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Observation of gender difference in mental toughness among tribal sportsperson of Shahdol Madhya Pradesh in India

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Abstract

The current study is for the Shahdol community (M.P.) which aims to compare the mental strength of the male and female national performer of Shahdol (M.P.). The study included 20 regional male athletes and 20 regional female athletes. A psychological tool for assessing mental stamina was a questionnaire prepared by Tiwari (2007). The independent 't' sample test gives a clear indication that mental strength and scale vary among national athletes on the basis of gender. It was noted that the male athlete is mentally stronger compared to the female athlete of the Shahdol tribe. Outcomes discussed considering biological differences and social theory and conclusions were appropriately considered.

Keywords: Gender, mental toughness, tribal sportsperson

Introduction

Doubt and anxiety about achieving a goal is a major obstacle to athletic success. An athlete needs to deal with a difficult situation while resisting distracting thoughts in order to achieve a set of goals. This skill is called cognition in sports psychology. The term mental strength has been used since ancient times in sports psychology. In sports psychology the educational definition provided by Jones *et al.* (2002) ^[1] classify mental strength in the following ways:

1. Mental resilience is an athlete's natural or trained ability that gives him or her mental strength over his or her opponent during competition or during training and lifestyle restrictions,
2. Mindfulness gives the athlete a unique opportunity to face the demands of a particular sport in the form of play, media pressure, peer pressure, coaches and people's expectations of doing well in competition,
3. Mental resilience is associated with determination, confidence, and concentration that gives the player a better mental state to play at his best level during the competition while being fully controlled even under great pressure.

Mental toughness characteristics are essential to stamp authority and leadership in different allied areas in life which naturally includes sports also. The belief comes from winning mindset. A mentally tough sportsperson possesses a winning mindset which allows them to believe that they will succeed in a competition or at least they will compete with fullest of their sporting potential. Mental toughness gives athlete a proper insight for training schedule and their belief in their abilities due to immaculate training is resolute. Another aspect of mental toughness is hyperfocus. It is the ability to perform with best of their abilities and mental clarity about task in hand and shunning away the distracting thoughts.

Mental resilience also includes a major factor in how to improve stress. While performing a set of specific skills or psychomotor work a mentally active athlete successfully copes with the pressures and pressures of performance. Mindfulness gives impetus to developing pressure in the way a player uses stressful situations during the game to his advantage which gives him more focus on the task at hand. Success and failure are an important part of a sports tournament. A mentally strong athlete learns a lesson even if he fails in a tournament and uses these lessons in future tournaments to improve his performance.

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As mental strength has gained greater popularity in sports performance, research has been done in the past to examine the factors that influence mental fitness. Another variation is gender. Nicholls *et al.* (2009) [2] in their study observed significant differences in psychological distress between male and female athletes. They have seen a higher level of mental stamina in male athletes compared to female athletes. However, Clough and Stracharczyk (2012) [3] found no gender differences in cognitive function. Newland *et al.* (2013) [4] reported that the athletic performance of male basketball players was strongly associated with their mental strength but the same was not established in the female basketball team. Elemiri and Aly (2014) [5] established a meaningful relationship between athletic achievement and mental strength in both male and female athletes. In addition to this positive psychological benefit to the performance and success of the sport was also developed by Levy *et al.* (2012) [6], Sathe (2013) [7] and Yadav and Agashe (2019) [8]. In view of the literature review, the findings contradicting the lack of research on mental stamina among international athletes on the basis of gender, this study was organized.

Objectives

The objective of this study was to compare mental toughness and its sub-scales between tribal male and female sportspersons with district level sports participation.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesised that mental toughness among tribal sportsperson will significantly depend on gender.

Materials and Methods

Following methodological steps are used for the present study:-

Sample: To conduct the study, 20 tribal male sportspersons (Ave age 24.18 years) were selected. Also 20 tribal female sportspersons (Ave. age 25.14 years) were also selected. The selected sportsperson possesses the domicile of Shahdol and represented the district tournament organized for team and individual event. The age range of sportsperson was 18 to 28 years. The selection of sample was based on purposive sampling.

Tools: The mental toughness questionnaire prepared by Tiwari (2007) was used to assess mental toughness and its sub-scales namely self confidence, motivation, attention control, goal setting, visual and imagery control and attitude control respectively. This questionnaire in all contains 48 items with high level of reliability and validity.

Procedure: The mental toughness questionnaire was administered to selected national tribal sportsperson as per instructions given in the manual. The scoring for each sub-scale and overall score on mental toughness was evaluated as per directions given in the questionnaire. The tabulated data for two groups was compared with the help of independent sample 't' test. The results are shown in table 1 and 2 respectively.

Analysis of Data

Table 1: Comparison of Sub-variables of Mental Toughness between district level Tribal Male and Female Sportsperson.

