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Absence of Reporting—Re-thinking Sports Safeguards in Pakistan

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

POA	Pakistan Olympic Association
NOC	National Olympic Committee
IOC	International Olympic Committee
FOSPAH	Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
NFs	National Federations
AASHA	Alliance Against Sexual Harassment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The last few years have seen tumultuous times in the sports universe. From a monstrous scandal of state-backed doping to topsy-turvy of all organizational planning in the aftermath of the worst pandemic outbreak, bona fide sports persons have suffered continuous setbacks. Amongst these tremors was one that was caused by the shock wave sent by the unearthing of player abuse at the hands of Larry Nassar. The case had disastrous consequences for the reputation of sports organizations in general and gymnastics in specific. Some of Nassar's victims reported to have complained about his abusive excesses in the 1990s, but nothing happened. The actual case surfaced only in 2015. Nonetheless, once the scandal was unearthed, it resulted in tremendous awareness regarding abuse in the sports arena and beyond. The proceedings of the case and outcomes thereof have given voices to many athletes who would have preferred to remain silent in the pre-Nassar era. Moreover, it has duly underscored the dire need for a sound reporting mechanism for abuse. In Pakistan, the situation hasn't been much different. Although reported only in interviews in 2019, there were abuse incidents as early as 1998 in the elite women's cricket players. In 2013, five girls from a cricket club came forward to speak against the club's chairman. Due to the absence of a trustworthy, supporting mechanism, the girls eventually bore the brunt of complaining and received a ban of nine months each in 2014 (Sheikh, 2019). There hasn't been any change in the legal and institutional framework for safeguards against abuse and harassment in sports since the reporting of these incidents. The present paper, therefore, is an attempt to recommend the setting up of an apparatus for an efficient abuse reporting system and the redressal mechanism in sports organizations in Pakistan.

1.1.1 General meaning and definition of abuse

Abuse is a broad term, covering a variety of actions. Slater and Gordon define abuse as any intentional action that harms or injures another person (Gordon, 2022). As defined by the Cornell Law School website, abuse is an action that intentionally causes harm or injures another person. This can refer to physical, psychological, mental, or child abuse (LIF, 2022). Persistence of abuse causing distress may be referred to as harassment.

1.1.2 Connotation in sports

The IOC Consensus Statement of 2016 duly elucidates the meaning of abuse and harassment in sports by stating that non-accidental violence or maltreatment in sports is reckoned as abuse and harassment. The Statement categorizes abuse and harassment in the following four main classifications:

- a) Psychological Abuse—*"A pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-contact behaviors within a power differentiated relationship." This form of abuse is at the core of all other forms.*" It covers emotional abuse in addition to other forms of psychological abuse.
- b) Physical Abuse—*"Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming athlete. This could include forced or mandated inappropriate physical activity."*
- c) Sexual Abuse—*"Any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given."*
- d) Neglect—*"The failure of parents or caregivers to meet a child's physical and emotional needs or failure to protect a child from exposure to danger. This definition applied to coaches and athlete entourage"* (Mountjoy, et al., 2016).

1.1.3 The extent of abuse and harassment in the sports world

Abuse and harassment in sports is a topic that has been researched around the world more intensively in the last few years. Before that, the research available on the subject was based on a few countries. Moreover, it was rooted in the experience of focused groups like LGBT and athletes with disabilities (Mountjoy, et al., 2016). Sexual harassment and abuse are seemingly happening in all sports (Fasting, 2015). Although there is no exact determination of the quantum of harassment, estimates as to prevalence range between 19% to 92% (Fasting, 2015). The risk of abuse increases as the athlete moves to the next level of professionalism (Brackenridge, Fasting, & Knorre, 2010).

1.1.4 The problem of low reporting of abuse and harassment in sports

Most of the work about abuse, and specifically sexual harassment, suggests that the phenomenon is widespread albeit under-reported. For instance, research in Europe reveals that although 45 to 81 percent of women experience sexual harassment at their workplaces, only 5 to 22 percent report it (International, Regional and National Developments in the Area of Violence Against Women, 1994-2003).

Figure 1: Workplace Harassment in Women (Europe)



This analogy can safely be applied to the world of sports where the probability of exploitation, abuse, and harassment is even higher because of the physical nature of the interaction, and the reporting of abuse is even lower. The situation is further aggravated in closed societies of developing nations where there are cultural taboos as well as mistrust in the reporting and redressal mechanisms.

1.1.5 State of affairs in Pakistan in general and specific to sports

The general environment of harassment and abuse protection is not encouraging in Pakistan. Athletes, coaches, sports managers, and other sports-related professionals constitute only a small segment of society. On a larger scale, women, children, and even men are victims of abuse and harassment. According to Thomson Reuters Foundation, Pakistan ranked 6th most dangerous country in the world for women in the year 2018 (Reuters, 2018). The report was based on surveys that covered the availability of economic resources, discrimination, risks from cultural and religious practices, etc. A survey conducted by United Nations Population Fund places the level of physical abuse of women in Pakistan at an astounding 32 percent (UNFPA, 2012-13). Likewise, although no official data exists on child abuse, unofficial reports place the extent of abuse as high as 25 percent (Mehnaz, 2018). Moreover, an NGO that has long been working in the field and has reputation for reliable data has indicated in its latest report that the

number of children being abused in Pakistan or harassed is alarmingly on the rise (Ahmed, Hameed, & Khalid, 2021).

Presuming the same level of abuse and harassment is there in sports, the remarkable fact is that neither there has been a single abuse or harassment complaint on record with the *Pakistan Olympic Association (POA)*, which is the National Olympic Committee of Pakistan, nor in any of its member national federations. This is not because athletes are living in a world different from the rest of society, but this is probably a reflection of the absence of trust in the prevalent abuse reporting system at all levels.

1.1.6 Actual abuse incidence in sports in Pakistan

Negligible literature about abuse in sports is available in Pakistan. The reason is that sportspersons, especially women, are not ready to come to the fore to share their experiences. They believe that, instead of doing good, reporting incidents of abuse would harm their personal as well as professional life (Hasan, 2022). Findings of small-scale research show that only around 32% of sportswomen accepted that they face the issue of harassment. The research concludes that abuse and harassment are prevalent in all individual and team sports for women (Jahangir & Manzoor, 2018).

1.1.7 Existing reporting channels and mechanisms for reporting in Pakistan

In the recent past, some steps have been taken in Pakistan to counter abuse and harassment. Amongst the first steps toward reporting abuse and harassment was the one taken with the help of UNICEF. It was in the form of a helpline (1098) by the name of *Madadgar* (helpful) for women and children who were suffering abuse and harassment. However, there was nothing for male athletes being abused. In 2010, the institution of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH) was introduced by the government of Pakistan. In 2017, the provincial government launched Women Safety App in the largest province of Pakistan to report incidents and locations of abuse and harassment. Child Protection Bureau and Prime Minister's Portal for Public Complaints also serve the same purpose. As such, in general, some steps have been taken to address the issue. However, reviewing the efficacy of the current systems through the data of complaints being handled by these institutions, the reporting of abuse is minimal. This is not amounting to saying that the harassment and abuse are under control in society; it's just that the reporting is not there for certain reasons. A feel of the actual situation comes when some crime is reported through news channels and other

media. And it happens frequently, with a confirmation of the assumption that the incidents of abuse are happening but not being brought forth at the corresponding frequency.

The POA hasn't framed any Code of Ethics for coaches so far. The POA follows the IOC Code of Ethics. It has recently introduced an independent abuse reporting mechanism but, to date, there hasn't been a single complaint of abuse received. This very fact suggests that there is a lack of awareness and reliability of the mechanism.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this paper are to review the existing safeguards against abuse in sports in Pakistan, evaluate their efficacy, identify gaps vis-à-vis other best practices in the world, and propose a reporting system for abuse in Pakistani sports institutions.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the existing safeguards against abuse in sports in Pakistan?
- Are the existing safeguards effective?
- What policy interventions are required to develop an abuse reporting system in sports in Pakistan to be adopted by all the sports institutions/organizations/federations?

1.4 Segments of the Paper: Brief Explanation of the Structure

1.4.1 Literature Review

This part of the paper shall conduct a review of the existing literature on the subject. The research on the general subject of the prevalence of abuse and harassment in sports is few and far between. In collaboration with some other authors, Kari Fasting has done some good work in this domain. The IOC Consensus Statement deliberates upon the issue and puts forward some brief guidelines as Recommendations for Actions (Mountjoy, et al., 2016). These recommendations are multi-pronged, dealing with sports organizations, athletes, sports medicine and health practitioners, and sports science researchers. The guidelines shall be discussed in detail in the final, recommendatory part of the paper. In Pakistan, the literature on the subject is rare. The issue of sexual harassment of women in sports has been discussed in a few research papers (Jahangir & Manzoor, 2018) (Sheikh, 2019). Nevertheless, the remedial measures recommended are cursory. This reflects the need of establishing practical and efficient safeguarding mechanisms in sports in Pakistan.

