. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 4*(4), 313-331. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1469-0292\(02\)00011-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1469-0292(02)00011-0)
- Jowett, S., & Nezelek, J. B. (2012). The coach-athlete relationship: An existential-phenomenological investigation. *International Journal of Sport Psychology, 43*(4), 303-321.
- Jowett, S., & Shanmugam, V. (2016). Relational coaching in sport: Its psychological underpinnings and practical effectiveness. In R. J. Schinke, K. R. McGannon, & B. Smith (Eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Sport Psychology* (pp. 471–484). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Judge, S. (2022, June 28). *Indian sport: Empowering more women in coaching roles is the need of the hour*. Scroll.in. <https://scroll.in/field/1026949/indian-sport-empowering-more-women-in-coaching-roles-is-the-need-of-the-hour>

Kajbafnezhad, H., Ahadi, H., Heidarie, A., Askari, P., & Enayati, M. S. (2011).

Difference between team and individual sports with respect to psychological skills, overall emotional intelligence and athletic success motivation in Shiraz city athletes. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*, 11, 249-254.

Kalia, S. (2022). *An Indian cyclist's sexual abuse complaint shows how power dynamics operate within sports*. The Swaddle. <https://www.theswaddle.com/an-indian-cyclists-sexual-abuse-complaint-against-a-coach-shows-how-power-dynamics-operate-within-sports>

Kalland, R. (2015). *2015 US open: Serena Williams falls short of history, not greatness*. CBSSports. <https://www.cbssports.com/general/news/2015-us-open-serena-williams-falls-short-of-history-not-greatness/>

Kane, M. (2012). Title IX at 40: Examining mysteries, myths, and misinformation surrounding the historic federal law. *President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition Research Digest*, 13(2), 2-9.

Kaskan, E. R., & Ho, I. K. (2016). Microaggressions and female athletes. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 74(7-8), 275-287. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0425-1>

- Kavanagh, E. J. (2014). The dark side of sport: Athlete narratives of maltreatment in high performance environments. In Doctoral dissertation.
- Kavussanu, M., Seal, A. R., & Phillips, D. R. (2006). Observed prosocial and antisocial behaviors in male soccer teams: Age differences across adolescence and the role of motivational variables. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 18*(4), 326–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200600944108>
- Kenow, L., & Williams, J. M. (1999). Coach-athlete compatibility and athlete's perception of coaching behaviors. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 22*(2), 251-260.
- Kerr, G. A., & Stirling, A. E. (2012). Parents' reflections on their child's experiences of emotionally abusive coaching practices. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 24*(2), 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2011.608413>
- Kerr, G., Stirling, A., & MacPherson, E. (2014). A critical examination of child protection initiatives in sport contexts. *Social Sciences, 3*(4), 742-757. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci3040742>
- Khasnis, U., Chapman, P., Toering, T., & Collins, D. (2021). Policy implementation in Indian Olympic sport: exploring the potential for policy transfer. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 13*(4), 623–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2021.1939764>
- Kirby, S., Greaves, L., & Hankivsky, O. (2000). *The dome of silence: Sexual harassment and abuse in sport*. Fernwood.

- Kirby, S. L., Greaves, L., & Hankivsky, O. (2002). Women under the dome of silence: Sexual harassment and abuse of female athletes. *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers De La Femme*, 21(3).
<https://cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/view/6635>
- Koshie, N. (2021, September 8). 'It was not only sexual abuse, it was also verbal and mental abuse'. The Indian Express.
<https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/sport-others/national-level-runner-sexual-mental-abuse-case-chennai-nagarajan-7495326/>
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. Daryaganj, New Delhi: New Age International.
- Kovacs, M. S., Pritchett, R., Wickwire, P. J., Green, J. M., & Bishop, P. (2007). Physical performance changes after unsupervised training during the autumn/spring semester break in competitive tennis players. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 41(11), 705-710. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.2007.035436>
- Krauchek, V. (1999). *In the hands of the coach?: Women's interpretations of athleticism and their relationships with men as coaches*. PRISM Home.
- Krishnan, M. (2022, June 13). *India's female athletes contend with sexual harassment*. Deutsche Welle. <https://www.dw.com/en/indias-female-athletes-contend-with-sexual-harassment-in-sports/a-62110783>

- Kristiansen, E., Murphy, D., & Roberts, G. C. (2012). Organizational Stress and Coping in U.S. Professional Soccer. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 24(2), 207–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2011.614319>
- Kuettel, A., & Larsen, C. (2019). Risk and protective factors for mental health in elite athletes: A scoping review. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 13(1), 231-265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2019.1689574>
- Kumar, P., & Khare, S. (2018). Gender disparity in sports: A sociological study of India. *International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health*, 5(5), 66-69.
- Larkin, M., & Thompson, A. (2012). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In A. Thompson, & D. Harper (Eds.), *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 99-116). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119973249>
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 102–120. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp062oa>
- Lemyre, P. N., Roberts, G. C., & Stray-Gundersen, J. (2007). Motivation, overtraining, and burnout: Can self-determined motivation predict overtraining and burnout in elite athletes? *European Journal of Sport Science*, 7(2), 115–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17461390701302607>

- Lemyre, P. N., Treasure, D. C., & Roberts, G. C. (2007). Influence of variability in motivation and affect on elite athlete burnout susceptibility. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 28*(1), 32–48. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.28.1.32>
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-Year Odyssey. *American Psychologist, 57*(9), 705-717. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705>
- Lokapally, V. (2021, October 24). *India's sportspersons are finally opening up about their mental health*. The Hindu. <https://www.thehindu.com/sport/indias-sportspersons-are-finally-opening-up-about-their-mental-health/article37119799.ece>
- Luanaigh, C. O., & Lawlor, B. A. (2008). Loneliness and the health of older people. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 23*(12), 1213–1221. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gps.2054>
- MacPherson, E., Battaglia, A., Kerr, G., Wensel, S., McGee, S., Milne, A., Principle, F., & Willson, E. (2022). Evaluation of publicly accessible child protection in sport education and reporting initiatives. *Social Sciences, 11*(7), 310. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11070310>
- Mandapaka, R. (2020). *My interview with G Rajaraman, esteemed sports journalist - The sports column: Sports articles, analysis, news and Media*. The Sports Column | Sports Articles, Analysis, News and Media.

