

EVEN THE OLYMPICS ARE UNFAIR TO WOMAN

At the Olympics before participating in any event a woman has to prove that she is really a woman can you believe? She has to undergo a 'Chromosome test to show whether in addition to her appearance, her genetical make up also corroborates the fact. The test was introduced in 1966 and at the time Eva Klobkovska was barred from the games and to her previous records were scrapped because the test could not confirm her femininity'. In protest the two renowned athletes sisters Tamara and Irina stopped taking part in international games. This year at Los Angeles when the test was carried out a twenty two year American swimmer Michail remarked with a mischievous smile. I think I am a woman and 24 year old blonde swimmer Kalli Maccarmic donning the test card in her neck said ' It is an evidence of myself being a woman'.

Also the females are barred from 9 of the 27 Olympic sports categories -Boxing, Football, Judo, Wrestling, the modern Pentathlon, Weight lifting, the Biathlon, Bob-sleigh and Ice hockey. There are no Five Thousand or Ten Thousand metre round for woman in the olympics, no pole vault, no hammer throw. One hundred and sixty eight events are restricted to males, 73 to females. It is in only fifteen events have men and women competed against one another which include, Yachting, equestrian sports and Rifle and Pistol-shooting, in which women have won medals. In some muslim nations such as Iran, Pakistan & Saudi Arab, women are not allowed to participate in any sport at the olympics.

The official reason for debaring woman from some sports of competition is Rule 44 of the International Olympic Committee which states that the sport or event must be widely practised "(by women) in at least 35 countries on three continents . This due to local prejudices and prohibition, is very difficult to demonstrate.

The other factor is the total dominance of men often with antique ideas in International sports Federation, National olympic committee and International Olympic Committee, who seldom take interest in the inclusion of any new event of women in the olympics.

Another category of reason for barring female athletes from competition range from althethic to the psychological and physical. The two most persistent notions are that sports will harm a woman's sexuality and her ability to cencieve and rear children and that women are physically weaker and less tough minded in comparsion with men. Yet findings by experts in sports medicine, psychology generally do not support these wiews. On the contrary they disapprove them. Our present day knowledge conforms these facts.

- i. "Women who engage in sports are not impaired in their reproductive function"

Sports and training do not limit a woman's ability concieve or to bear children. In fact athletic women generally have fewer problems in giving birth than inactive do. A study of 729 Hungarian women athletes found that their labour was sporter, and need for caesarean section 50% less, than that of non-athletic ones.

- ii. "PREGNANT WOMEN CAN PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS!"

In its initial stage, pregnancy, is no bar to most sports and it does not seem to diminish athletic performance. Ten medal winners in 1956 Olympics were pregnant. However cases of recurrent abortion, bad obstretical history and complicated pregnancy cases should not participate.

- iii. "JUMPING, JARRING OR BLOWS TO THE ABDOMEN WILL NOT DAMAGE THE NON-PREGNANT UTERUS!"

Uterus is securely suspended in the pelvis and it alongwith the ovaries is better protected by nature than are male sex organs.

- iv. "IT IS DEVOID OF TRUTH THAT A BLOW TO THE FEMALE'S BREASTS CAUSES CANCER".

There are nearly 34,000 females licenced to play otball, in Sweden. Yet Dr. Ingela Palmkvist, Physician for dish national women's footwall team, says, "I have never n a serious breast cancer". Doctors have noted that a call attention to an existing tumour, but is unlikely have caused it.

v. "Menstruation saps a woman's strength and makes her emotionally unfit for strenuous competition".

Women have broken sports record, and won Olympic medals in stages of the menstruation cycle. Some, however, are at disadvantage, just before menstrual cycles with sports rules, the team physicians often treat females with hormones.

While intensive training often delay the onset of menstruation and sometimes interrupts regular periods, women who exercise regularly have fewer menstrual discomforts on the cycle; less premenstrual tension, for example, shorter periods, less bleeding.

vi. "Women are inherently weaker than men".