Sub-variables of Mental Toughness	Tribal Male Sportsperson (N=20)		Tribal Female Sportsperson (N=20)		Mean Difference	't'
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Self Confidence	26.65	2.44	21.01	8.24	5.64	2.94**
Motivation	24.81	3.17	18.31	9.29	6.50	2.96**
Attention Control	16.73	4.52	14.24	5.06	2.49	1.64
Goal Setting	14.79	3.32	13.17	4.01	1.62	1.39
Visual and Imagery Control	12.67	1.68	10.86	2.11	1.81	3.00**
Attitude Control	13.09	1.92	11.02	2.63	2.07	2.84**

** Significant at 0.01 level

A perusal of statistical calculations shown in table 1 reveal the following facts

- Visual and imagery control, Motivation, Self confidence and attitude control factors of mental toughness in tribal male sportsperson was significantly higher in magnitude

as compared to tribal female sportsperson.

- Attention control and goal setting factors of mental toughness subscales was not found to differ significantly between two study groups.

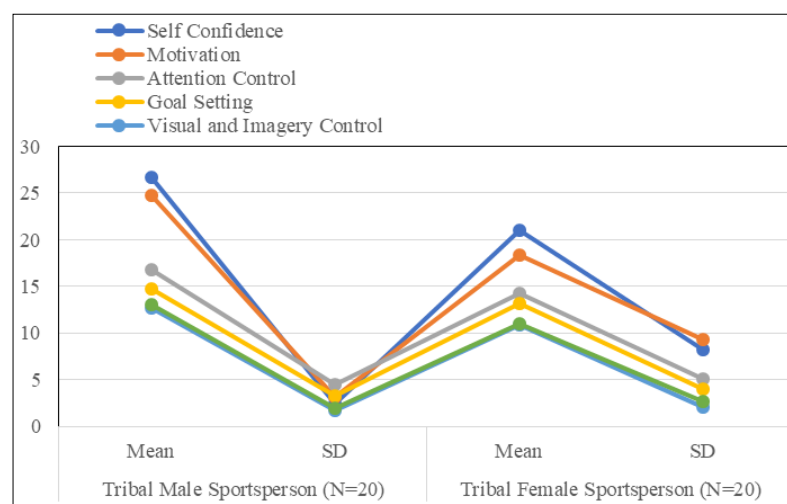


Fig 1: Graphical representation of sub variables of mental toughness between tribal male and female sportsperson

Table 2: Comparison of mental toughness between Tribal district level Male and Female Sportsperson.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	't'
Tribal Male Sportsperson	20	104.2	17.9	17.80	2.79**
Tribal Female Sportsperson	20	86.4	22.14		

** Significant at 0.01 level

Entries in table 2 indicate that mental toughness in tribal male sportsperson of Shahdol was significantly higher as compared to tribal female sportsperson of Shahdol. The calculated $t = 2.79$ adds statistical significance to this finding.

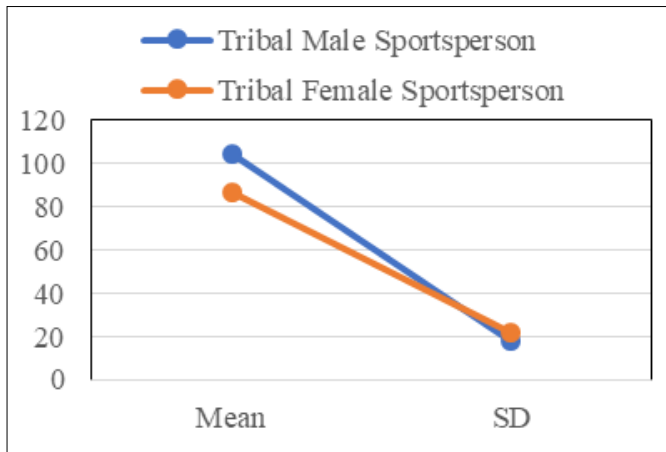


Fig 2: Graphical Representation of Mental Toughness Between district level Tribal male and female Sportsperson

Results

Tribal male sportsperson were found to be mentally tougher as compared to tribal female sportsperson of Shahdol (Madhya Pradesh).

Tribal male sportsperson showed their supremacy over tribal female sportsperson on subscales of mental toughness namely self-confidence, motivation, visual and imagery control and attitude control respectively while no such difference was observed between two groups on other parameters namely attention control and goal setting.

Discussion

Male and female players are totally different from each other and this difference is more than we actually observe. Due to different socialization process there exists a difference in mental toughness among sportsperson on the basis of gender. Other reason may be the stereotype norms associated with gender. In the present study, the sample consist of tribal sportsperson so it may be possible that in tribal culture also the upbringing of boys and girls is based on social norms. In one such study Sidhu (2018) ^[9] reported that male players had more magnitude of mental toughness as compared to female players. The study also contended that social environment is a major factor in the development of superior mental toughness in males. In another study Kumar (2016) ^[10] also reported a major difference in favour of male players towards mental toughness as compared to female players. Hence the results scientifically suggest towards the impact of gender on mental toughness of tribal sportsperson.

Conclusion

On the basis of results, it is concluded that tribal district level male sportsperson are mentally tougher as compared to tribal district female sportsperson. Hence specific gender based psychological strategies should be adopted to train tribal

sportsperson for better performance outcome.

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