

# **Report on the first Consultative meeting of the Sub Committee on 'Women and the Games'**

## **A Commonwealth Games 2010 and CEQUIN initiative**

Date: 11th May, 2010 (Tuesday)

Time: 10a.m.-1p.m. (followed by lunch)

Venue: Commonwealth Games Office, New Delhi

- This report gives the detailed account of the proceedings of the first Consultative meeting of the sub-committee on 'Women and the Games' convened by CEQUIN based on the notes taken in the course of the meeting.
  
- The points iterated by the different participants have been paraphrased keeping the content of the presentations intact.

**List of Participants:**

1. Suresh Kalmadi, Chairperson, Commonwealth Games
2. Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay retd. (armed forces)
3. Tanya Chaitanya (Femina Editor)
4. Kanta Singh (Women Power Connect)
5. Kadambari Murali (Sports Editor, HT - representing Shobhana Bhartia)
6. Abha Sahgal (Principal, Sanskriti School)
7. Ravi Verma (Regional Director, ICRW)
8. Nisha Agarwal (CEO, OXFAM)
9. Syeeda Hamid (Member Planning Commission)
10. Jyoti Suri (President, Latit Group)
11. Kalli Puri (India Today)
12. Gul Panang, Actress
13. Barkha Dutt, Managing Editor, NDTV
14. Indu Puri, Sports Woman, Arjuna Awardee for Table Tennis
15. Radhika Kaul Batra, UNDP
16. Sushma Kapoor (Deputy Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM)
17. Gita Gupta (UNIFEM)
18. Anupam Srivastava (UNIFEM)
19. Gitanjali Master (UNICEF)
20. Jayshree Raman (Manager, Brand Management-Lalit Group)
21. Gitanjali Aiyar, Organising Committee, Commonwealth Games, 2010
22. Asha Nayar Basu, Organizing Committee member, Commonwealth Games, 2010
23. Sara Pilot, CEQUIN
24. Lora Prabhu, CEQUIN

The first Consultative Meeting of the 'Women and the Games' initiative was held on the 11 May, 2010 at the Common Wealth Games Office. The meeting was a part of the endeavour undertaken by CEQUIN in collaboration with the Common Wealth Games Organising Committee towards utilising the opportunity provided by Common Wealth Games (henceforth CWG) to promote women in sports.

This report gives a detailed account of the proceedings and the discussions of the meeting.

### **Welcome Note**

**Sara Pilot, CEQUIN:** The session began with a warm welcome by Sara, CEQUIN. She thanked the eminent members for their cooperation and consent to become a part of the Committee. She stated that the purpose of the first consultative meeting was to garner valuable ideas, inputs and suggestions from the eminent body of the Committee members for the purpose of :

1. Employing the vehicle of sports to create awareness.
2. Evolving strategies for enhancing capabilities of women and girls.
3. Promoting women's access and participation.
4. Cultivating and enhancing women's leadership roles and decision making capabilities.

She informed that the present base and infrastructure for meeting and strategising collectively was available for the period of the CWG. She emphasized that although the present focus revolved around the time-frame of the Games, the issues involved had a much wider time-range and there was a concerted need to look at them in this perspective and take the tasks forward in a sustained manner even after the Games.

### **Round of Introductions**

#### **Introductory presentation giving the overview and the main objectives**

**Lora Prabhu, CEQUIN:** The round of introductions was followed by a presentation by Lora which gave an overview of the vision and the objectives behind the initiative. The idea was to foster women's leadership through the idiom of sports. The mandate she stated was to identify, nurture and unleash the sporting potential of women and girls for the purpose of both individual development and contribution to the nation.

The scope was to develop participation and promote high performance, through a multi-dimensional, lifecycle approach that took into account the various social, cultural, economic and political causes that perpetuated gender inequality and discrimination in sports and other wakes of life.

She mentioned the five identified thematic areas as being :

#### **1. Optimal health**

Promote nutrition, health and wellness of women and girls

#### **2. Enhanced Capabilities**

Promote holistic education and skill building amongst women and girls

#### **3. Violence-free life**

Address various forms violence against women and girls that perpetuate women's disempowerment.

### **5. Enhanced Access**

The prime focus would be on creating safe spaces and promoting access to opportunities, resources and services.

It was necessary to reflect on the situation where women and girls had little or no access to sport facilities. The focus was not elite schools that may have these facilities and women and girls who may be able to go to fancy clubs for swimming, etc. but women and girls who were practically at the fringes of the society.

### **5. Leadership and Agency**

Promote women's agency through decision making and leadership roles at all levels both within the household and sports structures and institutions and the need for gender sensitisation at all levels.

On the question of -Why women and sports?

Lora pointed out that although there was a dearth of statistics, it was generally known that participation of women in sports was abysmally low. Stereotypes, related to women's physical abilities and social roles lowered the value placed on women's sport. An attitude that consequently translated into inadequate resources, infrastructure, unequal wages and rewards. The powerful symbolism provided by women participating in sports could be very effective in countering these existing views and practices.