1.4.2 Benchmarking of different countries and the reasons for this selection

To determine best practices to avoid abuse in sports and reporting systems, it is important to study the countries that have been more successful in implementing regulations and protocols.

The case studies chosen for this project are the following:

USA

The choice of the USA as a case study is based on the very fact that it is among the sports leaders in the world. As such, institutional developments taking place in the USA are very relevant. Moreover, the US legislative and policy-making institutions have tried to strongly respond to the problem of abuse and harassment in sports after the unfolding of the Larry Nassar's case. So, the understanding of safeguarding mechanisms against abuse and harassment in the USA is important for the introduction of some policy interventions.

As far as the latest developments in the USA are concerned, an independent body for safeguarding sports was set up through an amendment in the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 in the year 2017. The amendment in the law resulted in Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 with the provisioning for a specific organization for safeguarding sport (Congress, 2018). The U.S. Center for Safe Sport was established in 2017 as a product of this legislation. The scope of the Center is to address the abuse and harassment of minor and amateur athletes in the USA. It has the power of reviewing the allegations and imposing bans, up to a lifetime, on the persons found guilty.

England

Pakistan is part of the Commonwealth. As such, it makes sense to research Commonwealth countries that have researched and advanced in this topic such as the UK. Since numerous governmental institutions in Pakistan are conceptually relatable to the ones in the UK, construing a relationship and networking at the conceptual level between different institutions is fitting and appropriate. Furthermore, many government officials, students, athletes, and business people in Pakistan get the opportunity to spend some time in the UK for studies, training, or business interaction. It is, arguably, the most visited western nation amongst Pakistanis. In addition, there is a huge Pakistani diaspora in the UK. Therefore, the researcher is of the view that the analysis of the UK model would be relevant and fruitful.

In the UK, Sport England provides a platform for reporting abuse and harassment to children and adults. It works in collaboration with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

the Children through Child Protection in Sport Unit. In the case of adults, the reporting mechanism includes the national federation or governing body, social care, and local police. Another layer of assistance and reporting is available in the form of Ann Craft Trust (England, 2022).

Austria

The choice of Austria is based on the quick adoption of the institutional framework for sports safeguards by the nation. Furthermore, amongst the continental nations, Austria is the one that was jolted by the accusations of harassment by the athletes and the issue was highlighted in the world for its gravity. It shaped the reporting mechanism against abuse in the aftermath of public accusations by former skiing athletes against their coaches. In the year 2017, a year after the Larry Nassar saga, former skiing athletes from Austria claimed that they had been harassed by their coaches since the 1970s. Some of the accusers claimed that they were raped. The probe was triggered by Nicola Werdenigg, a former Olympic skiing athlete, who claimed to have been sexually abused by a male teammate in the 1970s at the age of sixteen (Local, 2017).

The Austrian mechanism involves an organization by the name of Safe Sport Austria. The organization has a Board that is advised by another board, the Board of Advisers. The former board has a CEO, assisted by the Head of Safe Sports Austria and the Head of Media/Events. The organization is supported by the Austrian Government through the Ministry of Sports. Safe Sport Austria interacts with coaches, parents, and athletes for education and awareness. Moreover, it connects victims with expert psychologists and can trigger the legal process against the abuser.

1.5 Methodology

This paper is reliant on qualitative research. After the literature review, benchmarking of sports safeguards systems for three different countries will be conducted. The selection of these countries as the case studies for this research paper has been explained before. Benchmarking would be followed by semi-structured interviews of some important officials of POA and Professor Kari Fasting of the Norwegian School of Sports Science.

1.6 Results and analysis of the benchmarking

This chapter will process the results after collecting the data from the case studies and interviews. The study will learn from the three case studies and the input from the interviews.

1.7 Recommendations

The recommendation part deals with the outcomes of the study and the mechanism to be put in place. Based on the literature review, analysis, benchmarking of different models, interviews of the important stakeholders, and keeping in view the cultural and social backdrops, the model feasible for Pakistan will be proposed.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

The body of research available on the subject is neither exhaustive nor commensurate to the importance of the issue in the modern sports world. Yet, it is fast evolving. In Pakistan, however, the issue of abuse and harassment in sports is still very much under-researched. Regarding the introduction of an institutional mechanism, there is virtually no practical roadmap or applicable action plan available in the literature around sports safeguards.

2.1 Importance of safeguarding mechanism

The importance of the subject has been rightly highlighted in the IOC Consensus Statement (Mountjoy, et al., 2016). Albeit brief, the Statement is comprehensive and refers to most of the aspects of the issue from the point of breach of human rights to the point of consequential physical, emotional, and psychological injury (Mountjoy, et al., 2016). Indeed, the above-referred statement is a joint effort on the part of scholars working particularly in the field of abuse and harassment in sports. As such, every statement in the documents has the backing of research. The Statement attributes a widely prevailing culture of abuse and harassment to “power differentials across a range of social and personal factors” (Mountjoy, et al., 2016). Due to little pool of research available and the limited number of countries in which it has been conducted, the Statement focuses on the areas where there is empirical evidence available. The document declares that the target of abuse and harassment could be any athlete and his or her age, ability, gender, and other factors don't matter (IOC Consensus Statement, 2016). The document suggests that males are more likely to be the perpetrators as compared to females. Nevertheless, recent incident reports of male athlete victimization are raising questions as to this assumption. According to the IOC Consensus Statement, the mechanisms adopted for abusing athletes include contact and non-contact harassment, cyber harassment, negligence, bullying, and hazing. The statement has a special focus on child and adolescent athletes and their vulnerabilities in different scenarios and it underscores that in the case of child abuse in sports, the point of consent is out of the question (Archard, 1998). Towards the end, the statement recommends a roadmap for the safeguarding of sports personnel including the installation of a mechanism that suits the cultural sensitivities of a certain nation.

On the subject of the prevalence of abuse in sports, Kari Fasting and Celia Brackenridge have worked extensively along with other co-researchers. One of the important works by professor Fasting is a cross-cultural study on sexual harassment toward female athletes (Fasting, Chroni,

Hervik, & Knorre, 2010). The study covers the students who were studying sports in different institutions in the Czech Republic, Greece, and Norway. The participants' (N = 616) responses showed that Norway was the safest place in terms of harassment behavior. In another comparative study of Europe and America, Fasting refers to an insight whereby it was concluded that Americans had significantly higher rates of harassment as compared to Europeans (Kauppinen-Toropainen & Gruber, 1993). She attributes the reason for these lower rates of harassment in Norway and other Scandinavian countries to women's empowerment through more presence in the labor force and income parity in Scandinavia. From this, she assumes further that the prevalence of abuse and harassment in female athletes in various countries has a direct relationship with the presence of gender order and legislative instruments both general and sports-specific. As such, the need for a legally operative mechanism cannot be over-estimated.

The problem of non-reporting and under-reporting has a lot to do with both tangible and intangible barriers. The tangible barriers may include threats of harm or retaliation and intangible barriers may include the beliefs that the case will not be handled confidentially or effectively. Therefore, the limited data available on the subject is further reduced by the culture of silence (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020). Furthermore, it becomes imperative that the safeguarding mechanism is not only in place, but it is functional, reliable, and dependable. However, no policy or mechanism can assure that the abuse or sexual violence would evaporate all of sudden after the introduction of such a mechanism (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020). For sports organizations, handling abuse cases in-house is difficult for vested interests, lack of training, and education in this regard (Parent, 2011). Independent bodies or boards as safeguards can be more apt at educating athletes as to how to report and they can be proactive in responding too. In addition, a global, all-encompassing culture of safe sport is an urgent need.

