

## **Prevalence of Molestation among Male Coaches towards Female Athletes in Different Sports at Public Sector Universities Sindh, Pakistan**

\* Shireen Bhatti, Director P.E.

\*\* Dr. Salah Uddin Khan, Professor & Chairman SSPE

\*\*\* Marrium Bashir, Lecturer

### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the perception of respondents towards the prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches in respect of female athletes in different games at public sector universities in Sindh province. The study was mixed-method (survey and semi-structured interview) The Purposive sampling method was employed for the collection of the required data. Female athletes who competed at the intercollegiate, intervarsity, provincial and national level of public universities of Sindh province were subject of this study. The self-inventory and adapted questionnaire on sports-specific touch and behavior versus unwanted intimacy from coaches developed by Vanden Auweele (2006) Vanden Auweele et al (2008) was administrated for data collection. There were 85 female athletes from 20 public universities who participated in the survey. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches towards female athletes in different sports at public universities of Sindh province due to the coach's power, authority, decision making position, the threat of rejection on the refusal of sexual cooperation, the ready availability of inexperienced female athletes and lack of implication of policies regarding sexual misconducts in public sector universities.*

**Keywords:** Prevalence, Molestation, Athlete, Coach, Public Sectors.

### **Introduction**

Chronologically, man is believed to be fit in the position of coaching and leadership in sport organizations with the view that women are not as deserving candidates as men for leadership positions and such perception develops in society due to the idea that women hold more femininity and protective characteristics such as empathy, sensitivity, and a nurturing nature.

According to Elizabeth. (2017), sport is believed to be an exceptionally manly and gendered realm. Since childhood, Male athletes learn that they are born to display masculinity likely to become successful athletes and those athletes who are often ridiculed disgracefully and are considered inferior. Moreover women repeatedly encounter obstacles whenever they try to indulge in the specific setting when they try to rule decision-making positions. These hurdles involve the assumption of incompetence, which leads to a lack of female mentors. Women who get into a professional sports setting, explain encounter with complexity to work in an intimidating, male-dominated environment.

Sylvie, and Guyana, (2011) investigated that abuse exists in the field of sport Abuse in sport occurred due to the role and power of coaches. Such mishaps appear in sport prove key risk factors for female athletes. It is believed that coaches do have significant influence over athletes, since they are believed a parental figure. Kazi (2017) Believes that Pakistan is considered one of the countries where 70% of females encounter physical or sexual violence and 93% of women are those who are violated or harassed in public places in their lives.

The express tribune. (2014), states the suicide case of 17 years old female cricketer Haleema of Multan is evident. That she along with four other female cricketers accused harassment charges against Multan cricket club officials who insisted them for sexual favor for being selected in the team, later on, accused authority sued her for leveling harassment charges, which resulted in her suicide, committed by drinking acid. Most athletes decide either to withdraw from sport or from their lives rather than continuing. As per observation they are hesitant in speaking up such matters with family, friends or concerned bodies with the intention of set aside themselves from defamation. The objective

\* Education & Literacy Department Email: [dr.s.raza27419@gmail.com](mailto:dr.s.raza27419@gmail.com)

\*\* Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education Gomal University KP Pakistan

\*\*\* Department of Sports Science, Riphah International University, FSD, Pakistan

of the present study is to examine the perception of respondents towards the prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches in respect of female athletes in different games at public sector universities in Sindh province.

### **Literature Review**

Dorothy Lee Hayden (2003) affirms that in recent times sexual harassment is an exposed subject for female athletes; literature reveals limited research on the entire subject. records of the prevalence of sexual harassment of high school girls are thin and there is even less research specific to sexual harassment-related to coaches and female athletes. Furthermore, media testifies sexual harassment .in the last 20 years the study of women in sport has become a sub-specialty of research in sport. According to free Malaysia today (2012) sexual abuse, molestation and harassment are being evident to a great extent which leaves female athletes with the thought of whether they should pursue their professional career in sports at the worth of their security and protection.

Amorose and Horn, (2001) believe that masculinity and traditional male values closely govern the coaching dominion, in result, his control and power over athletes can direct to an offensive situation. Because the physical body plays such a central focus in all competitive performances, coaches' ethical principles come into play regarding whether or not to misuse the power accorded them. Coaches control athletes because of the considerable amount of time coaches spend with athletes; a coach also is a decision-maker of the athlete's lifestyle. Kirby, Greaves & Hankivisky (2002) believed that the coach-athlete relationship is of personal relationship. The athlete becomes weak to coaches because of their position and power, builds trust with the esteem they hold and headed with their day-to-day duties and responsibility without experiencing any supervision.