Participation in sports would lead to long-term health benefits. The presentation also highlighted the psychological, emotional and medical benefits of sport as a basis for positive embodiment. In a situation where women were prone to prioritize the need of others before their own positive embodiment would imply a situation where women and girls manage the care of themselves along with the care of others. Self-care involving personal time and space was critical for the well-being of women and is the right as well as the responsibility a woman owes to herself. Thus, it was necessary to iterate that women and girls have the right and responsibility to create active, healthy lifestyles to sustain vitality in their lives. Furthermore, sports was seen to expand opportunities available for education and for development of a range of essential life skills e.g. teamwork, goal-setting, communication, negotiation, pursuit of excellence in performance. Acquisition of valuable skills in management, negotiation and decision-making empowers women and girls to become leaders in all areas of community life, as well as in the household. Sports as a dynamic tool could be used to develop alternative norms. Sport was seen to provide women and girls with an alternative avenue for participation in the social and cultural life of their communities.

The broad objectives of the initiative was to:-

1. Encourage participation of women and girls in sports
2. Identify and nurture women sports icons, leaders, decision makers and role models within sports at all the levels.
3. Engage men and boys in challenging and changing gender inequality.

This required a commitment to create a wider enabling environment for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This would involve enhancing women's capabilities through education and health; ensuring freedom from violence; increasing their access to and control over opportunities and resources, and promoting their agency and leadership roles.

Lora concluded the presentation with some of the preliminary thoughts from CEQUIN's point of view for ensuring equal opportunities and outcomes for women and girls in sports and hoped that the discussion would lead to valuable inputs, suggestions and ideas. The objective of the meeting she stated was to collectively strategise on the possible courses of actions. In the long run it would be helpful if we could come up with some concrete policy recommendations and a set of good practices that could be shared and operationalised.

### **Presentation by UN Agencies**

**Gita Gupta, UNIFEM :** The presentation on 'Sport For Gender Equality', was shared by Gita Gupta. The presentation began with a quote-“My trainers taught me to believe in myself. I was inspired and learnt determination....., sports allows you to get to know yourself”. She stated that sports is one of the tools for empowering women and the UN agencies focussed on an empowerment approach using a rights-based framework. She stated that it was crucial to emphasize that having an opportunity was not enough, they needed to be complimented by enabling circumstances. So the focus was on ensuring substantive equality which goes beyond formal equality, which basically implies equality of results. For instance providing a school is not enough, there have to be the additional facilities that make the school workable and effective.

Women and girls do not have equality in nutrition, health, educational opportunities, participation in public social life, and leadership remains elusive for most girls. The socialisation processes over the years look upon women as a burden, a commodity and not a human being who can bear rights. Gender-mainstreaming is a tool with the potential of transforming laws, policies, programmes from gender neutral to gender-sensitive. It works to promote women's rights which leads to the empowerment of women which in turn leads to the ultimate goal of gender equality. This can be done by providing spaces and platforms which promote a sharing, discussions and dialogues, sharing of experiences and brokering partnerships. She said that partnerships were critical not only to UNIFEM but to all organisations. Some of the things she noted that promote inequalities as being-

- The policies, legal frameworks and regulations are not completely in line with gender equality.
- Groups advocating for gender equality do not often have adequate voice and influence.
- The institutional and organisational capacities and practices are not strong enough to promote women's rights and specific proven models at the community level are not enough as we need more of them.

She said that although in the present times there was more national and international commitment, greater political will and more national plans and greater resources there is at the same time rise in problems also and somehow the problems seems to outpace the programmes.

She then went on to talk about the CEDAW Convention, the international bill on the rights for women and one of the guiding principles for UNIFEM's works. Convention and this is the convention that talks about substantive equality which goes beyond the formal equality and equality of results and all of our work is evidenced based policy advocacy, bringing diverse stakeholders together, having discussions on the CEDAW Committee members, the government, various organisation and the civil society that can come together and discuss a

better ways of implementing the CEDAW with all stakeholders. All countries of the South-Asia are signatories to the Convention. UNIFEM worked with the government, the different civil society organisations and we are trying to develop a regional pool of CEDAW experts. They were also linking this with gender responsive policy tools and gender budgeting.

Poverty being a huge issue on South-Asia sports provided one of the ways in which getting out of poverty and making a better future. But all this really hinges on rights based approach in the home and outside. She also stressed that as pointed out by Lora it was important to work with boys and men. Sports helps in developing a sense of identity and accessing opportunities. Stressing that numbers do not translate into actual empowerment, she said that the individuals need to be empowered himself/herself. There was thus a need to promote women's agency, as in the instance of gender budgeting where women have been encouraged to articulate their own priorities and concerns. The patriarchal system made choice and freedom difficult for women.

She agreed with Sara that it was still a long way to go. Women and decision making process was probably a long way off, though progress was underway, they were not at the forefront.