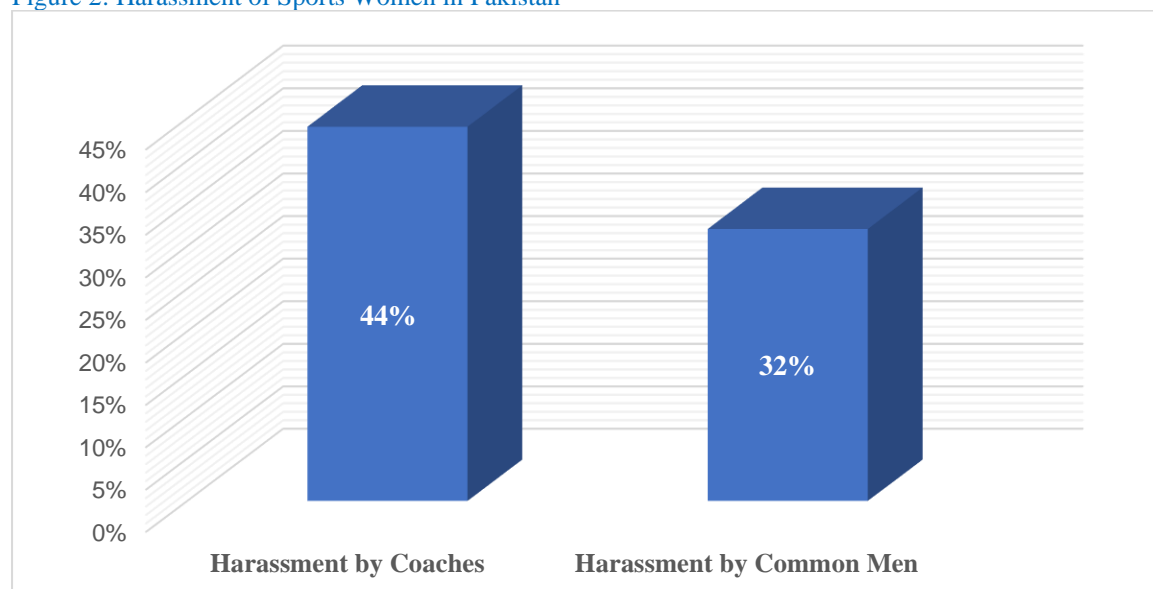
Bermon and others have argued that designing and implementing safe sport programs was a huge challenge for governing bodies in sports (Bermon, Adami, Timpka, & Hartill, 2021). They think that "a multi-faceted approach requiring human and financial resources which are often lacking in small to medium size sports federation or clubs" is needed to address the issue (Bermon, Adami, Timpka, & Hartill, 2021). Education of athletes regarding safeguards, designing and implementation of policies, introduction of an autonomous channel of reporting for victims and initiation of investigations are the most important steps (Kerr, 2021).

2.2 Abuse and Harassment in Sports in Pakistan

As mentioned in the Introduction, the subject is altogether new in Pakistan. As a literature review on abuse and harassment in sports in Pakistan is conducted, very few articles and research papers come to the surface. As such, investigation into the issue based on evidence and data in Pakistan is tough. One capstone project suggests investigations take us to conclusions that not only harassment in sports is more common than estimated in Pakistan, but it also involves females as perpetrators (Sheikh, 2019). Moreover, boys and young children too are victims as well. There are diverging views on speaking up against the abuse but the psychologist Dr. Ghazi, as quoted by Sheikh in the above-cited project, thinks that in Pakistan, speaking out could be disastrous for the victim as “society is still not survivor-friendly and tends to start victim blaming and shaming.” An all-known, very unfortunate incident to the extent happened when an emerging talent from a cricket club in Multan committed suicide in the aftermath of reporting a harassment incident (Khan, 2014). In women’s field hockey, two girls were suspended by Pakistan Hockey Federation as one of them released a video on social media in which she accused her coach of breaching her privacy by entering her room and holding her hand. The other girl supported her assertion (Tahir, 2017).

Data from a research study of 210 sportswomen in Pakistan shows that more than 44% were victims of harassment at the hands of their coaches (Jahangir & Manzoor, 2018). Around 32% of them reported being harassed at the hands of common men.

Figure 2: Harassment of Sports Women in Pakistan



Moreover, more than 40% were offered “friendship” by common men. Sixty-eight percent of women participating in the research believed that the sportswomen had no acceptance in

society (Jahangir & Manzoor, 2018). From these inferences, one can assume the discouraging outcomes of the reports of the incidents and public attitude towards these reports. “Social myths, norms, customs, and traditions of Pakistan strictly prohibit sportswomen to show the real picture of sexual harassment to the public...” (Jahangir & Manzoor, 2018). Moreover, there is fear that perpetrators are powerful and, consequently, victims back out from their claims.

Another investigation on the point was a survey conducted amongst 600 women athletes, aged between 20 and 32. The survey involved sportswomen at the national level who had also participated in international competitions. The data gathered thus revealed that more than 48.5% of women athletes had admitted that they suffered harassment in their careers (Din, Habib, Tabassum, Sarwar, & Shafique, 2020). However, none of them had reported it. It was observed that many elite, middle-class, and poor families allow their girls to participate in sports in childhood but the moment they enter adolescence, they are out of sports (Din, Habib, Tabassum, Sarwar, & Shafique, 2020).

The above-explained state shows that most of the incidents are not reported at all.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research questions and the consequent policy recommendation of the project envisage a model of sports safeguards that would be more reliable in terms of confidentiality and trust, thus focusing from the very beginning i.e., reporting of the incident. It has been decided that the data collection for research would mainly include detailed studies of three models of sports safeguards being practiced and interviews of three most important officials as well as a scholar. The research endeavors to analyze the institutional mechanisms available, legality, scope, governance patterns, relationship with stakeholders, etc. Through benchmarking of these countries, policy interventions are advised in the form of an institutional mechanism. Understanding these models does not mean that they are being replicated in Pakistan. Rather, ideas on inception and lessons learned from these models are supposed to be applied in Pakistan keeping in view the cultural and sociological context of Pakistan. Details of the models studied have been mentioned in the ensuing section. Moreover, the existing reporting and response mechanism of POA is also examined to conduct a situation analysis.

In addition, semi-structured interviews of three very relevant and important officials of POA have been conducted. They are the President, Secretary General and Chair Athlete's Commission of the POA. Selection of the President and the Secretary General of POA is based on their constant involvement in regulatory aspects and institutionalization of the governance processes of the Association and National Federations. The Chairman Athletes' Commission has provided a view from the perspective of athletes. President, POA is in the USA and has been interviewed through Zoom. Secretary General, POA has been interviewed in the Olympic House in person and Chairman Athlete's Commission is also interviewed. The interviews have been conducted to develop insights into the existing model and what, in their opinion could be the cause of the non-success of the existing mechanism. The questions asked them included the history of the introduction of the existing mechanism; their opinion on the awareness and performance of the present model; reasons for the absence of reporting; their views on how to improve the model within the cultural context of Pakistan; and methods of spreading awareness as to safeguards against abuse and harassment, available to athletes.

From the academic and research side, Professor Kari Fasting, arguably the most learned scholar on the subject of abuse and harassment in sports has been interviewed virtually in the month of June. She has shared her vision on the academic, theoretical and practical sides of the issue. Guidance has been sought from her on the ingredients of success for a sports safeguard mechanism; her opinion on the governance structure has been recorded; her experiences with

the studies in the developing systems has been taken into account too. She has also exchanged information on the expected resistance from different stakeholders in case of the introduction of a safeguarding system in response to a question on this.

The methodology employed in both data collection modes i.e., benchmarking and semi-structured interviews is *non-probability*, and the sampling involves a *purposive* technique. The non-probability choice is based on the relevance and availability of interviewees and purposive sampling has been opted for the importance of portfolios being held and prominence in research work on the subject.

CHAPTER FOUR: BENCHMARKING OF SAFEGUARDS

It has been observed in the literature review that, of late, a good amount of attraction has been generated by the issue of the safety of athletes against abuse and harassment. Many nations are coming up with ideas and institutions to protect their sportspersons. The IOC, through its Consensus Statement on the subject, has recommended steps to be taken to ensure the safety of athletes. Some countries had started laying down the foundation of institutional mechanisms for safeguarding athletes even before the watershed moment of Larry Nassar's case and some started taking steps in the aftermath. For this paper, three countries have been selected for benchmarking. Learning from these models shall broaden the vision of the researcher and would help in recommending the framework suitable for Pakistan.

4.1 The United States SafeSport

For the reason of legal authority and sanction of the government behind it, the sports safeguard mechanism in the USA could be referred to as the most authentic one. Although there had been some reports of abuse and harassment in sports even before the USA Gymnastics saga, the impetus to have an independent institution for the safeguarding of sports came from Larry Nassar's case.

4.1.1 Creation of U.S. Centre for SafeSport

The Center was created as a non-profit in the year 2017. The need to establish an independent body for safeguarding sports was felt as many incidents of abuse and harassment started surfacing in the last decade in the USA. Eventually, the U.S. Center for SafeSport was established with the primary focus on reviewing allegations of sexual misconduct and imposing sanctions up to a lifetime banning of a person from involvement in all Olympic sports (Brown, 2020).