<https://www.thesportscol.com/2020/04/my-interview-with-g-rajaraman-esteemed-sports-journalist/>

Mangoli, R. N., & Tarase, G. M. (2009). Crime Against Women in India: A Statistical Review. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 2 (2), 292-302 .

Maniyar, Z. (2023, June 2). *Sports industry of India: A structure build on patriarchy & the silenced cries of women*. CJP. <https://cjp.org.in/sports-industry-of-india-a-structure-build-on-patriarchy-the-silenced-cries-of-women/>

Martin, P., & Barnard, A. (2013). The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39(2), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v39i2.1099>

Mathur Gaiha, S., Ann Sunil, G., Kumar, R., & Menon, S. (2014). Enhancing mental health literacy in India to reduce stigma: The fountainhead to improve help-seeking behaviour. *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 13(3), 146–158. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-06-2013-0043>

Mazer, J. P., Barnes, K., Grevious, A., & Boger, C. (2013). Coach verbal aggression: A case study examining effects on athlete motivation and perceptions of coach credibility. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 6, 203-213. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.6.2.203>

- McCabe, T., Peirce, N., Gorczynski, P., & Heron, N. (2021). Narrative review of mental illness in cricket with recommendations for mental health support. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 7(1), e000910. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2020-000910>
- McDuff, D. (2014). Sports psychiatry: Strategies for life balance and peak performance. *Journal of Sports Science & Medicine*, 55(6), 743-744. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psym.2014.01.004>
- McGinty-Minister, K. L., Swettenham, L., Champ, F. M., & Whitehead, A. E. (2024). 'Smile more': Women's experiences of sexism while working in sport from a socio-ecological perspective. *Sport in Society*, 1(24). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2024.2321357>
- McLeod, J., Shilbury, D., & Zeimers, G. (2021). An Institutional Framework for Governance Convergence in Sport: The Case of India. *Journal of Sport Management*, 35(2), 144-157. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2020-0035>
- McMahon, J., & McGannon, K. R. (2021). 'I hurt myself because it sometimes helps': Former athletes' embodied emotion responses to abuse using self-injury. *Sport, Education and Society*, 26(2), 161-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2019.1702940>
- Meier, H. E. (2020). *The development of women's soccer: Legacies, participation, and popularity in Germany*. London: Routledge.

- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. New Jersey, NJ: The Humanities Press.
- Meshaw, M. (2018). *The power of networking: An insider's guide to making connections and building relationships*. Wiley.
- Mewshaw, M. (2001). *Ladies of the Court*. AbeBooks.
- Miller, J., & Glassner, B. (2001). The "inside" and the "outside": Finding realities in interviews. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, Method and Practice* (pp. 125-140). London, England: Sage.
- Morgan, W. P., Brown, D. R., Raglin, J. S., O'Connor, P. J., & Ellickson, K. A. (1987). Psychological monitoring of overtraining and staleness. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 21(3), 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.21.3.107>
- Morse, J. M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 220–235). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mountjoy, M., Rhind, D. J., Tiivas, A., & Leglise, M. (2015). Safeguarding the child athlete in sport: a review, a framework and recommendations for the IOC youth athlete development model. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 49(13), 883–886. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2015-094619>
- Mouratidis, A., Lens, W., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2010). How you provide corrective feedback makes a difference: The motivating role of communicating in an

autonomy-supporting way. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 32(5), 619–637. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.32.5.619>

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>

Mutatkar, A. (2018, July 9). *Why women in India are not choosing a career in sports?*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@aditiathaley/why-women-in-india-are-not-choosing-a-career-in-sports-bae09ae919f0>

National Crime Record Bureau. (2015). Crimes in India, Tables Section as appear on the official website

National level boxers turned Garbage Collector & Sweeper – they are Kamal Kumar & Krishna Routh!. Latest News, Breaking News, LIVE News, Top News Headlines, Viral Video, Cricket LIVE, Sports, Entertainment, Business, Health, Lifestyle and Utility News | India.Com. (2015, September 3). <https://www.india.com/sports/national-level-boxers-turned-garbage-collector-sweeper-they-are-kamal-kumar-krishna-routh-531624/>

Nesti, M. (2004). *Existential psychology and sport: Theory and Application*. Routledge: New York. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203483435>

Nigam, S. (2017). *Is Domestic violence a Lesser Crime? Countering Backlash Against Section 498A IPC*, Occasional Paper No. 61 CDWS, Delhi

- Nivetha, C. (2023, March 8). Mental health - still a stigma in sports?. *NSoJ - National School of Journalism & Public Discourse*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/mental-health-still-stigma-sports-nsoj/>
- Nixdorf, I., Frank, R., Hautzinger, M., & Beckmann, J. (2013). Prevalence of depressive symptoms and correlating variables among German elite athletes. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 7(4), 313-326. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.7.4.313>
- Noon, E. J. (2018). Interpretive phenomenological analysis: An appropriate methodology for educational research? *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v6i1.304>
- Norman, L. (Ed.). (2021). *Improving gender equity in sports coaching* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003028642>
- North, A. (2021). *America's mental health moment is finally here*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/22596341/simone-biles-withdrawal-osaka-olympics-mental-health>
- Ohlert, J., Vertommen, T., Rulofs, B., Rau, T., & Allroggen, M. (2021). Elite athletes' experiences of interpersonal violence in organized sport in Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 21(4), 604–613. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17461391.2020.1781266>
- Pandey, G. (2020). *What do Indians think about women in sport?* BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-51701924>