She concluded with some final thoughts:

- In terms of women's empowerment and promoting gender equality promoting interaction and exercising practical experience was very important-the sharing of experience can be made a side programme in the CWG.
- It can give inspiration and ideas, influence policy related to women and sport, that is something we could try and do and
- It was important to create and develop and have a vision for women and sports so that collective efforts could be made towards the identified objectives.

**Sara:** Thanked the presenter and requested Syeeda Hamid (Member Planning Commission) to share her views.

**Syeeda Hamid** (Member Planning Commission):

Thanked Sara and congratulated Lora for a succinct presentation substantive overview. She then congratulated CEQUIN for having come up with the idea of using sports as a vehicle for women's empowerment and utilising the platform of CWG was a commendable idea. She said that it was an idea that had not occurred to her inspite of having been a member of Planning Commission all many years. She also congratulated them for having got together an illustrious group and being able to tap all the sectors and getting on board women who really know how to move things and also some men because their partnership was crucial.

She said that the 11 Five Year Plan had the slogan or rather the title of the plan was 'Towards a Faster and a More Equitable Growth' and the idea was to really entrench it in the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. She said that the objectives laid out by Lora in her presentation was very well thought out. There was a need to keep in mind that the focus was on the marginalised women and girls from rural areas, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities and women who are handicapped in many ways, not necessarily physically handicapped women although they should also have recourse to and be able to intervene in the sports scene. She mentioned two main points:

- The objective was to get women and girls from those segments of our society that often tended to fall out of the radar screen. She cited the example of states like Jharkhand, Palamu, Latehar, Sariakelela, which were at the margins and yet thriving with talent. There was a need to understand and dignify this reality. They needed to be brought in with the spirit of participation and dignity.

- There was a need to set monitorable targets which are time bound deliverables. For instance within a period of one month have a review of the targets.

She said that there was a need to come together although all of them worked in different areas their objectives was the same. She said that she would be sharing the insights and ideas emerging in the meeting to her colleagues in the Planning Commission.

**Sara:** Thanked Syeeda Hamid for sharing her thoughts and expressed that they would be valuable especially for CEQUIN as a convenor. Objectives needed to be worked out in a time bound manner.

**Kadambari Murali** (Sports Editor, HT - representing Shobhana Bhartia):

Added that the problem was not only with rural and marginalised women but also the growing urban population of migrant workforce who were deprived of access to facilities and access related to sports even when these were available in the cities.

She also shared that often the media did not report on events that were crucial with regards to sports. She gave the example of the United States where a legislation had been passed and implemented across the board, where girls in the schools would have the same opportunity as boys. The present body was important because change could not be brought in immediately.

She also talked about the difficulties women faced and the grievances that women expressed in terms of the ill-treatment meted out to them in sports hostels. There were numerous cases of sexual harassment where young girls without any education and background were exploited by the coaches in return for getting into the teams even if they were talented and skilful. These cases often did not come up as the women had no recourse to bodies that could help her in such situations and she also did not want to risk the better life that sports was making possible for her family.

She said that there were numerous examples of this kind taking place in IIS Patiala one of the most well known sports hostel in the country. She felt that there was a need for:

- Legislation and its enforcement at the various level.
- To document the number of women engaged in sports. As Lora mentioned we may not know the exact statistics, but there were numerous examples across India from different sports. There is just so much out there and it is unfortunate that it only comes out periodically.
- There is a need to foster change beyond the CWG.

**Gul Panag:**

Put across her experience of having worked with various government agencies in Punjab, and stated the often the government had a very good blueprint for things. The Constitution had various provisions that guaranteed equality for women like the Articles 14, 15 (1), 16, 29 (B), made upholding discrimination legally binding for the institutions of the states in all realms and just in sports. Furthermore India was already a signatory to the CEDAW. Thus it would be really helpful to:

- Get into the activist mode and ensure that the existing blueprints are executed in a befitting manner.
- NIS can be looked up and take the help of the media and expose and embarrass the establishment.

**Kalli Puri** (India Today)

Brought her experience of being a part of a corporate and thereby the focus on monitorable targets with time-bound deliverables. So, the idea was to do one big signature act through this initiative, which can then be used as a role model for starting many more. For instance, if a

young star could be identified from a rural area, then groomed to win the Olympic medal. That then could be flagged as a success story around whom one could build and rally around. This person could serve as an inspiration and be a brand ambassador and do different things. The winning of the gold medal by Vijender Singh has opened up many different areas in the sport and that is what is required. Her main points were to:

- Focus on monitorable and achievable targets with time-bound deliverables.
- Identify young women, not so much from a privileged background, who you can use as an icon and a brand ambassador.
- Come up with one signature event that could be used as a rallying point.

#### **Gitanjali Master (UNICEF)**

She also emphasized on the need to focus on deliverables and create an enabling environment. In addition there is a need to create an environment macro wise. The CWG could serve as a platform, to enhance visibility around the issue of sports and women where one is not predisposed to understanding women and sports.