4.1.2 Statutory Provisions

The U.S. Center for SafeSport has its backing through the congressional legislation. Some laws regarding the protection of young athletes and children were already in existence. However, there was no consolidated legal framework that could become one contact point for a victim of abuse. Moreover, athletes and potential victims were not very aware of the laws existing around their personal and physical protection. One such law was the Victims of Child Abuse Act which

had been promulgated in 1990. As more and more voices against abuse and harassment in sports started being heard, Congress amended the above-said Act through a bill called Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (Congress, 2018). The Act attained the status of Public Law on 14th February 2018.

Section 101 of the Act states that the adult authorized to interact with minor or amateur athletes has the duty to report any incident of suspected abuse and sexual abuse and in case of failure to report such suspected abuse the authorized adult is subject to criminal penalty.

Authorization for the creation of the Center for Safe Sport comes from Sections 201 and 202 of the Act. Section 202 “designates the United States Center for SafeSport to serve as the independent national safe sport organization” (Congress, 2018). As mentioned above, the institution is one of its kind, having a national legislative authorization through an act of parliament. As such, from the legal viewpoint, it is a step ahead of the rest of the world in the evolution of sports safeguards.

4.1.3 Objectives

The Act is an expansion of the purposes of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee by including the promotion of a safe environment in sports for amateur athletes. The website of the Center explains that the new organization has the objectives of abuse prevention, education, ensuring accountability and eradicating all sorts of abuse of athletes all over the country (SAFESPORT, 2022). Nicole Johnson and others in their article on the subject explain that the Center is "focused on ending all forms of abuse in sport while carrying out its mission of making athlete well-being the centerpiece of nation's sports culture..." (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020).

4.1.4 Governance Structure

At the top of the governance structure of the Center for SafeSport is the Board of Directors. There are twelve Board Members/Directors who work as volunteers, without any compensation. They are, primarily, supposed to be “independent”. Independence is defined by the Bylaws of the Center as having no material affiliation or relationship with sports organizations. The objective of having independent board members is to avoid interference with their impartial judgment on an issue. Section 2.2 (a) (ii) of the Bylaws elaborates the purpose of this independence and authorizes nominating committee members to determine whether a candidate is independent or not (ByLaws, 2022). The Subject of “independence”

takes the center stage in all the functionality of SafeSport in the USA. There are three types of Directors:

Six At-Large Directors

Three Athlete Directors

Three NGB Directors

The Directors are elected for a three-year term. The election process for the Directors has been detailed in Section 2.2, sub-sections (c), (d) and (e). The Directors meet every three months to discuss the business of the organization. In addition, there are Annual Meetings to elect new Directors and there are Special Meetings, called at the request of the chair of the Board, chief executive officer, or a majority of the Directors. The Board is assisted by three committees namely Finance Committee, Audit Committee, and Nominating and Governance Committee.

There are the following officers of the board under Article 3.1 (ByLaws, 2022):

Chair of the Board—presides the meetings of the Board

Secretary—keeps minutes of the meetings, notifies, keeps the record in custody, etc.

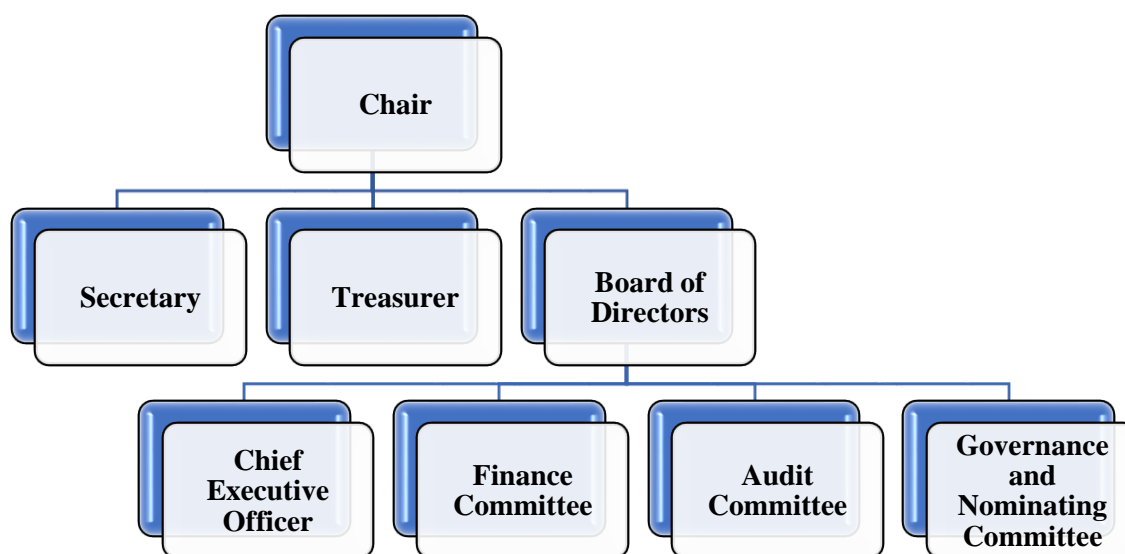
Treasurer—makes reports of finance, keeps books, etc.

Chief Executive Officer—controls the day-to-day business of the organization

Any other officer or agent deemed necessary by the Board

Officers of the organization are elected at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. The Chair is elected for a term of two years whereas the remaining office bearers are elected for one year.

Figure 3: US Center for SafeSport: Hierarchy



4.1.5 Process for Complaints and their Redressal

The investigations are managed by professionals who are also neutral and don't have any link to any sports organization. The Response and Resolution team have former prosecutors, FBI agents and other related professionals on it (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020). A report of abuse or misconduct to the Center for SafeSport is received through a form or by a phone number. Both are available on its website. The reception, either of the complaint form or an abuse or harassment call, triggers a chain of steps to, first, assess the veracity of the complaint and then, resolution the same. There are three main steps involved:

- a) **Reporting and Intake**—at this step, the report is received, and it is assessed whether the Center has jurisdiction over the matter. If jurisdiction is there, whether the Center has enough information to start the investigation process? Is there any need for immediate measures till the full investigation is completed?
- b) **Investigation**—collection of evidence is done here, including interviews to assess the report. It is assessed whether it is beyond any doubt that the abuse happened.
- c) **Resolution**—Did the conduct violate SafeSport Code? What should be the sanctions if that happened? Have all the parties been given a proper hearing and legal opportunities including the information about a decision? Do they know about the arbitration process? Has the decision been recorded in the centralized database of the Center? (SafeSport, 2022)

4.1.6 Impact Assessment

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is setting benchmarks for other such safeguards in sports systems to follow. Since its inception, there has been a tremendous increase in the trust level. This is reflected by the number of complaints being received and handled at the Center. In the infancy year, in 2017, there were, on average, 39 reports of abuse every month. By 2019 there was an increase of 600% in these reports (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020). Although there is no direct research to validate this premise, this increase is mainly attributed to awareness and education campaigns around the Center. As of now, more than 2 million individuals have been trained by the Center through its online platform and this has resulted in tremendous awareness. The basic training module covers the following three topics:

- a) Sexual Misconduct Awareness
- b) Emotional and Physical Misconduct Awareness
- c) Mandatory Reporting

In addition to the basic module, there is a module for parents, introducing them to the concepts of abuse and harassment and positioning the Center as a remedial institution. Moreover, there are refreshers and other regular training courses. In 2018, the Center started developing tailor-made courses for different dynamics of abuse including the Sports Situational Prevention Approach (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020). This has to be implemented by the National Governing Bodies (NGBs).

In the first three years since its inception, there were more than 4000 incidents reported to the Center (Johnson, Hanna, & Novak, 2020). These are sufficient proof of the trust that it has started enjoying with the public. Towards the fall of 2021, the number of incidents reported to the Center had jumped to more than 10,000—again a reflection of rising public trust in the institution. Outcomes of all the actions mentioned above have to be translated into resolution of the complaints. The number of resolved complaints has gone up by 19% in 2021 as compared to 2020, reflecting a focus on efficiency and performance (SafeSport, 2022). Moreover, 1600 persons have been reported via the SafeSport and are included in the central list.