- Pandey, G. (2022). *Rising crimes against Indian women in Five charts*. BBC News.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-62830634>
- Parent, S., & Demers, G. (2011). Sexual abuse in sport: A model to prevent and protect athletes. *Child Abuse Review*, 20(2), 120-133. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.1135>
- Pascoe, M., Pankowiak, A., Woessner, M., Brockett, C. L., Hanlon, C., Spaaij, R., Robertson, S., McLachlan, F., & Parker, A. (2022). Gender-specific psychosocial stressors influencing mental health among women elite and semielite athletes: A narrative review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 56(23), 1381–1387. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2022-105540>
- Patwardhan, D. (2022). *The Mental Health of Indian Athletes*. Mintlounge.
<https://lifestyle.livemint.com/news/the-mental-health-of-indian-athletes-111642690406769.html>
- Perlman, D., & Peplau, L. (1981). Toward a social psychology of loneliness. In S. Duck and R. Gilmour (Eds.), *Personal relationships 3: Personal relationships in mental disorder* (pp: 31-56). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Perlman, D., & Peplau, L. (1982). Theoretical approaches to loneliness. In L.A. Peplau and D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy*. (pp: 123-134). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Pluhar, E., McCracken, C., Griffith, K. L., Christino, M. A., Sugimoto, D., & Meehan, W. P., 3rd (2019). Team sport athletes may be less likely to suffer anxiety or

depression than individual sport athletes. *Journal of Sports Science & Medicine*, 18(3), 490–496.

Poczwardowski, A., Barott, J. E., & Jowett, S. (2006). Diversifying approaches to research on athlete–coach relationships. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 7(2), 125–142.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S146902920500066X>

Prakash, P. (2022, October 18). *How fiefdoms and “do or die” imperil the success of India’s sportspeople*. The Wire Science.
<https://science.thewire.in/society/sport/athletes-harassment-drugs-sports-ethics/>

Press, A. (2022). *Elina Svitolina calls for stronger mental health protection for junior tennis players*. ESPN. https://www.espn.com/tennis/story/_/id/33901685/elina-svitolina-calls-stronger-mental-health-protection-junior-players

Preventing and Addressing Abuse: U.S. Center for SafeSport. SafeSport. (n.d.).
<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>

Purcell, R., Gwyther, K., & Rice, S. M. (2019). Mental health in elite athletes: Increased awareness requires an early intervention framework to respond to athlete needs. *Sports Medicine*, 5(46). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40798-019-0220-1>

Purcell, R., Pilkington, V., Carberry, S., Reid, D., Gwyther, K., Hall, K., Deacon, A., Manon, R., Walton, C. C., & Rice, S. (2022). An evidence-informed framework to promote mental wellbeing in elite sport. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 780359.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.780359>

- Raedeke, T. D., & Smith, A. L. (2001). Development and preliminary validation of an athlete burnout measure. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 23(4), 281–306. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.23.4.281>
- Rama, L. (2012). National uproar over young woman's death triggers public conversation about rape. *The Washington Post*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/national-uproar-over-young-womans-death-triggers-public-conversation-about-rape/2012/12/29/183f9762-51ab-11e2-835b-02f92c0daa43_story.html
- Rashid, M., Hossain, S. M., Kabir, M. R., & Kabir, N. (2022). Comparative analysis of men's and women's cricket news in National Dailies of Bangladesh. *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(6), 77-101.
- Rasmussen, K., Dufur, M. J., Cope, M. R., & Pierce, H. (2021). Gender marginalization in sports participation through advertising: The case of Nike. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(15), 7759.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18157759>
- Reardon, C. L., & Factor, R. M. (2010). Sport psychiatry: A systematic review of diagnosis and medical treatment of mental illness in athletes. *Sports Medicine (Auckland, N.Z.)*, 40(11), 961–980. <https://doi.org/10.2165/11536580-000000000-00000>
- Reardon, C. L., Hainline, B., Aron, C. M., Baron, D., Baum, A. L., Bindra, A., Budgett, R., Campriani, N., Castaldelli-Maia, J. M., Currie, A., Derevensky, J. L., Glick,

I. D., Gorczynski, P., Gouttebauge, V., Grandner, M. A., Han, D. H., McDuff, D., Mountjoy, M., Polat, A., Purcell, R., ... Engebretsen, L. (2019). Mental health in elite athletes: International olympic committee consensus statement (2019). *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 53(11), 667–699.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2019-100715>

Rehani, A., & Thakur, A. (2018). *Women sports in India: Constraints and challenges a Case Study Based on Indian Women's Cricket Team*.
<https://events.rdias.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Women-Sports-in-India-Constraints-and-Challenges-paper-and-certificate.pdf>

Reilly, T., Atkinson, G., Edwards, B., Waterhouse, J., Åkerstedt, T., Davenne, D., Lemmer, B., & Wirz-Justice, A. (2007). Coping with jet-lag: A position statement for the European college of sport science. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 7, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17461390701216823>

Reilly, T., Atkinson, G., & Waterhouse, J. (1997). Travel fatigue and jet-lag. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 15(3), 365–369. <https://doi.org/10.1080/026404197367371>

Reilly, T., Waterhouse, J., & Edwards, B. (2005). Jet lag and air travel: Implications for performance. *Clinics in Sports Medicine*, 24(2), 367–xii.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csm.2004.12.004>

Reilly, T., Waterhouse, J., & Edwards, B. (2009). Some chronobiological and physiological problems associated with long-distance journeys. *Travel Medicine*

and Infectious Disease, 7(2), 88–101.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2008.05.002>

Retired early – how we are failing our future sports stars. Retired early – How we are failing our future sports stars, (2017, September 8). HT Brand Studio.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/brandstories/tatateajaagore/retired-early.html>

Rhind, D., McDermott, J., Lambert, E., & Koleva, I. (2014). A review of safeguarding cases in sport. *Child Abuse Review*, 24(6), 418–426.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2306>.