- The idea was to get people at all levels from the grass-roots as well as the urban middle class as well as the more privileged to understand the role of sports in empowering women.
- Monitoring the implementation of existing policies in the government programmes either through a) activism and b) by looking at success stories and doing it in a more radical and a more structured way.
- To commit as a Committee to identify grass-roots heroes who may not just be the girls but also the agents who have allowed the girls to come forward, there are many times the fathers, mothers, the brothers there are schools teachers and men.

#### **Kanta Singh (Women Power Connect)**

Hailing from Haryana and speaking from experience and a sports background that was in a sense underprivileged. Her concern was that there were no safe places for women to partake in sports. She was presently involved in organising sports for young girls in Haryana. Their demand was for building of stadiums in villages and allotting separate time for girls. She mentioned that they were in interactions with the Chief Minister who had sanctioned some money for building stadium. Recounting her own experience of 30 years ago she felt that movement for them as sports women was easier as compared to girls at present. The physical safety point was not so much of a concern then and they were used to travelling with boys for days to Chennai in second class trains.

She stated that there was a need to talk about:

- Achievable targets in terms of safe sports spaces for women.
- Have similar prize money
- Issues related to daily allowances for women as well as cases related to sexual harassment.
- Highlight the achievements of a number of girls who were doing well.

#### **Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay retd. (armed forces)**

She expressed that situations had improved considerably since her time. She recounted her experience in school in Delhi where girls were not encouraged to participate in sports and the completely different environment in the armed forces where talents were nurtured and given the space to flourish. She was trained for shot-put and went on to become the all India



champion, never having played anything in her life. But in the present times she noticed that lots of girls were going out and parents were encouraging and showing interest. She also recounted a function in Greater Noida where there were more girls than boys and they were mostly from the middle class. So the focus needed to be on:

- Identifying the talents young and training them.
- Get women and girls to access the facilities.

### **Suresh Kalmadi, Chairperson, Commonwealth Games**

Mr. Kalmadi said that although the organising Committee consists of 40% women, it was a rare occasion where he was outnumbered by women in the meeting. He expressed his pleasure that Sara had taken the initiative with the CEQUIN and brought together an eminent set of people which made the possibility of achieving the objectives higher.

He informed that 50% of the 8000 foreigners coming in for the CWG would be women.

This Sub Committee was extremely important one. He then gave details about the Games Village which going to be handed over to the Organising Committee (OC) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. The Mayor had been nominated and he requested Sara on behalf of the Sub Committee to suggest names for a Deputy Mayor.

There was a need to get the limelight on Olympic sports that was played in 220 countries of the world vis-i-vis cricket played in only 10 countries. The Prime Minister has put aside a budget for sports training and scientific support for the Indian players. But the city is also benefiting from it. There is now a state-of-the-art airports in the city. He said that the vision would be towards getting the Olympics Games to India. He also said that there was a need to work out plans for utilising the facilities and infrastructure after the games and hoped that the Committee would be active in that.

He said that he would be presenting the detailed plans of the CWG that the OC had been working on. He expressed that he was happy that the Committee was meeting today and looked forward for greater interactions.

### **EXCHANGE OF IDEAS**

#### **Gul Panag, Actor**

Inquired to Mr. Kalmadi if there was any possibility in his capacity to encourage the game viewership with a female perspective. Was there a possibility of bringing school girls and allow them discounted, perhaps and even free viewing as it had an inspirational value to view female athletes from all over the world. Girls from 8-15 years could be brought ahead through schools.

Suresh Kalmadi: Said that it was a good idea worth exploring and there was a possibility for such arrangement in selected events but not all.

**Kadambari Murali** also thought that it was a good idea as the inclusion of women in any sporting event was a good sign. Given that there was 10 years for the Olympic Games she felt that the time was ripe to start now to get women oriented programmes and create a strategy for India representing the Olympics and have it winning the Olympics. This could be adapted as a theme across federations and at all levels.

**Kanta Singh:** Felt that the state level players, say the hockey players as well as other athletes should be exempted for having to procure the tickets and given the opportunity to watch the games. Furthermore there needed to be more women in the Federations which select the players in different games.

**Gul Panang:** Agreed that at least 50% of federation members needed to be women and this held especially for the federations that sent women boxers, athletes, and wrestlers. It is the obligation of the state and the state has to put in a determined and focussed effort to proactively implement it.

**Suresh Kamadi:** said that at present there was a general body for federation where 2 people from every state were present, there was thus a need for the women to get in at the state level. Women needed to enter the fray and if they started now things were bound to change. The problem was that women were not coming forward. He also suggested that he would be happy to nominate people in instances where it was possible. 50% women are participating, and women are better.

**Sushma Kapoor (Deputy Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM):**

Wanted to flag the issue of violence that has been raised in the beginning by CEQUIN. Given that 50% of the 8000 athletes were going to be women, there was a need to look at the safety aspect of the women athletes as well as others participating in various capacities in the CWG. Taking the instance of the large number of women coming from other states as part of the workforce, she iterated that there was an immediate need to look at the issue of violence and safety of these women. Speaking as a representative of UNIFEM that has been addressing violence against women both in domestic and public spaces, and also on behalf of UNICEF and United Nations DP, UNFPA, ILO she felt that one could focus on some of the thoughts that had emerged through the discussion.

