



A STUDY OF GENDER DIFFERENCE IN MENTAL TOUGHNESS AMONG TRIBAL SPORTSPERSON OF CHHATTISGARH IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Performance psychology lay tremendous emphasis on mental toughness. In sports psychology mental toughness techniques are used for peak performance and achieving better results in sports. The term is coined by Loehr and discussed it in a book entitled "The Only Way to Win". Although both men and women actively take part in sports, research on mental toughness of sportsperson on the basis of gender is not vast and the results on role of gender in determining mental toughness are not consistent. The present study belongs to tribal community of Chhattisgarh in which it is aimed to compare mental toughness of tribal male and tribal female sportsperson of Chhattisgarh. The study comprise of 40 tribal national male sportsperson and 40 tribal female national sportsperson. The psychological tool to assess the mental toughness was questionnaire prepared by Tiwari (2007). Independent sample 't' test gives clear indication that mental toughness and its sub-scale vary among tribal sportsperson on the basis of gender. It was observed that tribal male sportsperson are mentally more strong as compared to tribal female sportsperson of Chhattisgarh. The results are discussed in the light of biological difference and socialization theories and conclusions were drawn accordingly.

Keywords : Gender, Mental toughness, Tribal sportsperson

INTRODUCTION

Doubts and worries about achieving a goal is a major obstacle in sporting success. A sportsperson need to cope up with problematic circumstance while opposing the distracting thoughts so that he/she can achieve the set of goals. This ability is termed as mental toughness in sports psychology. The term mental toughness is used since ages in sports psychology. In sports psychology the academic definition given by Jones *et al.* (2002) states mental toughness in following ways - (1) Mental toughness is inherent or trained ability of sportsperson that gives them

psychological superiority over their opponent during a competition or while training as well as lifestyle parameters, (2) Mental toughness gives specific edge to sportsperson to cope up with demands of a particular sports in the form of performance, media pressure, peer pressure, coaches and peoples expectation to perform good in a competition, (3) Mental toughness is associated with determination, self confidence and focus which provides better psychological environment to a sportsperson to perform at their best level during competition while in complete control even under immense 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 atleast 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 toughness also encompasses a major characteristic in the form of optimization of stress. While performing a certain skill set or psychomotor task a mentally tough sportsperson cope efficiently with stress and pressure of performance. Mental toughness gives edge in stress optimization in way that a sportsperson uses intense stressful atmosphere during a match to his own advantage which gives him additional focus on task in hand. Success and failure is part and parcel in sports competition. A mentally tough sportsperson learn the lesson even in failure in competition and uses these lessons in future competitions for betterment of their performance.

Since mental toughness has gained so much popularity in sports performance, studies have been conducted in the past for assessment of factors that have influence on mental toughness. One such variable is gender. Nicholls *et al.* (2009) in their study observed a meaningful difference in mental toughness between male and female athletes. They observed higher level of mental toughness in male athletes as compared to female athletes. However Clough and Stracharczyk (2012) did not find sex difference in mental toughness. Newland *et al.* (2013) reported that sports performance of male basketball players was very much associated with their mental toughness but the same was not established in a group of female basketball players. Elemiri and Aly (2014) established a meaningful relationship between sports achievement and mental toughness in male and female sportsperson. Apart from this usefulness of mental toughness in terms of performance and sports achievement has also been established by Levy *et al.* (2012), Sathe (2013) Yadav and Agashe (2019). In view of literature review, contrary findings and lack of researches on mental toughness among tribal sportspersons on the basis of gender, this study was planned.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study was to compare mental toughness and its sub-scales between tribal male and female sportspersons with national 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, 40 tribal national male sportspersons (Ave age 24.16 years) were selected. Also 40 tribal national female sportspersons (Ave. age 25.11 years) were also selected. The selected sportsperson possesses the domicile of Chhattisgarh and represented the state in national 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 National Tribal Male and Female Sportsperson.

Sub-variables of Mental Toughness	Tribal Male Sportsperson (N=40)		Tribal Female Sportsperson (N=40)		Mean Difference	't'
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Self Confidence	37.72	2.47	33.07	8.26	4.65	3.40**
Motivation	41.97	5.37	36.70	10.70	5.27	2.78**
Attention Control	37.92	8.89	34.45	9.84	3.47	1.65
Goal Setting	29.47	7.04	27.15	8.01	2.32	1.37
Visual and Imagery Control	25.70	3.74	22.12	5.98	3.57	3.20**
Attitude Control	25.40	3.87	22.05	5.62	3.35	3.10**

** Significant at 0.01 level

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

- Self confidence, motivation, visual and imagery control 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.