Rice, S. M., Purcell, R., De Silva, S., Mawren, D., McGorry, P. D., & Parker, A. G.

(2016). The mental health of elite athletes: A narrative systematic review. *Sports Medicine (Auckland, N.Z.)*, 46(9), 1333–1353. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0492-2>

Richmond, L. K., Dawson, B., Stewart, G., Cormack, S., Hillman, D. R., & Eastwood, P. R. (2007). The effect of interstate travel on the sleep patterns and performance of elite Australian Rules footballers. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 10(4), 252–258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2007.03.002>

Roderick, M. (2012). An unpaid labor of love: Professional footballers, family life and the problem of job relocation. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 36(3), 317–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723512445283>

- Roderick, M. (2013). Domestic moves: An exploration of intra-national labour mobility in the working lives of professional footballers. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(4), 387–404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690212442497>
- Roderick, M., & Gibbons, B. (2015). ‘To thine own self be true’: Sports work, mental illness and the problem of authenticity. In J. Baker, P. Safai, & J. Fraser-Thomas (Eds.), *Health and elite sport: Is high performance sport a healthy pursuit?* (149–162). Oxon: Routledge.
- Rowlatt, J. (2016, August 3). *Olympic losers: Why is India so bad at Sport?* BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36941269>
- Sabiston, C. M., Jewett, R., Ashdown-Franks, G., Belanger, M., Brunet, J., O’Loughlin, E., & O’Loughlin, J. (2016). Number of years of team and individual sport participation during adolescence and depressive symptoms in early adulthood. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 38(1), 105–110. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.2015-0175>
- Sadala, M. L., & Adorno, R.deC. (2002). Phenomenology as a method to investigate the experience lived: a perspective from Husserl and Merleau Ponty's thought. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 37(3), 282–293. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2002.02071.x>
- Samanta, A. (2020, September 27). *An open letter to Indian society: Daughters are not burden*. OdishaPlus. <https://www.odisha.plus/2020/09/an-open-letter-to-indian-society-daughters-are-not-burden-a-daughter-is-not-a-burden/>

- Samuels, C. H. (2012). Jet lag and travel fatigue: a comprehensive management plan for sport medicine physicians and high-performance support teams. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine: Official Journal of the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine*, 22(3), 268–273. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JSM.0b013e31824d2eeb>
- Sawai, A. (2017). *The economics of an Indian tennis player: Rs 20 lakh on coach, Rs 5 lakh on travel, and trainer*. The Economic Times. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/the-economics-of-an-indian-tennis-player-rs-20-lakh-on-coach-rs-5-lakh-on-travel-and-trainer/articleshow/57073801.cms?from=mdr>
- Schaal, K., Tafflet, M., Nassif, H., Thibault, V., Pichard, C., Alcotte, M., Guillet, T., El Helou, N., Berthelot, G., Simon, S., & Toussaint, J. F. (2011). Psychological balance in high level athletes: gender-based differences and sport-specific patterns. *PloS One*, 6(5), e19007. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0019007>
- Schiphof-Godart, L., & Hettinga, F. J. (2017). Passion and pacing in endurance performance. *Frontiers in Physiology*, 8, Article 83. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphys.2017.00083>
- Scott, E. (2022, November 7). *How is stress affecting my health?* Verywell Mind.
- Service, S. N. (2023, June 16). *Government revised the payment of athletes and Support Staff Travelling abroad*. The Statesman. <https://www.thestatesman.com/sports/government-revised-the-payment-of-athletes-and-support-staff-travelling-abroad-1503190799.html>

Shah, S. (2020). *India has a sports history going back a thousand years*. Business India.

<https://businessindia.co/csr/india-has-a-sports-history-going-back-a-thousand-years>

Shashwati, S., Gupta, P., & Kapur, P. (2023). Exploring the dynamics of negotiating everyday sexism in India: A daily diary study. *Qualitative Report*, 28(4), 1166-1192.

Shaw, L. (2022). *Mental-health services come to women's tennis, inspired by Naomi Osaka*. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-30/mental-health-services-come-to-women-s-tennis-inspired-by-osaka>

Shosha, G. A. (2012). Employment of Colaizzi's strategy in descriptive phenomenology. A reflection of a researcher. *European Scientific Journal*, 8(27). <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2012.v8n27p>

Shriver, L., Wollenberg, G., & Gates, G. (2016). Prevalence of disordered eating and its association with emotion regulation in female college athletes. *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism*, 26(3), 240-248. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsnem.2015-0166>.

Shukla, A., & Joshi, R. (2017). Gender disparity in sports: A study of Indian sportswomen. *International Journal of Yoga, Physiotherapy and Physical Education*, 2(4), 73-76.

Shukla, K. (2021, August 9). *Tokyo 2020: Even as female athletes deliver for India, Women's sport struggles for equal footing*. Scroll.