According to the Executive Board of the Norwegian Olympic, Paralympics Committee, and Confederation of Sports, (2010), a woman underwent and continues undergoing harassment, molestation and abuse for the epoch. This phenomenon is Attached to the history of terrible conduct, imbalanced status, approach, and strategies aim to uphold women's inferior role in society. Twenty years of research has proven that abuse is witnessed in the field of sport. Besides, abuse and harassment in sports were reported by the Norwegian female athlete Marne Hugli towards her coach, Peter Mueller who was the coach of the Norwegian National speed skating team. She complained to the board of the Norwegian Skating Association. Her allegation proved and finally coach was dismissed by the board from continuing his job as a Norwegian coach. Such cases of harassment, abuse and molestation did not only draw the attention of masses but electronic media, print media and authorities.

Fasting, Brackenridge & Walseth, (2007); Rodriguez & Gill, (2009) claimed that Irrespective of athletes' tolerance towards unwanted sexual behaviors, it has been testified direct emotional cost. Previous qualitative studies showed that sexual harassment victims meet with emotional feelings involving repugnance, terror, frustration, guiltiness, and anger. Moreover, Fasting, Brackenridge and Walseth (2002) study revealed that elite female athletes sexual harassment consequences, reporting that athletes mostly experience destructive feelings. They end their relationship with the coach, their passion turns into disappointment with the sport. And it affects the point of view of female victims about men in general whereas some report no ostensible consequences.

Fasting, Brackenridge and Sundgot-Borgen's (2004) study studied the prevalence of molestation, assault and sexual harassment in 56 different sports among 553 female athletes. Fasting et al., (2004) concluded that female athletes in masculine sports (e.g., judo, taekwondo) encountered higher percentage of molestation, assault and harassment (59%) than the neutral (46%) and feminine (50%) sports groups ( $p < .013$ ). 28 percent of athletes reported molestation, assault and sexual harassment in sport whereas 15% were from authority figures and 19% were from peer-athletes. Moreover the author concluded that sport type does not cause prevalence of molestation, assault and sexual harassment; as an alternative it is the participation of females within a masculine structural organization.

Coaches control athletes because of the considerable amount of time the coach spends with athletes; a coach also is a decision-maker of the athlete's lifestyle. Tomlinson and Stratchan (1996) point out that the coach and athlete relationships involve "the cherished relation socially and communication. Staff Arizona Republic, (1994), Coach is believed to be a second parent and taken him responsible for nurturing athletes with the degree of affection and discipline. Such social pressure

can either make a coach or athlete vulnerable. While making a decision which is low ethically. The coach plays a critical role in the triumph or failure of the athlete because the power is in the hand of the coach. The coach makes decisions on behalf of the athletes. This type of relationship, a kind of loyalty from female athletes, can be subjugated by male coaches for their sexual or emotional needs.

Kirby, Greaves & Hankivsky, (2000) confirms that Sport studies reveal that athletes experience a higher level of molestation and harassment from coaches and peer athletes than any other sport power personnel. Though, athletes have higher negative costs from coaches than peer athletes. When an athlete experiences harassment from a trusted individual. She feels trapped in obedience to the person they trusted for physical and mental training preparation, and with whom they have developed an emotional connection for years.

Jowett & Cockerill (2003) argued that Various researches have shown that coach has a great influence not only on athlete's performance but motivation furthermore coach is believed to be a leader and the behavior of coach aids athlete to sustain his performance, self-esteem, confidence, and satisfaction. Stirling (2009) added that coach-athlete relationships add to the personal growth and development of athletes. However, coaches take advantage as an authority by mistreating athletes.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

Quantitative and qualitative research approach (survey and semi-structured interview) method was adopted to investigate the anticipated aspects of the study.

#### **Sample and Sample Size**

The target population of the study is encompassed of 85 female athletes of different games such as volleyball, cricket, football, table tennis, badminton, karate, wall climbing, athletics, boxing, throw ball, snow hiking, basketball, taekwondo, hockey and handball at public sector universities of Sindh province, their age ranged from 18 years to above 30 years.