The scientific studies show that, on average, women's arm strength is typically less than and leg strength equal to that of men of similar size. However the quality of muscle, its contractile properties and ability to exert force, is the same in both sexes. With training, women can increase their muscle mass, although upper body mass will be less, than in male.

vii. "The aerobic power of women, one of the most important determinants of athletic performance in any event lasting longer than five minutes, is much lower than of men".

Girls and Boys start out with the same capacity for oxygen uptake, but when girls reach puberty it slows down, whereas in boys it increases until the mid 20, before dropping. When aerobic power is corrected for size and weight, women are about 15% less than men. Its reason is that, women have smaller heart volume and their blood contains about 15% less haemoglobin, the substance that is responsible for colour of the blood and carries oxygen.

The aerobic power is also related to lean body mass, and women average about 75% lean mass to 25% fat, compared with men's 85% to 15%. However, the modern training methods, can reduce body fat and thereby raise the proportion of lean mass. The fat percentage of world class female distance runners is often close to that of male runners.

Women's cardiac output i.e., the amount of blood pumped each minute, after intense training increases. Thus, not surprisingly, in a test of top runners of both sexes, women's aerobic capacity was only 4.3 % lower than men's.

Before 1979 women were barred from any Olympic running event longer than 1500 meters. Yet women had been running in marathons as official competitors since Kathrine Switzer broke into the Boston Marathon in 1967. She was entered by her coach under her initials, had a private medical check up, and was not seen to be a woman until she took off her sweatshirt. She was suspended by Amateur Athletic Union for fraudulent entry. However, the AAU, in 1972 relented and allowed women to run in Marathons. In 1979 the American college of sports medicine recommended that females be allowed to compete in long distance running at the national and international level in the same distance running as the male counterparts compete. At the Olympics held recently at Los Angeles, the first women's Olympic Marathon was organised when the gold medalist a woman ran the marathon in just longer than the top man.

The female athletes have won a major victory, in achieving an Olympic women's marathon. But they are far behind in the race for sports equity. The verdict of the sports medicine experts is that women should not compete against men in contact sports, because their smaller stature, lighter weight and lesser muscle mass expose them to injury. At the same time, they believe that women should be free to compete against other women in any sport they wish. And all agree that there should be more open events such as the marathon. There is no scientific, medical, physiological, social, Psychological or sexual justification for prohibiting women from entering Olympic competition in most sports.

So like ~~other~~ all fields women need to clear their minds from such myths and struggle to achieve rights in field of sports. From very childhood girls should be encouraged not only for 'Giddy Patolas' but for out door games also. On part of the parents to encourage their children without any differentiation of sex is fundamental but alongwith this help to provide conditions for female children in school and colleges is also needed. Sports women reach this status after struggle, and to fight these inequalities should also be part of their struggle.

A Short Story TO HIS FUTURE LOVE STORY

LAST evening my husband told me that he was tired of seeing me looking so washed out and sick. When I come back from the office the least I can expect is a smiling face, he said. You don't even give me that. It's bad enough that the house is in a mess, but you don't seem to have time to entertain my friends properly either, when they come home. They must be wondering what sort of a wife I have. I tell you, ~~and~~ I'm tired of all this. And he walked out of the house slamming the door behind him.

My baby looked up and went back to her toy. 'My darling', I told her, 'my rani beti, do you like the toy, do you like it baby? Next time I'll get you a big doll that will open and close its eyes just like you. I nuzzled her and she gurgled with pleasure.

What I say doesn't even affect you, groaned my husband, returning to the room. Look at you, your face un-washed, your hair uncombed, lying on the bed like that, that's not what I married you for. For heaven's sake get up and prepare something, my friends are coming home for tea. To-day? I said. Yes, today, today he mimicked. Is the Maharani too busy to look after them?