4.2 Sports Safeguards in the UK

In England, an organization by the name of Sport England governs amateur and club sports. It is a government body “responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and getting more people active across England.” (Sport England, 2022). The official website of Sport England describes safeguarding in basic terms: “Safeguarding in sport is the process of protecting children and adults from harm by providing them a safe space in which to play sport and be active” (England, Safeguarding, 2022). The website further explains that people should know what to do if they are faced with concern in sport and, based on this premise, it concludes the reason for working to support parents, caregivers, organizations etc. Incidentally, the topic is not addressed specifically in the UK Sports, the body responsible for professional, Olympic and Paralympic sports in England from the government’s side (Sport, 2022). British Olympic Association is the National Olympic Committee for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is an independent body, representative of IOC in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It selects the teams for 33 Summer Olympics and 7 Winter Olympics Games. On its website, there is no mention of any safeguarding apparatus, either commission or department, working under its umbrella (Team GB, 2022). Hence, the presumption is that British Olympic Committee has not introduced any safeguarding mechanism on its own.

4.2.1 Creation of Sports Safeguards

Safeguarding in England is covered as a function of Sport England. Through a royal instrument, the Royal Charter of 1996, the English Sports Council came into being on 1st January 1997. Later, in 1999, the name of the body was changed to Sport England (England, Sport England, 2022). There have been three amendments in the Charter ever since its promulgation. As such, the Sport England is a corporate government body (Charter, 2009).

4.2.2 Statutory Provisions

Inasmuch as the statute is concerned, there is no direct provision dealing with the issue of safeguards in sports. However, there are general provisions that could be used to develop a framework for the protection of athletes. For instance, Article 3 (1) (a) states that the Council shall regard the policy of the government issued from time to time. Likewise, Article 3 (2) directs the Council to accept responsibility as the Secretary of State may direct (Charter, 2009), thereby creating room for sports safeguards.

4.2.3 Reporting Mechanism

As per guidelines from Sport England, adults and children have been placed in separate channels for reporting their concerns.

- a) **Children:** In case of danger or medical attention is required, emergency services on 999 have to be contacted. In addition, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) could be approached through 0808 800 5000 helpline. The recommendations advise that although the welfare of the child is of primal importance, a citizen should not take matters into his hands and should just report the concern efficiently. In case of the presence of a national governing body, the same may be approached for support. Likewise, statutory social care services are also the forum available in such situations.

If there's no imminent danger, the procedure laid down in the statutes of the governing body should be followed or the concern may be reported to the children's local social care.

If nothing is available, local police may be contacted.

- b) **Adults:** The recommendation for adults, like children, is to go to emergency services at 999 in case of need of medical attention. The remaining steps are almost the same that are there for children, including the approach to National Governing

Body and Police, except that instead of NSPCC adults can approach Ann Craft Trust for expert advice.

4.2.4 Objectives

The objects of Sport England, as envisaged in the Royal Charter are “fostering, supporting and encouraging the development of sport and physical recreation, and the achievement of excellence therein among the public...” Furthermore, it is to encourage and develop higher standards of performance and achievement. It would increase facilities for benefit of sports, ensure training and experience for individuals and teams and will collaborate with UK Sports Council and so on and so forth. (Charter, 2009). There are no separate objects specific to sports safeguards.

4.2.5 Governance Structure

The governance structure of Sport England consists of a Board headed by a Chair and assisted by a Vice Chair, in addition to Members, not exceeding twelve in number. The appointment and terms of the appointment are determined by the Secretary of State. Generally, the appointment for the Chair is for five years and Vice Chair is for three years. However, they can be re-appointed. Moreover, they can be terminated at any time by the Secretary of State on the grounds mentioned in Article 6 (e) of the Royal Charter. The operations are conducted through the Executive Team headed by a Chief Executive who reports to the Board. Again, there is no separate governance structure for SafeSport England.

4.2.6 Impact Assessment

Having starkly remarkable similarities with Larry Nassar’s case, English sports in general, and gymnastics in specific, have been embroiled in controversy recently. With the release of the Whyte Report on 16th June 2022, the safety of the athletes against abuse and harassment has been brought under the light for yet another time (Whyte, 2022). The report is a comprehensive document of more than 300 pages. The issue has been investigated in the aftermath of a series of revelations made to the press in the summer of 2020 by the present and former gymnastic athletes. The allegations have been made by the British gymnasts against their coaches and mainly focused on emotional and physical abuse. All this happened in presence of safeguarding mechanisms that have been discussed above i.e., helplines, NGOs’ assistance, and NGB’s support. However, the apparent limitation of the system appears to be the absence of one contact point for reporting abuse. There are multiple ways an athlete may report an incident of

abuse or harassment but those all are conventional institutions that have been working already in a different capacity and that are not sports-specific. Consequently, a pilot project by the name of Sport Integrity has been launched by the professional sports governing body, UK Sport, in April 2022. It is indeed a realization that the current system is responding properly. The Sport Integrity has been envisaged to be a “new independent disclosure and complaints service...” which will ensure a safe space for athletes. A preliminary assessment of complaints shall be made by it as well as allowing “access to trained mediators” for dispute resolution (sport, 2022). The redressal pilot project, currently, is limited to Olympic and Paralympic sports.

4.3 Austrian Sports Safeguards

Albeit with modifications suited to them, Austrian sports authorities and the government quickly followed the steps that were taken by the USA for insulation of athletes from abuse and harassment. With the Larry Nassar’s case coming to light and athletes all over the world starting to have their voices listened to, the problem of harassment in Austrian sports came to forth in the form of allegations hurled by the ex-Olympian skiing player, Nicola Werdenigg. The accusation suggested that there had been harassment to the extent of rapes against the women skiing athletes as early as the 1970s and as late as in 2005 (Local, 2017). The case couldn't reach its logical conclusion due to laches. Nevertheless, it triggered the institutionalization of safeguarding mechanisms against abuse and harassment in Austrian sports which resulted in SAFE SPORT AUSTRIA.

4.3.1 Creation of 100% Sport and Safe Sport

An association by the name of 100% Sport had already been existing in Austria since 2004. It was based in Vienna and was established as a non-profit, with a different name and for a different purpose. The scope of the "Vo-Gos-Volleyball Goes School", the original project, was replicated in many other sports. Federal Chancellery, whose primary role is to sport national government in different functions like controlling the statistics department, ombuds office and communication authority (Chancellery, 2022), played an important role in this expansion (100% Sport, 2022). The association kept evolving with time and underwent many changes. In 2010, the association brought its focus on gender equality by changing its name to "WeGoS—Women Go Sport" and redefining its board. Currently, the association works for

gender mainstreaming. One leg of the working of 100% Sport is “Safe Sport Austria” which was introduced in the aftermath of public accusations by Nicola Werdenigg.

4.3.2 Statutory Provisions

The Statute of 100% Sport Association envisages in its Article 2.3—which deals with the purpose of the association—as follows: "Contact point for the prevention of sexual assault in sport". In the Article 3.2 part (b), the Statute idealizes the prevention of sexualized violence. Article 16 of the statute specifically mentions that "the members undertake to sign and actively implement the code of honor "Respect and Safety—Prevention of Sexualized Assault in Sport" (Sport, 2022). Amongst the services offered by 100% Sport is the Safe Sport Service with its separate organizational structure, order, and website. As an attached department of 100% Sport, Safe Sport was established in 2020.

4.3.3 Objectives of Safe Sport Austria

The objectives of the Safe Sport Austria are etched in the Order on its website: "to support full-time and volunteer officials, trainers, athletes and legal guardians and thus contribute to creating a safe and inclusive sports environment" (Safe Sport, 2022).

In addition, the purposes mentioned on the 100% Sport website are:

- a) Sensitized through training and free information material
- b) Advises sports organizations on the setting preventive measures
- c) *Connects those affected with experts in sports psychology, sports law, violence, and child protection.* (Sport, 100prozent-sport.at, 2022)

4.3.4 Governance Structure

The Board of 100% Sport is chaired by the President. He/she is advised by the Board of Advisors and assisted by a CEO. The CEO, in turn, controls the department of Safe Sport Austria. The department has a workforce for the Prevention of Sexualized Abuse. The department also has external stakeholders in the form of registered associations and their representatives.