#### **Research Procedures**

The researcher made contact with the heads of institutions/sports directors/sports instructors/sports assistants for approaching the female athletes to collect the data. Meetings were settled with them on call/ via emails as per their availability. They were provided a consent letter of the supervisor with an additional copy of the letter to get it signed/stamped which was later collected back to keep in the record as proof of approval of the authority. With the consent of authorities, female athletes were surveyed. Former athletes and beginners female athletes of different sports at public universities were included in the present study. Whereas male participants were excluded to participate in the study and Private universities of Sindh province were excluded. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 25 female athletes of Sindh province who belonged to different sports and varied in experience and level of participation. Before the pilot study the questionnaire was validated on the opinion of 12 experts of the faculty of Sports science. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients were used for each part which was 0.884 and 0.942 respectively for Prevalence of Molestation in Sport and Molesting Behavior of Male Coach. While the value of the whole scale was 0.907.

The setting of the present study was 20 public universities. There were 8 general, 6 medical, 4 engineering and 2 business administration public universities. The researcher of this study visited 19 public universities of Sindh in person Whereas Sindh agricultural university, Tando jam was sent questionnaires by courier service .among 20 universities. Data collection was started on Nov, 18 and ended on May 19. Among 20 public universities, only 10 universities cooperated in collecting data whereas agricultural universities did not return the questionnaire. There was no availability of Female athletes at 4 universities, the authority of 4 other universities did not allow researcher and participants for data collection due to the sensitivity of the research topic whereas 4 universities were emailed to seek permission but they remained unresponsive. Surveyed respondents were students of under graduation, graduation and post-graduation. They were participants of 13 games who participated at the interdepartmental, intervarsity, provincial and national levels. Their participation experienced varied from 1 year to 7 years and above. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 25 years.

#### **Instrument**

The 5-point Likert scale was used in the research study. The questionnaire consisted three sections, the first part of questionnaire collected demographical information which included the questions about respondent name, level of study, university, age, major sports, level of current participation and

number of year of participation whereas Second part was self-inventory scale consisted of 14 items depicting Prevalence of molestation in different sports ranging from very much to never and Third section was an adopted scale which was sports-specific touch and behavior versus unwanted intimacy from coaches developed by Vanden Auweele (2006) and Vanden Auweele et al (2008) consisted of 15 items which were ranging from completely acceptable to unacceptable and serious.

**Statistical Analysis**

SPSS 20 was used as a statistical tool and the results were analyzed through frequencies and percentages, mean, standard deviation and *chi-square*.

**Findings**

**Table 1. Demographical distribution of the respondents**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Classification</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>
Age	18-21 Years	64
	22-25 Years	21
Level of Study	Undergraduate	69
	Graduate	03
	Postgraduate	13
University	General	64
	Medical	9
	Engineering	9
Participation In Different Sports	Business Administration	3
	Badminton	29
	Table Tennis	12
	Football	2
	Cricket	13
	Athletics	4
	Boxing	2
	Throw Ball	8
	Snow Hiking	3
	Wall Climbing	3
	Basketball	4
	Taekwondo	1
	Hockey	2
Handball	2	
Participation level	Inter-department	12
	Intervarsity	50
	Provincial	8
Experience	National	15
	1-3 years	37
	4-6 years	23
	7 and above	25

Table 1 shows female athletes with diverse backgrounds. The sample was distributed based on age, level of study, university, sports and experience. The significant number of female athletes represented each classification of demographical variables mentioned above.

**Table 2. Chi-Square Test indicates that there is a Prevalence of Molesting Behavior among Male Coaches at Public Universities of Sindh Province**

<b>Testing variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Prevalence of Molestation Among Male Coaches	85	4.2875	.87165	28	162.447	.000

*α* =0.05

The results of Chi-square indicated the prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches at public universities of Sindh province. The table also shows the mean and standard deviation of the respondents regarding their responses; ( $M = 4.2875$ ,  $SD = .87165$ ). The above-sketched table rectifies from the Chi-Square,  $\chi^2 = 162.447$  and  $p = .000 < 0.05$  which implies that the p-value is lower than the alpha level ( $.000 \leq 0.05$ ). The ratification of the alternative hypothesis is accepted; it means that the prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches at public universities of Sindh province.