<https://scroll.in/field/1002216/tokyo-2020-even-as-female-athletes-deliver-for-india-womens-sport-struggles-for-equal-footing#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe%20haven't%20had%20too,given%20the%20best%20support%20possible>

Sijapati, A. (2019). *That's what she said: Media representation of women in sports*. The Gazelle. <https://www.thegazelle.org/issue/166/thats-what-she-said-media-representation-of-women-in-sports>

Singh, R., & Gupta, A. (2018). Safety issues for women athletes in India. *International Journal of Sports Sciences and Physical Education*, 3(2), 1-4.

Singh, R., Gupta, A., & Sharma, V. (2020). Exploring the experiences of mistreatment among elite athletes in India. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 18(6), 662-677.

Singh, U. (2023). *Opinion: Mental health is still considered taboo in India*. Humber News. <https://humbernews.ca/2023/04/opinion-mental-health-is-still-considered-taboo-in-india/>

Skinner, J., & Engelberg, T. (Eds.). (2018). *Research methodologies for sport scholarship*. Routledge.

Smith, J. A., & Eatough, V. (2007). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In E. Lyons & A. Coyle (Eds.), *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology* (pp. 35–50). Sage Publications Ltd.

- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2007). Pain as an assault on the self: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the psychological impact of chronic benign low back pain. *Psychology & Health, 22*(5), 517–534.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14768320600941756>
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain, 9*(1), 41–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2049463714541642>
- Smith, J. A., & Shinebourne, P. (2012). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 73–82). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-005>
- Smith, L. (2013). Working hard with gender: Gendered labour for women in male dominated occupations of manual trades and information technology (IT). *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal, 32*(6), 592-603.
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/EDI-12-2012-0116>
- Smith, M., & Wrynn, A. (2013). *Women in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games: An analysis of participation and leadership opportunities*. Ann Arbor, MI: SHARP Center for Women and Girls

- Snelgrove, S. R. (2014). Conducting qualitative longitudinal research using interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Nurse Researcher*, 22(1), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.1.20.e1277>
- Spitzer, R. L., Terman, M., Williams, J. B., Terman, J. S., Malt, U. F., Singer, F., & Lewy, A. J. (1999). Jet lag: Clinical features, validation of a new syndrome-specific scale, and lack of response to melatonin in a randomized, double-blind trial. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 156(9), 1392–1396. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.156.9.1392>
- Sport Integrity Commissioner*. Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport. (2022). <https://sportintegritycommissioner.ca/files/UCCMS-v6.0-20220531.pdf>
- Sports For Women*. sfw.kheloindia.gov.in. (n.d.). <https://sfw.kheloindia.gov.in/public/index.php#:~:text=The%20sports%20for%20women%20component,also%20nurturing%20their%20sporting%20abilities.>
- Stafford, A., Alexander, K., & Fry, D. (2013). Playing through pain: Children and young people's experiences of physical aggression and violence in sport. *Child Abuse Review*, 22(4), 287–299. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2289>
- Stewart, H., Gapp, R., & Harwood, I. (2017). Exploring the alchemy of qualitative management research: Seeking trustworthiness, credibility and rigor through crystallization. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2604>

- Stirling, A. E., Bridges, E. J., Cruz, E. L., Mountjoy, M. L., & Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (2011). Abuse, harassment, and bullying in sport. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine: Official Journal of the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine*, 21(5), 385–391.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/JSM.0b013e31820f9248>
- Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. (2013). The perceived effects of elite athletes' experiences of emotional abuse in the coach–athlete relationship. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), 87–100.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2013.752173>
- Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. (2014). Initiating and sustaining emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship: An ecological transactional model of vulnerability. *Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma*, 23(2), 116-125.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2014.872747>
- Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. A. (2007). Elite female swimmers' experiences of emotional abuse across time. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 7(4), 89–113.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J135v07n04_05
- Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. A. (2008). Defining and categorizing emotional abuse in sport. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 8(4), 173–181.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17461390802086281>

Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. A. (2009). Abused athletes' perceptions of the coach–athlete relationship. *Sport in Society*, 12(2), 227–239.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430802591019>

Supekar, D. (2023, January 4). *Why Indian athletes can't advance due to a lack of sports funding?* Ketto. [https://www.ketto.org/blog/lack-of-sports-funding-affecting-](https://www.ketto.org/blog/lack-of-sports-funding-affecting-indian-players)

[indian-players](https://www.ketto.org/blog/lack-of-sports-funding-affecting-indian-players)

Sura, A. (2012). *19 years after death, Ruchika's friend cries for justice: India News - Times of India*. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/19-years-after-death-ruchikas-friend-cries-for-justice/articleshow/17761608.cms>

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls in Sport. UN Women. (2023).

[https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf)

[07/3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf)

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335193>

Theberge, N. (1988, June.). Sport and Compulsory Heterosexuality: Some Observations on the Contribution of Sport to Gender Relations. Presented at the annual meetings of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, Windsor.

Tofler, I. R., Stryer, B., Micheli, L. J., & Herman, L. R. (1996). Physical and emotional problems of elite female gymnasts. *The New England Journal of Medicine*,

335(4), 281–283. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejm199607253350412>

- Tomlinson, A., & Yorganci, I. (1997). Male coach/female athlete relations: Gender and power relations in competitive sport. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 21(2), 134–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019372397021002003>
- Tracy, N. (2021). *Psychological abuse: Definition, signs and symptoms*. Healthyplace.com. <https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/emotional-psychological-abuse/psychological-abuse-definition-signs-and-symptoms>
- U.S. Center for SafeSport. SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. (2024). <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-SafeSport-Code.pdf>
- Vasvada, M. (2021). *10-year record at SAI: 45 complaints of sexual harassment, 29 against coaches*. Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/10-year-record-at-sai-45-complaints-of-sexual-harassment-29-against-coaches/>
- Veerappa, M. (2019, November 26). *The respect a player has for a coach in India is very huge: Sjoerd Marijne: Hockey News - Times of India*. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/hockey/top-stories/the-respect-a-player-has-for-a-coach-in-india-is-very-huge-sjoerd-marijne/articleshow/72229857.cms>
- Vertommen, T., Schipper-van Veldhoven, N., Wouters, K., Kampen, J. K., Brackenridge, C. H., Rhind, D. J., Neels, K., & Van Den Eede, F. (2016). Interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Netherlands and Belgium.