Figure -1- Graphical Representation of sub Variables of Mental Toughness Between national Tribal male and female Sportsperson

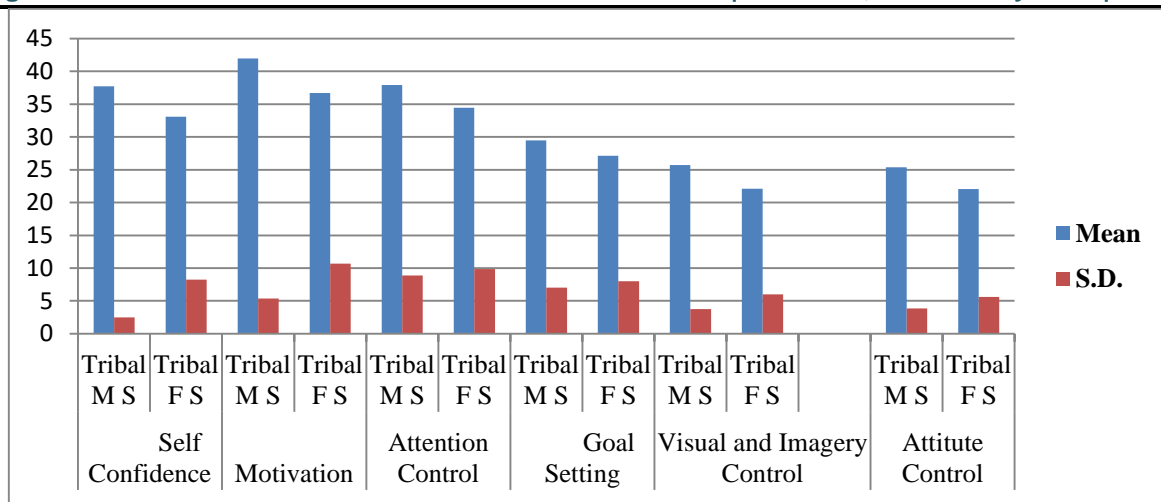


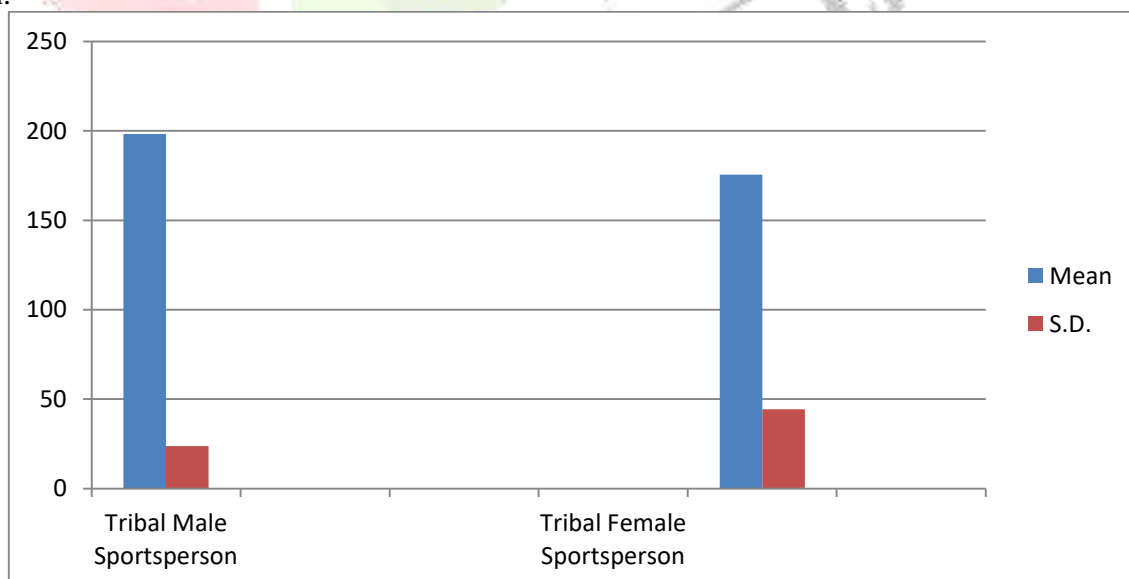
Table -2 - Comparison of mental toughness between Tribal National Male and Female Sportsperson

Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean Diff.	't'
Tribal Male Sportsperson	40	198.20	23.81	22.65	2.84**
Tribal Female Sportsperson	40	175.55	44.41		

** Significant at 0.01 level

Entries in table 2 indicate that mental toughness in tribal male sportsperson of Chhattisgarh was significantly higher as compared to tribal female sportsperson of Chhattisgarh. The calculated $t = 2.84$ adds statistical significance to this finding.

Figure – 2 - Graphical Representation of Mental Toughness Between national Tribal male and female Sportsperson.



RESULTS

- Tribal national male sportsperson were found to be mentally tougher as compared to tribal national female sportsperson of Chhattisgarh.
- Tribal national male sportsperson showed their supremacy over tribal national female sportsperson on sub-scales 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) 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) 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 national male sportsperson are mentally tougher as compared to tribal national female sportsperson. Hence specific gender based psychological strategies should be adopted to train tribal sportsperson for better performance outcome.

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