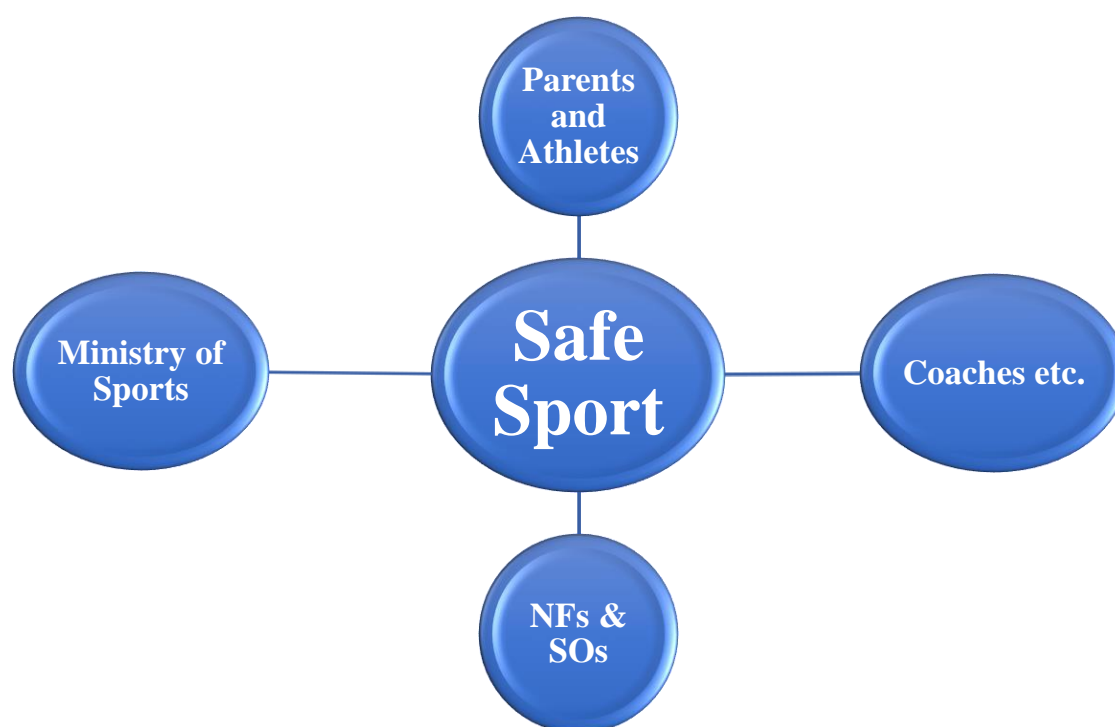
4.3.5 Stakeholders Functioning Map

The stakeholders include the following major players:

- a) **Ministry of Sports** provides funding for the organization. In addition, it ensures media support for Safe Sport Austria.

- b) **National Federations and other Sports Organizations** of the country are offered education and awareness. They are encouraged to bring statutory amendments in their constitutions and ensure that the sports taking place under them are safe and free of harassment.
- c) **Coaches and Support Staff** are delivered with education pertaining to safe sport.
- d) **Parents and Athletes** are dealt with in two ways. One, they are given awareness through programs and seminars. Two, they are offered help by connecting the victims to expert psychologists and guidance through the process.

Figure 4: Safe Sports Austria: Stakeholders



4.3.6 The Process

Safe Sport Austria endeavors to guide federations, athletes, coaches, and parents through the process in case there is an issue. It is part of the larger awareness campaign as to athletes' rights in case of incidents of abuse and harassment.

The affected athlete reaches out to Safe Sport Austria. Once the complaint is received, the victim and/or his/her guardians are immediately connected to expert psychologists. Psychologists will assess the situation and if the complaint is cognizable under the law and the

victim agrees, there will be a report to the police or federal prosecutor. Further investigations and legal steps are then up to the police. At all times, three principles shall be followed:

- a) Athlete's Voice—the athlete should always be heard;
- b) Athlete's Choice—At every step, the athlete should be given a free choice of how he/she wants to proceed; and
- c) Exit—the athlete should be able to exit the situation with the least damage possible.

In addition, confidentiality throughout the process is always ensured.

4.3.7 Impact Assessment

The mechanism was placed in position in the year 2020. There has been a gradual trust-building process that's taking place through awareness. The institution provides education through public interaction and through educational materials. In addition, the consultations being provided to National Federations and Sports Organizations of the country are making the association more reliable. With the acceptance of the government of the role of the organization in the form of funding support and media access, the credibility of Safe Sport is increasing with every passing day.

Data on the number of complaints received are not public. However, due to reasons of confidentiality, no information could be had on it. It is known that there have been several reports in the last few years (Scharnagi, 2022). The most important one was of Nicola Werdenigg. As a consequence of this claim, the skiing coach was fired from his position in the Austrian Skiing Federation. Nonetheless, the legal prosecution couldn't be initiated due to having surpassed the limitation period to file.

Overall, the Safe Sport Austria is a great initiative (Scharnagi, 2022). It has all the ingredients of a successful sports safeguarding organization including a proper organizational structure. Moreover, government backing gives it the authority needed to develop the trust of the public in general and the victim in specific (Scharnagi, 2022).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The research objectives of this paper are to review the existing safeguards against abuse in sports in Pakistan, evaluate their efficacy, identify gaps vis-à-vis other best practices in the world, and propose a reporting system for abuse in Pakistani sports institutions.

The research objectives have been outlined in the following way:

- Assessing the existing safeguards against abuse in sports in Pakistan;
- Efficacy of the existing safeguards and Gap Analysis; and
- Policy interventions required to develop an efficient and trustworthy abuse reporting mechanism to be adopted by sports organizations in Pakistan.

Through employing different tools of investigation including literature review of the current knowledge available both on national and international levels, benchmarking of three countries that have put the mechanism of sports safeguards in place, and interviews with Pakistani senior officials who have deep knowledge of the topic of research and who can actually influence the policy formulation on the subject and an interview with Professor Kari Fasting, arguably the most prominent scholar on the subject of abuse and harassment in sports.

5.1 Sports Safeguards in Pakistan and Status in Other Countries

It has been observed that, of late, the knowledge pool on abuse and harassment in sports is rapidly growing. Till the IOC Consensus Statement (Mountjoy, et al., 2016) the research on the topic was limited. The same fact has been indicated even in the above-mentioned Statement. However, since then and since the notorious Larry Nassar's case, many scholars and researchers have contributed towards the subject.

5.1.1 Prevalence of Issue and Existing Safeguards in Pakistan

During the knowledge review and data collection, it came to forth the phenomenon of abuse and harassment in sports is prevalent everywhere. It has different definitions, kinds and modes but the universality of the phenomenon is there. Likewise, it was assessed that the issue of abuse in sports exists also in Pakistan but has not been highlighted much so far for cultural and social reasons. During the interview with Professor Kari Fasting, she also endorsed the view that the people in Pakistan, especially women, are afraid that the leakage of information could be disastrous for their future (Fasting, 2022). Participation of women in sports in Pakistan is already discouragingly low and parents are afraid of the sports environment. When some abuse

takes place, the female athletes are the first ones to face consequences and they can't speak due to cultural issues (Hasan, 2022). Few and far incidents that were reported through media couldn't reach the logical end. Rather, these resulted in more trouble for the athletes who reported these incidents. There are some divergent views on the prevalence also. For instance, the POA Secretary General, while sharing his experience as Secretary General of Sports of Water and Power Development Authority in Pakistan, informed that there was genuinely no issue of harassment during his tenure in that department (Mehmood, 2022). However, it can safely be concluded from literature review, data from media reports, and interviews of the senior officials, that the problem of harassment in sports in Pakistan exists but the reporting is not there.

While searching for available safeguards in Pakistan, it was found out that Pakistan Olympic Association had already taken some initiatives in the domain of abuse and harassment by introducing multiple reporting mechanisms through its website (Association, 2022). The initiative was based on the dictates of the IOC in its Consensus Statement (Mehmood, 2022). Other than that, there has been no specific legislation or organization focused on abuse and harassment in sports in Pakistan. Although the general legal provisions of criminal law exist, in addition to a special law for the protection of women in the workplace introduced in 2010 (Assembly, 2010) and the Federal Ombudsman Office for Abuse and Harassment, these mechanisms have seldom been invoked in case of abuse in sports.

5.1.2 Safeguards in other countries

In compliance with the IOC regulations on the subject, more and more countries have started introducing sports safeguards mechanisms. As a consequence of appraisal of the knowledge pool available, and on the grounds mentioned in detail in Chapter 3, institutional analysis of three countries, the USA, the UK and Austria has been conducted. Findings tell that two of them, the USA and Austria have already moved to independent organizations working as the focal point of sports safeguards and the third one, the UK, has been experimenting with the autonomous body since April 2022 (Sport, 2022). Professor Fasting (Fasting, 2022) is of the view that in addition to introducing a trustworthy institution, education and awareness of the issue are very important aspects to make these institutions successful. The topic of abuse has to be brought at each possible education opportunity and be explained to make it aware. However, the process is evolutionary. It has accelerated in the last few years when the general #metoo movement started to be present in the world. Larry Nassar's case is a recent happening in the West before that sports organizations would try to downplay or hide the incidents to

avoid the perception of bad name. Normally, in case of reporting, athletes were snubbed badly (Hasan, 2022).