Child Abuse & Neglect, 51, 223–236.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.10.006>

Vincent, J. (2004). Game, sex, and match: The construction of gender in British newspaper coverage of the 2000 Wimbledon championships. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 21(4), 435-456. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.21.4.435>

Volkwein, K. A. E., Schnell, F. I., Sherwood, D., & Livezey, A. (1997). Sexual harassment in sport - perceptions and experiences of American female student-athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 32(3), 283–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690297032003005>

Walker, I., Brierley, E., Patel, T., Jaffer, R., Rajpara, M., Heslop, C., & Patel, R. (2022). Mental health among elite sportspeople: Lessons for medical education. *Medical Teacher*, 44(2), 214–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2021.1994134>

Walsh, N. P., Halson, S. L., Sargent, C., Roach, G. D., Nédélec, M., Gupta, L., Leeder, J., Fullagar, H. H., Coutts, A. J., Edwards, B. J., Pullinger, S. A., Robertson, C. M., Burniston, J. G., Lastella, M., Le Meur, Y., Hausswirth, C., Bender, A. M., Grandner, M. A., & Samuels, C. H. (2020). Sleep and the athlete: Narrative review and 2021 expert consensus recommendations. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, bjsports-2020-102025. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2020-102025>

- Walton, C. C., Rice, S. M., & Purcell, R. (2022). Mental health in youth elite athletes. In *Mental health care for elite athletes* (pp. 209-213). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Waterhouse, J., Nevill, A., Finnegan, J., Williams, P., Edwards, B., Kao, S. Y., & Reilly, T. (2005). Further assessments of the relationship between jet lag and some of its symptoms. *Chronobiology International*, *22*(1), 121–136. <https://doi.org/10.1081/cbi-200036909>
- Waterhouse, J., Edwards, B., Nevill, A., Atkinson, G., Reilly, T., Davies, P., & Godfrey, R. (2000). Do subjective symptoms predict our perception of jet-lag?. *Ergonomics*, *43*(10), 1514–1527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/001401300750003943>
- Waterhouse, J., Edwards, B., Nevill, A., Carvalho, S., Atkinson, G., Buckley, P., Reilly, T., Godfrey, R., & Ramsay, R. (2002). Identifying some determinants of "jet lag" and its symptoms: A study of athletes and other travellers. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, *36*(1), 54–60. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjism.36.1.54>
- Waterhouse, J., Nevill, A., Edwards, B., Godfrey, R., & Reilly, T. (2003). The relationship between assessments of jet lag and some of its symptoms. *Chronobiology International*, *20*(6), 1061–1073. <https://doi.org/10.1081/cbi-120025249>
- Waterhouse, J., Reilly, T., & Edwards, B. (2004). The stress of travel. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *22*(10), 946–966. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410400000264>

- Waterhouse, J., Drust, B., Weinert, D., Edwards, B., Gregson, W., Atkinson, G., Kao, S., Aizawa, S., & Reilly, T. (2005). The circadian rhythm of core temperature: Origin and some implications for exercise performance. *Chronobiology International*, 22(2), 207–225. <https://doi.org/10.1081/cbi-200053477>
- Waterhouse, J., Reilly, T., Atkinson, G., & Edwards, B. (2007). Jet lag: Trends and coping strategies. *Lancet (London, England)*, 369(9567), 1117–1129. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(07\)60529-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(07)60529-7)
- Westberg, K., Stavros, C., & Wilson, B. (2008). An examination of the impact of player transgressions on sponsorship b2b relationships. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 9(2), 125-134. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-09-02-2008-B007>
- What is Khelo India Games? know history and winners*, (2024, February 29). The Khelo India Youth Games, University Games and the Winter Games promote sports at a grassroots level in India. <https://olympics.com/en/news/khelo-india-games-youth-university-school-history-winners>
- White, A., & Brackenridge, C. (1985). Who rules sport? Gender divisions in the power structure of British Sports Organizations from 1960. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 20(1-2), 95-107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/101269028502000109>

- Wigglesworth, J., & Stables, A. (2018). Interpretive phenomenological analysis: An appropriate methodology for educational research. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 6(1), 88-94.
- Wilczyńska, D., Qi, W., Jaenes, J. C., Alarcón, D., Arenilla, M. J., & Lipowski, M. (2022). Burnout and mental interventions among youth athletes: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the studies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(17), 10662.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710662>
- Willis, Z. (2023, September 10). *Is tennis a rich person's sport?* TennisLovers.
<https://tennislovers.com/is-tennis-a-rich-persons-sport/>
- Willson, E., Kerr, G., Stirling, A., & Buono, S. (2022). Prevalence of maltreatment among Canadian national team athletes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(21-22), NP19857-NP19879. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211045096>
- Willson, E., & Kerr, G. (2021). Body shaming as a form of emotional abuse in sport. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 20(5), 1452–1470.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197x.2021.1979079>
- Williams, S., Bradley, H., Devadason, R., & Erickson, M. (2013). *Globalization and Work*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Willson, E., Kerr, G., Battaglia, A., & Stirling, A. (2022). Listening to athletes' voices: National team athletes' perspectives on advancing safe sport in

Canada. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 4, 840221.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2022.840221>

Wolanin, A., Hong, E., Marks, D., Panchoo, K., & Gross, M. (2016). Prevalence of clinically elevated depressive symptoms in college athletes and differences by gender and sport. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50(3), 167–171.