I got up and went to the kitchen. O God, where do I begin? the dishes had to be washed, the dinner to be made, also snacks for his friends..... I put the potatoes to boil, best that I made some aloo sabji and used the rest of them for tikkies. Then I took out the sooji to make halwa, that should be enough for them. Why did they have to come today? I was tired after a day at the office. The dishes were so dirty, I didn't expect my mother-in-law to wash them, but she should have soaked them in water at least. I suppose I should be thankful she remembered to fill the buckets before the water finished. Please God, don't let the electricity go off too, I prayed, these power cuts will be the death of me.

I put the dal in the pressure cooker and began the dishes. I was so tired. How could I smile.... what was there to smile about?

The bus back home had been so crowded. More so than usual, because the previous bus was held up by some college boys who were protesting about the irregular service. I could hardly get in and once I got in I couldn't move.

It was horrible. I don't understand these men. Even if you are sitting they edge closer and closer to you and you can't do anything. When the bus reached the ^{stop}, the bus had started moving again. I told the driver to stop and he said something rude, but did. The air, how fresh it was, and the slight breeze against my face so cleansing. I walked home slowly, this

is the only time I ever get to myself. Sometimes I wished that I didn't know typing so that I didn't have to work, but if I didn't work we couldn't make ends meet. In my husband's matrimonial advertisement his family had insisted that they wanted a working girl, so I suppose it wouldn't be fair at this stage to say that I just couldn't cope. When I was working before marriage, Ma would pack me a lunch of soft parathas with sabji. And when I came back she would make me a cup of hot tea and ask me how her rani beti was. Then she would talk to me and tell me all the gossip... how lazy the jamadarani was, ... how Mrs. Sharma next door had a fight with her husband... I always had a good laugh about Mrs. Sharma's fights, she had such a loud voice that we could hear her in the house, I wondered what she fought too but I don't know how to, so whenever I'm upset I just go to the bathroom and cry instead.

They all think that nothing bothers me. Let them. I long for Ma to come here and stay with me for some time but when I last wrote, now you are a married woman and you must understand that a mother does not stay with her daughters, it is not the right thing to do. I miss her so much. No one talks to me here, oh they do in one sense, but not like Ma.

My mother-in-law called me then and I went to her room where she was lying down. She is always lying down. What are you doing, she asked me. She always wants to know what I'm doing whether I am in the kitchen or in the bathroom. Looking. I said. Do you want any help, she asked as she did every day. No mummy, you rest, I replied as I did every day and returned to the kitchen.

I remember once when I had said that I did need some help (some people were coming over for dinner that day), she never let me live it down. This poor child is still young, she kept telling the guest, we just can't cope with the housework. She smiled gently as she said this and the guest looked pityingly at me. Later my husband reproached me for letting such an old woman do all

and began to wash the other half for the tikkis. Vegetables were so expensive these days, not to mention essentials like sugar. With the fall of the last government we all thought that prices would go down, one needs another emergency to get our country out of this mess, my husband had said as he cast his vote. But they've gone up still further. Once economy meant bying a saree or two less, now we have to cut down on things like fruit and sugar.

Household stuff is almost impossible to buy. At the time of my marriage my parents gave me a refrigerator and a TV set. We would never have been able to buy them on our own. In the beginning my family was against giving the set, but my husband's side insisted and as they were taking any my parents said that they might as well. Still, it was all so expensive they spent about Rs. 20,000 on the wedding and even then people

said that they could have married me off in better style, considering that there were just two of us.

Now my husband has taken out a policy for our daughter so that when it matures in another 20 years, we will have Rs. 50,000 for the marriage expenses. The price of gold has gone up so much... my parents gave me four golds sets. I doubt if I can give my daughter even two. God knows how well ever have money to build a house after that, and house rents are soaring, too, our tinny two-bedroom house costs us Rs. 900 a month and that is supposed to be cheap; No wonder people are corrupt....how else can they build such huge houses in a city like this? That way my husband is not bad he doesn't take bribes, but when he sees other people doing it he gets mad and takes it out on me.