- Having icons was sometimes superficial, but powerful icons can be very good as a medium to put across the message.
- Some words that stuck out were ‘voice, choice, freedom and rights’.
- Greater participation of girls and women in sports and using sports as a medium to enhance women’s leadership in sports brings back the focus to CEDAW which is the convention on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and to which India is a signatory.
- The focus that the meeting was not merely an agenda leading upto the CWG but went much beyond that.

**Suresh Kalmadi-** Agreed that there was a need to take this effort beyond the CWG. He said that OC had so far been involved in other aspects of the preparation and had not been able to give more priority to the involvement and safety of women, he felt that it was the right time to put concerted efforts and the greater involvement of women was a good starting point. Committee could be formed that can look into all the aspects and a deputy mayor could be there to look after the women. As per what was mentioned earlier, the Committee could play a vital role in the Games. There can be whole Committee looking into the issues related to women’s safety and their problems.

The Committee can also do the work of identifying the icons. He mentioned Saina Mehwal.

**Radhika Kaul Batra, UNDP: suggested that:**

- they identify 6-7 people players from across the country, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and other states where we have these women, some wrestlers, boxers and others where these women can represent what we are talking about.
- There can be a team which can come up with a set of events, have a selection and use them as ambassadors to take up the issues that have been identified.
- To think of integrating these ideas into the CWG.

**Sushma Kapoor (Deputy Regional Programme Director, UNIFEM):**

- Suggested that out of the 7-8 icons to be identified, at least 2 should be men. It is necessary involve men who will speak for the issue that women need to be involved.
- There could also be a woman elected representative leaders from one of the Panchayats. This can be a long term plan where the woman representative speaks for the issue that facilities and infrastructure should be available for girls at all the levels.

**Ravi Verma (Regional Director, ICRW) :**

Given the wide range of issues that were coming up for discussion, he believed that CEQUIN would cull out the essential points that they could collectively work on as these were issues that needed engagement at the long term. He said that the CWG provided the opportunity of laying the foundation for something more fundamental towards changing the masculinisation of sports. In the long run it had to be worked out at different levels. He shared that his organization was piloting a scheme in Mumbai that involved about 50 coaches and about 100 athletes in various sports like kho-kho, hockey etc. In attempting to change the motivational language they realised that it was the coaches who were doing the maximum damage and they shifted their focus from working with the athletes to working with the coaches. He explained that coaches were extremely insensitive to gender issues. So if this Committee has to operationalise some of the institutional mechanisms one would be to go and take stock of the existing coaches, training modules and the existing attitudes and interactions, and then try and bring some kinds of changes in that. Some tangible programmes can be put in place like building modules. He emphasized the importance of adapting gender sensitive coaching in sports to the larger body like the NIS.

Informing about the testing modules, he said that if the 7 were successfully piloted in Mumbai over this next 6 months then it would be ready to be adapted and tested in different settings.

- Sports bodies and the coaching of coaches was critical issue. The entire sporting and the motivational language was extremely masculine and demeaning to women's bodies.
- He offered the technical expertise for adapting gender sensitive coaching in sports to the larger bodies.

**Abha Sahgal (Principal, Sanskriti School):**

She strongly agreed that coaches needed to be coached. Speaking as a person who is in a school in Delhi, a metropolitan she shared that even in cases where the girl child was hailing from privileged background she was not given the same opportunity and motivation as boys neither from the family nor the school. The coaches are much into the boys and getting them the medals. Just as there could not be good teaching in class unless there are good grading systems for teachers, sports cannot be improve in the absence of a strong programme for our coaches.

The other point she felt was that there were girl-children who were good in sports but there was a huge amount of favouritism in sports. She also informed that CBSE has come out with a curriculum for the primary level which was extremely helpful.

There is a need for

- Coaching programmes for the coaches.
- We need to have them understand that their job is extremely important and that they can dampen the initiative.
- The kind of language used is extremely important.

- Structure and curriculum were extremely important.

**Jyoti Suri (Lalit Group):**

Felt that short term plan was quite clearly the focus on CWG. In the long term enabling environment had to be created right from the grass-roots. It was unfortunate that facilities for sports did not exist. She said that as a corporate head she took on sports very seriously and it was a part of her responsibility to promote sports.