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2015-095756>

World Health Organization. (2022). *Mental health: Strengthening our response*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

Yang, E. C., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2017). Constructing space and self through risk taking: A case of Asian solo female travelers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(2), 260–272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287517692447>

Zalk, S. R. (1990). Men in the academy: A psychological profile of harassment. In M. A. Paludi (Ed.), *Ivory power: Sexual harassment on campus* (pp. 141–175). State University of New York Press.

Zhang, Y., & Hitchcock, M. J. (2017). The Chinese female tourist gaze: A netnography of young women's blogs on Macao. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(3), 315 - 330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2014.904845>

Zhang, Z., & Chelladurai, P. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of athlete's trust in the coach. *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 2(2), 115-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2012.03.002>

Zhou, J., & Heim, D. (2014). Sports and spirits: A systematic qualitative review of emergent theories for student-athlete drinking. *Alcohol and Alcoholism (Oxford, Oxfordshire)*, 49(6), 604–617. <https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agu061>

(N.d.). [Apa.org. https://www.apa.org/topics/sexual-assault-harassment](https://www.apa.org/topics/sexual-assault-harassment)

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer for Potential Participants

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR

RESEARCH ON INDIAN FEMALE TENNIS PLAYERS

I am conducting a study to explore the lived experiences of elite female Indian tennis players.

I am seeking to interview individuals who:

- are Female
- of Indian Nationality
- current or former elite tennis player

You will be asked to participate in a 60–90-minute online interview to discuss your lived experience within the sport. The particular focus of the interview will be on experiences in training and traveling with a male coach or alone.

For more information about this study or if you are interested in participating in the study please contact:

Kanishka Chawla, Principal Investigator

Student, University of New Brunswick

By email at kchawla@unb.ca

Or by phone at (506) 461-7555



This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics approval through, the Research

Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick and is on file as REB 2023-165

Appendix B: Information Letter

November, 2023

Dear Potential Participant,

This letter is an invitation for you to participate in a study that focuses on the lived experiences on Indian female tennis players. This research is being conducted by Kanishka Chawla, student at the University of New Brunswick. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your participation would involve.

Tennis has been a major part of my life, as I played the sport for over 10 years, and as Indian female athletes on tour, traveling and training all year long, there has been limited research conducted within this field. The aim of this study is to understand experiences that female athletes have experienced in the India tennis industry.

If you are interested in this study and give your permission, you will participate in a discussion about your athletic experience and your experiences with traveling alone and with a male coach. The discussion will be in the form of an online interview and is expected to last approximately 60-90 minutes, but its length will depend on what information you share with me. The date and time of the interview will be based on your and my availability. Examples of the questions you will be asked to discuss include: Tell me about how you got introduced to the sport of tennis? How did your interest in playing tennis develop? What coaches have you trained with? Describe your experiences with training? Can you please tell me about your experience with traveling alone as a female?

Please understand that you may withdraw from the study without consequence at any time. You may also withdraw any of the information collected prior to the data being submitted for publication, without penalty. The information you share through the interviews will be kept confidential. You will not be identified by name in any presentation, report or publication resulting from this study. Any information that might identify you (e.g., years in sports; academy name; unique personal characteristics) will be removed when the text transcripts are created and will not be included in any report or publication. All hard copy materials and memory sticks containing data will be retained in a locked filing cabinet until the study is complete and only, I will have access to these materials.

I will send you a copy of the results section of the study to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. Offering feedback is voluntary.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant, however if needed, I will have referrals for psychologists and resources. It is hoped that your participation will provide insights into the India tennis industry and help researchers and organizations to develop programs based on the athlete's needs.

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of New Brunswick and is on file as REB 2023-165. If you have any questions about this research study or the procedure, you may contact:

Dr. Jonathon Edwards, Assistant Dean, 1 (506) 453-5139, jonathan.edwards@unb.ca

Dr. Wayne J. Albert, Dean, 1 (506) 453-4576, walbert@unb.ca

Thank you in advance for considering participation in this study. It is my hope that you will personally benefit from this opportunity to explore your family leisure experiences and what they mean to you.

Yours sincerely,

Kanishka Chawla

Kanishka Chawla, Graduate Student, 1 (506) 461-7555, kchawla@unb.ca

Dr. David Scott, Faculty, 1 (506) 447-3311, scotty@unb.ca

Dr. Charlene Shannon-McCallum, Faculty, 1 (506) 458-7533, cshannon@unb.ca

Dr. Terri Byers, Faculty, 1 (506) 447-3325, terri.byers@unb.ca



Appendix C: Consent Form

I understand that the main goal of this research is to explore experiences of Indian female tennis players. The research is being conducted by Kanishka Chawla, student at the University of New Brunswick.

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of New Brunswick and is on file as REB 2023-165.

I understand that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I understand that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research and that the quotations will be anonymous.

I understand that I will receive a copy of my interview transcript and a report of the study's findings after data collection has been completed.

I understand my participation in this study is voluntary. I am under no obligation to answer any particular question during the course of the study, and I can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

I understand that the information provided during the interview will be kept strictly confidential.

I understand that my name will not appear in any report or publication resulting from this study.

Any information that might identify me (e.g., years in sports; academy name; unique personal characteristics) will be removed when the text transcripts are created and will not be included in any report or publication.