I put the oil on the gas and began frying the tikkies. They should here any minute. O God, time for baby's milk....I put the milk to heat and got the bottle ready. Is everything ready? I asked my husband from the next room. Almost, I replied.

He never entered the kitchen. On principle, He can't even heat a glass of milk. That's woman's job, he said when I once asked him to heat the milk for the baby while I was engaged in some other work. Once when I was ill and my mother-in-law away, there was no one to look after the house. What chaos, My husband lived for two whole days on bread, butter and cheese, while I, in bed was given the same. I had no alternative but to get well and stagger about the house cleaning up the place and washing the dishes which had mounted alarmingly. During those two days we used twelve cups and saucers, six plates, seven glasses, four knives, eight spoons and two forks....all of which awaited me. Also two trousers, two shirts, four banyans, one pair of pyjama kurta and three handkerchiefs, Thank God you're all right, he sighed when he heard me in the kitchen that evening. It is the nearest he has ever come to paying me a compliment--If you can call it one.

Well, the tikkies were ready now. Just a few minutes for the halwa, too. I quickly gave baby her bottle, went back to the kitchen and heard my husband yell that they had come. For heaven's sake get dressed, he said coming into the kitchen, you should have finished everything by now, once you get stuck in the kitchen you get stuck, learn to be systematic. I rushed to the bedroom and fever-ishly washed my face and combed my hair. Should I change my saree or not...might as well, or he'd say some thing again. I changed and went to the drawing room with a smile.

NAMASTE, Bhabiji, namaste, his friend's said, nice smells coming from the kitchen. Oh it's nothing, I murmured, what will you have, tea or coffee? Please don't bother, they said No bother

bother at all, I replied, you must have something. Oh well, said one, I'll have coffee, the other said he would have tea, but not to bother about anything else, no formality please. No, no, not at all, I said and went to the kitchen.

I put one vessel for the tea and another for the coffee.

Why couldn't they have asked for the same thing? Sometimes I felt glad that I was working, it provided some variety to this life of cooking and washing and cleaning. In the morning I got up at 5 am, made bed tea for everyone, milk for baby, then got breakfast ready for the family. Sometimes my husband wants parathas, sometimes toast and eggs, sometimes he gets this craving for dosas. Then I pack my lunch for the office, make the beds and rush to catch the bus to work. No time to talk to baby or cuddle her.

I took the tea and coffee to the drawing room. Thank you, thank you, they said, perfect weather for hot drinks. I looked out of the window. It was raining.... I hadn't even known. Yes, perfect weather for hot drinks. I looked out of the window. It was raining..... I hadn't even know. Yes, perfect weather for tea and pakodas, they exclaimed, Good idea, excellent idea, beamed my husband, let us have some pakodas. Ah, this is what you would call doing poetic justice to the weather. So I went to the kitchen to do poetic justice to the weather.

When they were ready I put the pakodas, tikkies and halwa on the tray and took it to them, Wonderful, Wonderful, they said. What a feast you have laid out for us, you really shouldn't have bothered. No bother, no bother at all, I said. So, they inquired, how is your office? Fine, I smiled.

It wasn't. Not now. In the beginning when I started working, it was all so interesting. I met new people, got a salary, felt independent. But people are so strange. One day I happened to talk to one of my colleagues longer than I usually do. He was telling me about a book that he was reading and I got brought up in what he was saying that I hardly realised how time had passed. So you had a nice chat did you, the girl who sits next to me said that evening. Yes, I replied, and then something in the way she was looking at me made me go red.

The next day when he lent me the book I noticed another of my colleagues (male) looking meaningfully at me. Now whenever by chance I happen to talk to him everyone in the office watches and feel so wretched. The men, especially, gossip so much. At lunch time they sit amongst themselves and giggle. They seem to

notive everything, who is talking to whom, who is wearing what and who the best favours.. everything. They never seem to discuss books or music...and I miss both. We get bored yet, they say, we don't know what to do on week-ends. Oh now I long to be bored. Or just lie in bed with a book and listen to music. That's my idea of heaven.