**Table 3. Anova Showing the Mean Differences of Molestation in Different Sports at Public Universities of Sindh Province.**

Testing Variable	Format Major Sports	or n	M	SD	Df	F	Sig.
Prevalence of molestation in different sports	Badminton	29	3.2042	1.03656			
	Table tennis	12	3.5193	1.44427			
	Football	2	3.4615	.10819			
	Cricket	13	3.5445	.80587			
	Athletics	4	3.7115	.73862			
	Boxing	2	3.4230	.38042			
	Throw ball	8	3.2789	1.02377	(12, 72)	1.264	<b>.259</b>
	Snow hiking	3	3.9487	.34721			
	Wall climbing	3	3.5897	1.42938			
	Basketball	4	3.2310	.18861			
	Taekwondo	1	3.3850	1.10377			
	Hockey	2	3.0770	.10889			
	Handball	2	3.2695	.16334			

**p= .05, M = Mean and SD = Standard deviation**

The above table expresses that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents regarding the molestation based on format or major sports of respondents such as; (Badminton, Table tennis, Football, Cricket, Athletics, Boxing, throw the ball, Snow hiking, Wall Climbing, Basketball, Taekwondo, Hockey and Handball). The mean differences are found equal in each group from the table no 4.29, ( $F(12, 72) = 1.264$ ) and similarly in the same table the p values are also found which is greater than to the alpha level  $p = .259 > 0.05$ ).

### Discussion

Based on the analysis, the analyzed data revealed the total mean score of the respondents upon molesting behavior of coach which was greater than to the mean of average scale ( $4.08863 > 3.00$ ), although 65.64% of respondents were with the opinion that molesting behavior of coach is unacceptable and serious whereas 14.26 % were agreed that the behavior of coach was completely acceptable. 8.90% also considered the behavior of the coach unacceptable and very serious. 6.15% of respondents were with the opinion that the behavior of coach was acceptable but not serious and 5.89% chose option "acceptable" but suspicious upon molesting behavior of coach. The majority of the respondents indicated that the molesting behavior of coaches is unacceptable and serious. The researcher has determined the prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches through the *Chi-Square test* which indicated the significant prevalence of molesting behavior among male coaches towards female athletes.

Maximum numbers of the respondents were of different sports such as Badminton 34.1%, Table Tennis 14.1%, Cricket 15.3%, Throw Ball 9.4%, Athletics and Basketball were 9.4%, Snow Hiking and Wall Climbing were 3.5%, Football, Boxing, Hockey and Handball 2.4% and Taekwondo 1.2% participants. It is commonly witnessed that Badminton and table tennis are frequently played and their championship is organized. Many public sector universities have badminton court and table tennis arena which are easy to maintain and its teams are feasible to prepare as it has fewer participants. It is seen that badminton and table tennis are not only played professionally but recreationally, therefore, they are all time available sports whereas other sports are occasionally played. They require sufficient participants in team games, outdoor setting, high maintenance, regular practice, sufficient time, long term planning for competition and all-time separate instructor or coach. Some sports appear risky to participate in.

The present study has major findings that reveal that as per the responses of female athletes, Coaches control them because of the considerable amount of time coaches spend with them. Coach also is a decision-maker of the athlete's lifestyle. They become weak before coaches because of their position and power. Moreover their physical feebleness and emotional instability encourage the coach to take undue advantage. Most respondents were repeating words such as touch and molest.

Female athletes are usually made many promises such as they would be selected in the team, they will be promoted in their sports career, they will be earning international participation as a reward in return. Due to the coach's underhanded intention female athletes stay silent due to the dependability, fear or shame to inappropriate comments and touches. Young athletes are easy to control; they desire to gratify the coach which weakens them. They display a tolerant attitude towards the molesting behavior of coach with the intent of pursuing their sports in the long run and their complaint can cost their dream of play therefore they are left with no options but to adopt avoidant behavior. Coaches repeatedly target those female athletes who have little self-confidence, are given warning of violence, keep them unvoiced. Female athletes are more defenseless therefore they are prompt to molestation. Female participants usually experience deliberate touch, unnecessarily interaction, and unpleasant compliments by coach, sexual jokes or unusual staring. Moreover she feels trapped in obedience to the coach due to her trust in him. Lack of implication of policies regarding sexual misconduct in public sector universities are commonly reported .recent case of sexual misconducts of Sumbal Balouch and Nimrita Kumari made big headlines in news.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the study it revealed that female athletes are molested during training and competition of different sports at public sector universities of province Sindh, Pakistan. The results are only confined to the present study. It will not be generalized as it adopted snowball sampling.

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