5.2 Performance Evaluation

5.2.1 Functionality of safeguards in Pakistan

Unfortunately, there has not been even a single reporting of abuse in sports in Pakistan through the existing mechanism by the Pakistan Olympic Association. During the interview on the subject, the POA Chair of the Athlete's Commission informed that a major hurdle, among the others, was that the athletes were not mainly aware of it (Inam, 2022). The President of the Pakistan Olympic Association, during his interview, informed that keeping in view the importance of awareness and education on the subject of abuse and harassment, it is being made part of every seminar that is being conducted by the Pakistan Olympic Association (Hasan, 2022).

In addition to lack of awareness regarding the system, it has not been adopted by almost any of the national sports governing bodies or national federations. Indeed, there is a muted resistance to adoption (Mehmood, 2022). To quote Fasting, Celia Brackenridge went to elite sports organizations to conduct survey on harassment, but sports organizations would tell her that sports were very healthy and good and that abuse and harassment didn't happen there. This denial could be there when sports organizations are asked to adopt the safeguards (Fasting, 2022).

5.2.2 Functionality in benchmarked countries

Impact analysis of these models suggests that the USA model is turning out to be successful. It was conceived with the idea of spreading awareness and encouraging athletes to speak out in case of abuse. It has resulted in exponential increase in reporting over the last few years. Total reports jumped to 3708 in 2021 from only 281 in 2017 (SafeSport, 2022).

Figure 5: US Center for SafeSports: Reporting trends

TOTAL REPORTS

IN 2017

281

IN 2021

3,708

It can, therefore, be deduced that the trust level of athletes is considerably increasing in U.S. Center for SafeSport.

In the case of the UK, there is no single reporting mechanism. Instead, the current sports safeguard system in the UK offers multiple contact points. However, the recent scandal of British Gymnastics and the Whyte Report have underscored gaps in the mechanism and shed light on the actual situation. Consequently, the UK is moving towards one contact point model like the USA. Indeed, a pilot project by the name of Sport Integrity was launched in April 2022 (Sport, 2022).

Like the USA, Austria has also opted for an independent body by the name of Safe Sport Austria that has started gaining confidence of the athletes in Austria (Scharnagi, 2022). So, it can safely be assumed by the limited study made that as an institutional mechanism one-contact point is proving to be more effective and successful vis-à-vis multiple contact points in case of abuse and harassment in sports.

5.3 Modern Interventions

During the course of evidence collection, it came to forth that the technological interventions being used by successful safeguards play a significant role. For reporting purposes, all three reviewed countries have the easiness to report the abuse through online platforms, using their websites through computers or mobile phones, rapid responding call centers and mobile apps etc. For awareness' sake, the trainings are being frequently imparted using online platforms. The website of the U.S. Center for SafeSport declares that online training has been imparted to millions of people (SafeSport, 2022).

Figure 6: US Center for SafeSports: Milestones



5.4 Gap Analysis for Pakistan

It has been discovered in the process of research through review, benchmarking and interviews that there are some basic elements of a successful sports safeguard mechanism. Many of these basic elements are missing in the case of Pakistan.

5.4.1 Governance independence and absence of bias

From the USA model, the concept is that in order to be a reliable source to report abuse, it has to be an independent safeguarding mechanism. It should be working without any influence of any sports body and the governance apparatus has to be based on board members who are upright and the majority of them must not have any sort of affiliation with any sports organization (Hasan, 2022). However, athletes' representatives must be there on the board (Fasting, 2022). This is not the case in Pakistan. In Pakistan, so far, the members of the Abuse and Harassment Committee of the Pakistan Olympic Association belong to sports organizations. Not only does this skew their judgment in assessing the validity, but it also results in the loss of trust of the athlete who has been abused. Since the sports managers know each other, the question of confidentiality and anonymity may be in doubt on the mind of the athlete. The President of the Pakistan Olympic Association informed the writer (Hasan, 2022) that some prominent professionals, who had nothing to do with sports organizations, were requested to join the Women Commission of Pakistan and some accepted but they couldn't continue since it's a volunteer job.

5.4.2 Legislative backing

Legal sanction in the form of an act of legislature behind the sports safeguard is of utmost importance. It bestows upon the organization a strong mandate to conduct its operations. Cross-links are made robust. There is clarity of purpose. Legal apparatus and law enforcement agencies have to respond to the call of the organization if there is strong backing of an act of the legislature. The U.S. Center for Safesport has behind it the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (Congress, 2018). Likewise, Sport England, the organization managing sports safeguards in England, is rooted in the Royal Charter of 1996 (Charter, 2009). In countries like Pakistan, it becomes very important to have legal sanctions to make things effective and serious (Hasan, 2022).

5.4.3 Financial Independence

The existing Committee has no financial resources. It is based on a group of volunteers. So far as the reception of reports and routing it to different stages of processes are concerned, the jobs may be done voluntarily. However, in the case of the involvement of professionals like psychologists, physicians, mediators, and attorneys, the job is not so simple. That is why a specified budget is one of the mandatory requirements of any modern sports safeguard mechanism. But if the government is solicited for funding, it is likely to exercise influence on the board. There is a need to look towards the industry for budgetary management (Hasan, 2022).

5.4.4 Ease of Processing

The author of this paper, being part of the Committee, knows that the committee is two-layered. First, the athlete has to report the incident to a sub-committee and the sub-committee refers the report to the Committee which, in due course, is supposed to decide what is to be done about the report. This arrangement has been made to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the complaint (Hasan, 2022). However, this not only confuses the reporting athlete but also makes the process complicated. Since there has been no report received so far, the Committee doesn't know what kind of procedural hurdles would come to forth when the time to handle a report comes.

5.4.5 Awareness amongst stakeholders

In the reviewed models of the USA, the UK and Austria and in the literature review, the point of spread of awareness amongst the athletes turns out to be the game-changer. If a country has a system but people don't know about it, they won't use it. Norwegian Army has a reporting system for these situations, but reporting is only 20% (Fasting, 2022). The U.S. Center for SafeSport intimates in its report that they have informed and trained 2 million people (SafeSport, 2022) whereas, in case of Pakistan, most of the athletes do not even know that some mechanism exists (Inam, 2022). Not only a system needs to be in place, but the stakeholders need to have full knowledge about the system in place. Moreover, the mechanism has to work two-way: it has to announce itself loud and it has to teach the stakeholders about their rights and about sports safeguards. Furthermore, some stakeholders, like the National Sports Federations have to share the responsibility of dissemination of awareness and information (Mehmood, 2022).

CHAPTER SIX: LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study is limited by methodology and availability of material. There is very little pool of knowledge available on the subject of abuse and harassment in sports in Pakistan. So, the review of the local literature on the matter is limited in scope.

The choice for the sampling of countries for benchmarking is restricted. There are few countries that have employed the mechanism. Most of them are in the process of developing safeguards suitable to their needs. For instance, the writer checked with one of his classmates from Malaysia, who informed him that the draft for the safeguarding mechanism was underway, but it had not been approved yet by the relevant authorities and was not available for even academic purposes. Moreover, the impact-analysis study of the already installed mechanisms is rare. Furthermore, the writer couldn't draw parallels from developing countries due to the non-availability of resources and limited access to data.

In the case of interviews, the reluctance of female athletes and coaches in participating in the interviews also created limitations of data.

As such, future studies on the subject should have a quantitative tilt, based on the experiences of athletes and analysis of safeguards available in some developing nations.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence collection, the current position of Pakistan in terms of sports safeguards, benchmarking of three mechanisms in place, interviews of Professor Kari Fasting, practitioners and officials of the sports and understanding of cultural insight of Pakistan, the following conclusions have been reached and recommendations are being made for the revival of sports safeguards in the country.

7.1 Governance Regime

- The world is moving towards a one-window solution to the abuse and harassment problems. Even the UK, which had multiple reporting fora, launched a pilot project for a single contact point for abuse reporting by the name of Sports Integrity in April 2022. In line, Pakistan needs a new, more empowered independent body/commission/department (Hasan, 2022).
- The re-constituted institution should be independent of other sports bodies (currently the members are part of other sports bodies) except for a couple of members who would assist other members in developing an understanding of sports organization structures. It must, however, include athletes in its structure (Fasting, 2022).
- The new institution may either operate as part of the already existing framework of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH) or it may be created wholly independent of the existing institutions through a legislative process.
- It has to include a panel of psychologists, mediators, lawyers and experts in the field to handle the situations professionally.
- Women friendly environment for the reporting panel is a must (Fasting, 2022). POA is already striving hard to bring a gender balance to its structure. As such POA currently stands at 33% so far as women's participation in governance and other matters is concerned. The target is to bring it to 50% within the next three years (Hasan, 2022). Likewise, the new independent institution must have at least 50% women representation so that the female victims of abuse and harassment feel at ease in interacting with the members. This could be achieved by incorporating reserved seats/quotas for women.