She recounted some of her involvements in the case of the girls kabbadi team in Kashurgud, Kerela where she had organized matches for both boys and girls team with equal prize money. There were no grounds available for the event so she organized it in a school compound by importing a mat. She had about 5000 people watching this competition but it was shocking for her that there was not a single women in that audience other than herself and her family. Furthermore not a single boy in the audience paid any attention to the girls playing although they were playing way more skillfully and with a lot more etiquette. In the end she announced that she would not be organizing the game the coming year. After the game she had some Muslim women coming to meet her the next day and they said that there were at least five girls who were expert kabaddi players but they were not allowed to play after a certain age in front of males. So this year she was organizing in Kashurgad, an all women's game and audience in the confines of her hotel and she was going to have these girls play kabaddi. But there was only so much she could do but she felt that this impetus should be given at the national level to both boys and girls, create the arena and let the talent come out. She told Mr. Kalmadi that he could contribute towards this as he had been into sports for a very long time and his passion for sports went beyond the CWG. She felt that if we wanted to have champions it the apt time to start. She felt that it was necessary to:

- Create arenas where girls will have the space and spirit for sports right from childhood and only then will we have a healthier generation coming forward.

**Suresh Kalmadi-** Thanked all for the meeting and took his leave for another meeting. He said that it had been wonderful being there and he was able to gain many new ideas. Larger issues that needed to be taken forward had come up. But at present the focus was on the CWG. He said that the next meeting could be used to concretise some of the plans that had emerged in this meeting. He also said that he was looking forward to see the Committee in the Olympic Games. He stated some the fresh ideas, agenda of forthcoming meetings and the tasks of the Committee as being:

- Popularizing and providing viewership in the CWG to girl students.
- Work out how the Committee is going to look at the complaints of the women and how we see that they are not harassed in the games village.
- The women participants could also be looked after by this Committee.
- Hospitality was also an issue and the Committee could also get involved in various cultural programmes with school children.

Sara: informed him that he would be kept updated with the developments after the discussions and the follow-up.

***DISCUSSIONS:***

**Nisha Agarwal (CEO, OXFAM)**

Laid out some points related to the long term agendas. She mentioned that OXFAM had an ongoing big campaign on violence against women from which some similarities could be

drawn in terms of trying to bring about changes in the hearts and minds and attitudes. It was an issue that would take a long time and there was a need to engage with both individuals and institutions. It was an issue that cuts across class. The campaign was in the form of asking individuals to take a pledge to live a violence free life and sign up ten other individuals to do the same. So there were around a million people who had signed up for this effort. She mentioned that ten year old boys who had taken the pledge say that they stand by the sister when they are not allowed to go to play by their fathers and now they were allowed. And now we are trying to take it to schools and universities so that they can be linked up and get a scale and at fact in an institutional level where the whole university or school where students and teachers are saying that they want to have a violence free life. She felt that some of the parallels could be drawn from this campaign. We could involve the media, celebrities and a lot of middle-class volunteers to take it forward. It was a long term effort and there was a concerted need to change the minds and hearts and get girls and women into the arena of sports.

- She felt that a campaign (similar to the one being undertaken by OXFAM on the violence against women) in which people would pledge to send their girl child to partake in sports could be undertaken.

### **Gitanjali Master (UNICEF)**

Also wanted to share on the long term agenda. She informed that UNICEF has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs, in the specific areas of Panchayat Yuva Khel Krida Abhiyan. In certain identified districts UNICEF was programming to try and encourage girls and young women to actually engage and enroll in the existing schemes. UNICEF is very keen on encouraging girls and young women and to advocate to the different people, coaches, teachers, self-help groups and others who are involved.

Thanking her Sara requested Indu Puri for a few words. She said that it has been a conscious effort on her and Lora's part not to predetermine the agenda. Given the abundance of ideas, one should feel free to add anything on, and then consolidate actionable points. Towards the end of the day's discussions she wanted to assure all that CEQUIN would definitely be incorporating the suggestions and working on both the long term and short-term agendas and objectives.

### **Indu Puri, Sports Woman, Arjuna Awardee for Table Tennis**

Thanked the conveners for having her. Reciting the lines "abla nari teri yehi kahani, achal mein doodh aankh mein pani.." which she felt aptly described the deplorable conditions of the majority of the women in the country especially in the rural areas, she said that working for women's empowerment had been a deep seated desire and she saw in this platform a God send medium to realize her efforts.

She said that sports has been shown to have a positive impact in terrorism and crime affected areas. Games like football volleyball or other such community games where not much expenditure was required have helped the youth to channelize their energy.

Involving women or girls in sports would raise their level of confidence.

She felt that the issue of safety was crucial. Although her father had encouraged her, in spite of himself being debarred by his father to represent the state hockey team, she felt that she would be quite apprehensive of letting her daughter travel for sports. Although this had changed and there were many ambitious parents who took their sons and daughters to compete, the exploitation of the girls when they go with the teams not only by the officials but also by their co-travelers exists and is on the rise. She said that it was her dream to open a

sports center only for girls where the parents would not have to worry about their safety in this manner.

She then recounted the boost a self defence programme had provided her and thought that sports could similarly help women.