It's nice to be independent, said my husband's friend, women like you will change the face of this country. Very nice pakodas, very nice indeed, Thank you, you're very kind I murmured. We don't feel like leaving, he added as he settled more comfortably into his chair, Stay for dinner, said my husband at once, then we can all relax and gup-shup. That will be too much of a bother for your wife, said his friend. No problems, no problem, said my husband heartily, what is there from the food is ready, there is no such formality in this house. They all looked at me. Of course, I said, it's no bother

So I excused myself and went to the kitchen. Would there be enough food for them? I felt like fingering the dal and sabji into their faces and was shocked at the force of the feeling. My husband followed me into the kitchen. Will the food be enough for them? It had better be, I replied, What is wrong with you, stop acting difficult, he hissed. Stop breathing down my neck, I said, you invited them, not I, This is the limit my husband said, I don't understand you. Is this the time to make a scene, Why don't you make another sabji and some khir? Because there is no other sabji and no milk for khir, I replied.

We stared into each other's faces. I should have expected this, said. How do you expect me to go, he said furiously, then who will look after them? That's your problem said my husband, this is what comes of being unsystematic. But as you told me not to buy more vegetables or milk than was absolutely necessary because of the prices going up, I reminded him and this made him even angrier.

What is the matter, can I help you, asked my husband's friend walking into the kitchen. No, no, please, I said, I can manage. I wondered what he would do if I had said, please help, the thought made me smile and my husband, seeing my face, gave a sigh of relief and ushered his friend out of the kitchen.

FOR dinner there were puris, alho, dal, karelas and mangoes, with the cream that I had been collecting for the week's butter. I was so tired by the end of it that I could

hardly eat. Then I put baby to sleep and gave them all coffee
They finished the coffee and said , chalo, chalo let us go for a
movie. Now , I said? Of course, they said ,if we rush we can get
tickets for the night show. chalo, let us go, Let us, agreed my
husband, these imprompt decisions are always so enjoyable, one
shouldn't always plan.

I have to wash the dishes, I said. Oh do that tomorrow,
they said, you mustn't always work so hard. But I have to go to
office tomorrow I said and I'm tired. Don't make a fuss, my
husband replied, you are not the only one who has to go to office,
even I have to go. That is the trouble with you, you don't know
how to enjoy yourself. And mataji will look after the baby, don't
make her an excuse now. Chalo, chalo, let us hurry.

I put the dishes in the sink and then we rushed, The tickets
were not available so we bought them in black-eight rupees each.
In spite of that we were just four rows away from the screen. As
the hero and heroine sang their first song to each other I fell
asleep. A deep sleep. My husband woke me up when it got over. They
were all mused. Even here she sleeps, said my husband indulgently.

We reached our colony at 1 am, just managed to get the
night service bus back home. I slept in the bus too. As we walked
back home from the bus stop my husband's mood expanded. What a
night, what a night, he exclaimed. He stopped and looked up at the
heavens.

Palace-roof of cloudless nights;
Paradise of golden nights;
Deep, immeasurable, vast.....

he quoted dreamily. I leaned sleepily against his arm and he looked
at me with something akin to pain. Sleep always sleep, he said,
why can't you rise above such purely physical reactions...you
lack soul.

When we reached home. I made the beds and sank into mine
with a groan of satisfaction. Heaven. The trouble with you, said my
husband, is that your whole attitude is wrong. You'll never get
tired if you change your attitude to work. Learn from Kahlil
Girbran, and he quoted.

Always you have been told that
work is a curse, and labour a misfor
fortune.

But I say to you that when
you work you fulfil a part of
earth's further dream, assigned to
you when that dream was born.

That is poetry philosophy, truth quoted by husband

So were the packages, I sighed and slept.

WITH THANKS FROM ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY

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