I understand all hard copy materials and memory sticks will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and only the principal investigator will have access to these materials.

I understand my name will not be attached to any hard copy materials.

I have read, understood, and agree to the above conditions.

Please print your name: _____

Please print your address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact Information:

Kanishka Chawla

506-461-7555

kchawla@unb.ca



Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Rapport Building Questions

- 1) Tell me about how you got introduced to the sport of tennis or how your interest in playing tennis developed.
- 2) Describe your first tennis tournament. Probes: Where? Who was there? How did you feel competing? What role did your coach play?

Training Questions

- 1) Tell me about your journey with training in tennis. (Probes: Where have you trained? What coaches have you trained with? Describe your experiences with training? What are the characteristics of coaches that get the best out of you as an athlete? What have your relationships with your coaches been like across your athletic career?)

Travel Questions

- 1) Describe your first experience travelling to compete in tennis. Probes: Did you travel alone? With family or a coach? Where did you go? What was that experience like for you as a woman and as an athlete?
- 2) Can you please tell me about your experience with traveling alone as a female? Probes: How often do you travel alone? Where have you travelled alone? How do you feel when you travel alone? What is your most memorable experience of travelling alone? How would you describe your competition preparation and performance when you travel alone?

- 3) Describe your experiences with coaches you have travelled with? Probes: In what ways has travelling with your coach supported you? In what ways has travelling with your coach been challenging?

Is there anything else that you would like to add about this topic?

Additional probing questions:

- 1) How did you feel when that happened?
- 2) What were you thinking when that happened?
- 3) Can you tell me more about [the experience?

Appendix E: Feedback Letter

University of New Brunswick

Date

Dear (Insert Name of Participant),

Thank you very much for being a part of this study. Your involvement during the interview will contribute to better identify and understand what athlete's face. The findings will assist professionals in sports psychology and training with program development and players' needs. Moreover, the findings will benefit the various sports associations in providing better support to female athletes. Lastly, the conclusions made from this investigation will directly benefit the participants and future athletes as the upcoming athletes will be able to gain experience from the participant's past travel history.

The goals of the study were:

- To explore experiences in Tennis
- To explore training experiences faced
- To understand travel faced by participant alone and with a male coach
- To involve at least 5 participants

These goals were achieved, and a summary of the results is attached. Feedback is voluntary.

I enjoyed the opportunity to work with you in achieving these goals and wish you all the best in the future.

Kanishka Chawla

Graduate Student

1 (506) 461-7555

kchawla@unb.ca



Appendix F: Operational Definitions

Elite Athletes- Any athlete who competes nationally or internationally in any sport. Elite athletes are also under strict training in order to obtain the desired outcome in the sport, either becoming the best in their home country and being part of the national team or becoming the best among multiple international athletes (<https://dictionary.apa.org/elite-athletes>).

Mental Health- A state of well-being where individuals recognize their own potential, are able to handle and successfully achieve their day-to-day activities and contribute (usually positively) to their community (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Mental health was usually thought of as the absence of mental illnesses; however, more recently, it has been suggested that it is a broad concept that should be assessed with the presence or absence of mental illnesses (WHO, 2022). As new challenges present to individuals, mental health is an important factor in determining how individuals would manage and solve the challenges in the best way possible (WHO, 2022).

Stress- A non-specific bodily reaction to a scenario that may be interpreted as a jolt beyond our comfort zone (Scott, 2022). Stress is viewed as our mind or body's reaction to any change, threat, or pressure from outside or internal sources. Stress is also regarded as a form of self-defence designed to safeguard persons from impending damage. Stress keeps many people attentive and might be advantageous in dangerous situations; nonetheless, the term stress is mainly perceived as a threat to people's wellness, causing a chain reaction of bad results such as worry, fear, and despair.

Psychological Abuse- A threat to the mental well-being of individuals. This kind of abuse is repetitively used by an aggressor for long periods of time (Tracy, 2021). It usually includes threats to physical health, restriction, or full control over the freedom of the victim, and destabilization. Victims of this type of abuse can be fearful of a negative outcome if they are not able to comply with the rules placed on them by their aggressor. This kind of abuse is difficult to establish and prevent since the aggressor does not leave physical evidence on the victim. There may be signs such as a lack of confidence or fear to speak for oneself, but this may be concealed by the aggressor pointing out that the victim is simply an introvert.

Sexual Abuse- Any action that involves forcing, threatening, or coaxing an individual into sexual contact. It can range from body exposure to penetration (Adapted from the APA Dictionary of Psychology). Sexual abuse can cause multiple issues in the victim, such as depression, intrusive thoughts, avoidance of memories of the abuse, dependency coming from the victim to the aggressor, self-defeating, personality disorders, and in some cases, it can lead to self-harm and an increase of guilt in the victim.

Curriculum Vitae – Kanishka Chawla

Education

Masters in Sport & Recreation Studies (Research-Based)

Specializing in Sport & Exercise Psychology

The University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada

(2020 – Currently)

Diploma in University Teaching (2021)

The University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, (2019)

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University,

Greensboro, North Carolina, U.S.

Academic Awards

Graduate Research Award (2023) Research award for graduate students in Kinesiology, at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada.

Graduate Research Award (2022) Research award for graduate students in Kinesiology, at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada.

Graduate Research Award (2021) Research award for graduate students in Kinesiology, at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada.

Graduate Research Award (2020) Research award for graduate students in Kinesiology, at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada.

Rookie of the Year Award (2017) North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Greensboro, North Carolina, U.S.

Sport Scholarship Award (2015-2019) North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State
University, Greensboro, North Carolina, U.S.