- Legislative sanctioning/backing by means of either introduction of a new law or amendments to existing laws (proposed minor amendments in the criminal codes to include specifics of abuse and harassment in sports, amendments in Ombudsman laws etc.) (Hasan, 2022). This proposal is going to be implemented through lobbying with women in sports management and sports science disciplines, using the wheel of NGOs and CSOs already working in the field of abuse and harassment. For instance, Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA) shall be approached for highlighting the issue. Women Commission of POA shall also be used to underscore the importance of a reliable mechanism.

7.2 Financial Arrangements and Funding

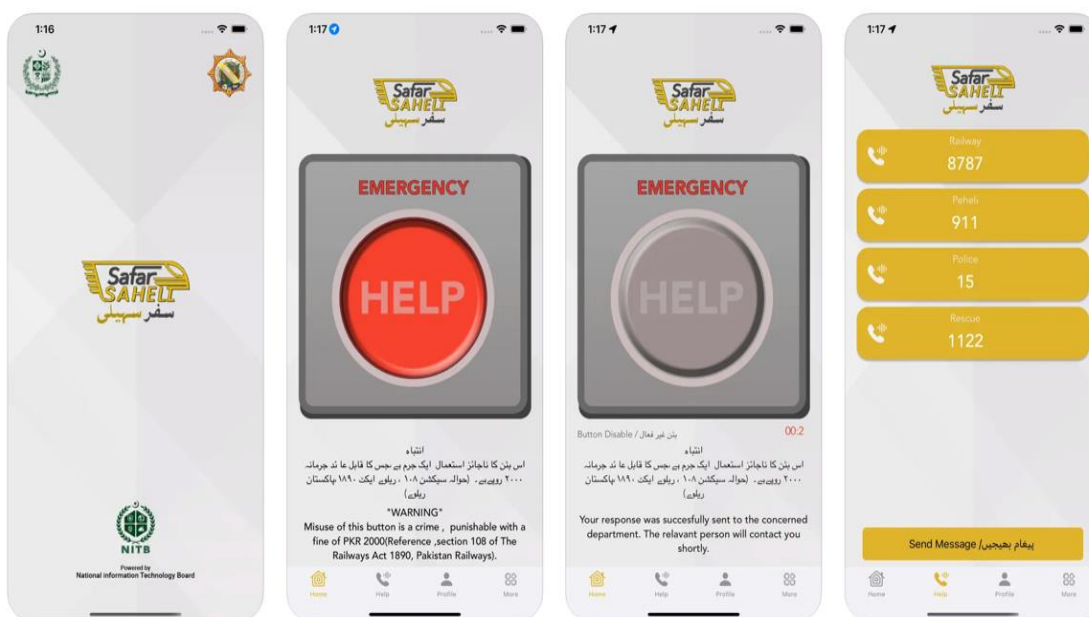
- Primarily, the constitution of the new institution may be based on a pool of volunteers.
- The institution may be housed in an independent secretariat, allocated by the government in its behalf.
- Government to be solicited for a small amount of money for expert engagement.
- Industry to be approached for financial assistance for the cause. Industry can use their corporate social responsibility budgets to manage the funding for the independent commission (Hasan, 2022).
- The institution is supposed to assist sportspersons in Pakistan in remedying the wrongs against them. As such, POA may also play its role in helping the institution financially without exercising any influence on the decision-making processes.

7.3 Awareness and Education

- Media committee/panel of the institution to launch social media handles with short videos, banners, awareness messages etc. that will result in the organic development of the campaign. The best example of such an information-giving, confidence-boosting campaign is the #metoo movement.
- Media management by taking on board the main sports media of the country.
- Training arrangements by the Commission along the lines of U.S. Center for SafeSport, including short courses, seminars, online training programs, public outreach programs, etc.

- Introduction and frequent use of automation, including mobile apps and electronic reporting mechanisms to ensure swift, confidential reporting with the creation of a database of location, coaches and personnel involved to avoid recurrences. This would not only create ease of operations but it would enhance accessibility to the newly formed or revitalized institution on abuse and harassment. Mobile apps and electronic reporting mechanisms have already begun to appear in Pakistan but those are general in nature and not sports-specific. For instance, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province in Pakistan introduced a mobile app to report abuse and harassment in June 2020 (Khan, 2020). Likewise, in Pakistan Railways, an app to report abuse or harassment during traveling has also been launched by the name of Safar Saheli (Travel Friend):

Figure 7: Safar Saheli App by Pakistan Railways



On these lines, a sports-specific abuse and harassment app shall be introduced.

Priority	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Critical Success factors
1	Awareness and Education	Commission to launch social media handles	Media Committee of Pakistan Olympic Association	Time	Dec 2022	Media Handles Management

2	Funding Arrangements	Industry be approached Government be requested	President and Secretary General Pakistan Olympic Association	Time Travel Expense	Dec 2022	Commitment of President and Marketing team
3	Governance	Legislation by Government	President, Secretary General, Pakistan Olympic Association Presidents Sports Federations CSOs & NGOs	Time Travel Expense	June 2023	Networking and lobbying with politicians and civil servants

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Abstract

Of late, there has been an exponential increase in reporting of cases of abuse and harassment in sports in the world. Sports, which once was considered the activity of healthy minds and physiques, is entering into the grey area due to such allegations. Consequently, it is becoming imperative to introduce institutions with credibility, to minimize the likelihood of incidents of abuse and spread awareness amongst athletes and other stakeholders. Moreover, robust reporting and response mechanisms are indispensable if sports are to survive. The IOC has taken many steps in this direction by issuing Consensus Statements on the subject of abuse and harassment in 2007 and 2016. Developed countries are marching towards strengthening the institutional mechanism against abuse and harassment in sports. Center for SafeSport in the USA is a pioneering, independent institution in the field whereas other countries have also experimented with other safeguarding systems. In Pakistan, POA has introduced a purpose-specific Committee for abuse and harassment. However, so far, no report has been received by the Committee. This does not mean that the phenomena of abuse and harassment are not there in Pakistani sports but that there are some gaps in the construct, operations, and information of the existing mechanism. The study tries to investigate these gaps, compare existing safeguards in Pakistan with safeguards in some developed countries, gets insights from scholars and practitioners, and make policy recommendations for a robust reporting and redressing safeguard system for Pakistan with legislative backing, independence, and financial freedom.

Keywords: Sports, Abuse, Harassment, Reporting

Résumé

Dernièrement, il y a eu une augmentation exponentielle des rapports de cas d'abus et de harcèlement dans le sport dans le monde. Le sport, qui était autrefois considéré comme l'activité des esprits et des physiques sains, entre dans une zone grise en raison de ces allégations. Par conséquent, il devient impératif de mettre en place des institutions crédibles pour minimiser la probabilité d'incidents d'abus. De plus, des mécanismes de rapport et de réponse solides sont indispensables pour faire des terrains de sport des centres d'excellence. Le CIO a pris de nombreuses mesures dans ce sens en publiant des déclarations de consensus sur le sujet des abus et du harcèlement en 2007, puis en 2016. Les pays développés s'efforcent de renforcer le mécanisme institutionnel de lutte contre les abus et le harcèlement dans le sport. Le Center for SafeSport aux États-Unis est une institution pionnière et indépendante dans ce domaine, tandis que d'autres pays ont également expérimenté d'autres systèmes de protection. Au Pakistan, le CNO a introduit un comité spécifique pour les abus et le harcèlement. Cependant, jusqu'à présent, aucun rapport n'a été reçu par le comité. Cela ne signifie pas que les phénomènes d'abus et de harcèlement n'existent pas dans le sport pakistanais ; cela signifie en fait qu'il y a des lacunes dans la construction, le fonctionnement et l'information du mécanisme existant. L'étude tente d'examiner ces lacunes, de comparer les mesures de protection existantes au Pakistan avec celles de certains pays développés, de recueillir les points de vue des universitaires et des praticiens et de formuler des recommandations politiques en vue de la mise en place d'un système de protection solide pour le signalement et la réparation au Pakistan, avec un soutien législatif, une indépendance et une liberté financière.