She also recounted the story of a young girl in Chennai ‘who lives in a bustee and is literally a safai wali’s daughter’, who was a champion in carrom but she was unable to get the Arjuna Award due to the stringent criterias. However people like her could become a role model so that she could inspire people from her background. There were also other girls from rural and tribal areas, hockey players and boxers from Manipur, Jharkhand and Bihar. She felt that once women and girls got into activities the allied activities like health and hygiene and education could also be improved. She then recounted how one of her friends who had a weak vision like hers was not allowed to participate in sports. She felt that there was a need to arrange for positive opportunity for girls who are not privileged and face challenges. Some of the main issues that come up could be stated as:

- The issue of safety- to have a safe women’s only space for sports.

**Sara:** Thanked Indu and introduced Tanya, the editor of Femina magazine from Mumbai who had just arrived and filled her in the proceedings so far.

**Tanya Chaitanya, Editor Femina:**

Tanya recounted the incident where Madhu Sapre, a Femina Miss India who had gone to the Miss Universe contest, and had responded that she would open a world class stadium if she became the Prime Minister of India. She lost in the contest. The point Tanya wanted to make was that sports are not connected with glamour. She felt that it was necessary to make it interesting for a lay person who isn’t really interested in sports so there was a need to give it a little bit of glamour.

She suggested that it would be interesting to have:

- A television show with a mentor and a new discovery. This could be done in various categories.
- Highlighting this through news papers, magazines could bring in certain bit of glamour coming in and people would be interested in these young stars.

There was a discussion on glamourizing sports and an overall agreement was that male sport was also not glamorized. It was only the case of cricket that was over hyped.

**Ravi Verma:** Cautioned that the talk of glamour was again leading us to stereo types that we need to break out of.

**Sara:** Suggested that the issue of glamourising sports was related to get the girls motivated and the parents motivated, more like a means to an end rather than an end in itself,

It was agreed upon that it was more of popularizing the sport rather than glamourising it. It was an effort towards evolving interest. It was also thought that there was a need for mentor-disciple interaction.

**Kadambari Murali**

Suggested that they could also work with male sports icons who were already established and could be those ready to understand and make a change. She gave the example of 5 sisters in

Haryana who were all wrestlers and represented India at various levels, their father supported them despite community disapproval.

**Kanta:** talked of the an International Women's Sports in Australia - an annual event to bring together women on sports. So we can also think in similar line of a national level event to take up issues concerning women in sports, to bring in more women into sports and priorities and work accordingly.

**Gul:** summarized her points:

1. Make sports more inclusive in terms of popularizing its viewership and participation.
2. Women do not feel safe to come and watch even a hockey match. ('I had to come with men'). We need to tackle not only the safety of the athletes but also the audience as one incident would ill marr all the efforts. There was a need to prevent women from getting raped in the parking lots. She said that although she was not sure how this could be done but she felt that it was the crux of the matter.
3. She also felt that the entry of women in larger numbers in the federations and decision making bodies was an important agenda to be pursued in the long run..

**Sara:** felt that there was a need to be careful on the issue of how much they could take up as a Committee. She suggested that this instance what they could put down some actionable points and then go and present it to Mr. Kalmadi, or there could be a representative from the Crime Against Women Cell in the next meeting.

**Kanta:** suggested sensitization of Delhi Police.

**Sara:** said that she had been having discussions where there were talks of more women officers coming up for the games, but these women officers themselves have so many concerns- they don't have toilets and they are also harassed and it is a huge issue.

**Lora:** informed that proceedings of the meeting would be put in the net and circulated through a list serve. She summarised the views and suggestions that emerged out of the meeting at three levels:-

1. Short-term: The first set of tasks were specific kinds and served as a run-up to the games.
  - a) Setting up help desks for women athletes at the Games Village, which could link up with the Women's Desk already being set up by the Delhi Commission for Women. She informed that CEQUIN had already spoken to the Committee about setting up a women's desk. The scope and activities of the desk can be deliberated.
  - b) Gender sensitization training of all the volunteers, men and women
  - c) Specific events for awareness raising during the run up to the Games
  - d) Focussed messaging: The five thematic areas could be focused on for creating messaging to build up the talk about women and sports through as many areas as possible. In this various agencies and organizations that were a part of the Committee could lend their expertise. The UN agencies would provide a whole range of technical support in the thematic areas that we have identified and it is certain that the entire wealth of knowledge would serve to effectively put across the message of substantive rights.
2. In terms of the long term:

- a) There was a need to identify, share and bring on board good practices that we have individually evolved or by others that we may be aware of.. For instance the Sanskriti School sports curriculum could be used as a model, of the ICRW modules for coaching of coaches, etc.
- b) Resources could be pooled in together and each member can contribute in their area of expertise and strength.
- c) A website for the Sub-Committee will be created which can be utilized for sharing information, related activities and as many good practices as possible for anyone to access.
- d) A wider advocacy campaign needed to be chalked out and in this OXFAM could provide valuable ideas. There was an existing campaign on violence against women. There could be further discussions as to whether we could collaborate with the existing campaign or create something new. It would help to see how various campaigns can link it up and synchronize and create an advocacy base.
- e) The media can be proactive on messaging for creating awareness about women and sports.
- f) Some programme geared towards encouraging new talent and creating icons, or a reality show for popularizing sports could also be thought of.
- g) The suggestion regarding an annual event like a conference could be considered.
- h) Focused intervention through specific projects need to be built

### 3. Policy level recommendations:

Lora stated that within the subcommittee there was a need to critically come up with policy level recommendations at the end of the CWG related to

1. Increasing the number of women in sports federation,
2. Infrastructure and sports facilities for young girls and women

**Barkha:** Apologised for having arrived late. She said that in terms of messaging effective she would be happy to provide space for television shows related to the issue. She felt that in the end the messaging should popularize sports and make it possible for women to have greater access.

- She however thought that it was more important to focus on the psychological level and it was important to be careful that women and sports is not projected as a victimhood situation. A positive message could be spread without highlighting that particular aspect.
- Whether one called it popularisation or glamourisation it was important in the long term to capture the imagination of the school going children.
- One could think of a reality show television contest around young school kids or girls and that could bring in a lot of other elements in terms of creating a drama around it and at the same time getting the focus on the sport.
- A kind of PSA thing which has some big names and we can write up ourselves saying something like a sub-campaign on women and sports within the CWG, it would be fascinating to take someone well known and an aspirant.
- Integrating men into the whole campaign would be important.
- She also said that she would be happy to do a programme with ‘Bend it like Beckham’ kind of argument and look for girls who wanted to get into sports considered for boys alone. One could also try and get Gurinder Chadda on board.
- Schools could be used as a forum but the campaign should not be limited to schools, it could be taken to the teams.



**Kanta:** suggested that the show could also be taken to various sports camps that were held in different parts of the country.

**Kadambari Murali** In the long term she suggested that there could also be provisions made for corporate scholarships for young girls and women for education. It could also serve to provide incentives and make it better for the parents. Institutions like the FICCI and CII who have worked with sports could also be contacted for it. The National Sports Foundation did have funds but the administration was very corrupt and it doesn't reach the deserving candidates. We have to be practical and think of incentivizing it

**Kanta:** Mentioned that there were Lakshmi Mittal Foundation that had scholarships but it was only accessible to those having access to internet. The Tata's also have a scheme. So there was a need to popularize these among the female athletes.

**Sara:** Suggested that there were some corporate who could be contacted and brought on board.

**Gitanjali Aiyar,** Organising Committee, Commonwealth Games, 2010 also suggested that the role of the media is important and have women represented as sporting icons.

**Radhika Kaul Batra,** UNDP: Suggested that the role of the icon may be tied in with the Panchayat representatives. At the QBR, there can be a woman elected representative who represents women's interest and there can also be male icons. It could even be institutionalized in the long run. UNDP suggested that girls from Maoist area who can never get out of the places can make amazing news story. By the end of the next week we can come up with 10 names.

**Gul:** Mentioned that the Chairman had agreed to popularize women's viewing by providing tickets to school children and state level athletes.

**Barkha:** thought that it would be a good idea to hold sporting contests for these tickets.

**Lora:** said that schools could be chosen through selection and each school nominate its best sports girls and reward them the ticket and make the child feel special.

**Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay retd.** (armed forces) in talking of the selection process pointed out that Fair and Lovely gave scholarships for 300 girls only on the economic criteria and the parents don't have education.

**Asha Nayar Basu:** Pointed out that seats were available for the build-up events, like the quarter finals and the semi finals and these seats could be utilized for the programmes that are being worked out by the Committee.

The OC also had programmes to bring in children and the armed forces-retired and other personnels for the finals and it might be difficult to procure seats for the finals. The OC was collaborating with the SPICMACAY in various cultural events to promote interest in games and popularize sports. The sports icons could also be identified and there would be a need to integrate and work towards number of other events cultural and others. Then there were the sponsors like the CBI, the Coca-Cola, Hero Honda, who were organizing certain events and

this should be in place in the next two weeks. She said that she would be happy to share and to look forward to working together..

She also emphasized that corporate responsibility towards the games should be built up into their CSR activities and woven into that.

**Gitanjali Master (UNICEF):** said that the viewership for the build events were important as people who are interested in sports would want to come for the event anyways.

***Conclusion:***

**Lora:** We are looking at:

Short term the short term-we were looking at the help desk, the trainings for the volunteers.

Long term-

- Using these meetings as opportunities for brainstorming and coming up with concrete strategies for example-specific recommendation like more women's participation and etc, increase corporate sponsorships and scholarships and advocating spaces and specific gender sensitive facilities for girls to participate.
- Collating best practices which as a team we can all collectively collate-there was an example about a conference and about a Tata are working on it, so we may all not know the good practices that may be coming up so we can form a platform for sharing it and we can all also come up with some of the good practices that we will have evolved or come across.
- Identify icons at two levels-if they could be identified immediately then in the short term they can be taken forward through the upcoming programmes. In the long term creating icons through reality shows, through corporate sponsorships and nurturing and working out the logistics.

The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks by Sara.