Sports is one of the avenues of mankind’s never ceasing strive for excellence. Its uniqueness lies in the intimacy between the physical happenings of our bodies and their repercussions on our minds; as well as in the general recognizability of the social and aesthetic values which sport engenders. Sport evokes experiences that are exclusively human and independent of the changing forms, patterns and customs of a civilisation which involves profoundly modifying concepts of our environment.

From its very simple form, sport has emerged into highly organised activity of human society. Sport is highly organised form of play and play is a general innate tendency. Play is very important for preservation, growth and development of organism.¹

Sport involves extremely complex behavioural issues. As a consequence of intense competition sportsman’s behaviour may undergo important changes. Physical education scientists and coaches have not to be expert only in the matter of skill training but also to be engineers who understand the mechanism of human behaviour on the playfields, under extremely diverse situations.

The modern sports training lays a greater emphasis on preparing the athletes psychologically than physically and thus lot of emphasis is being given to the psychological research dealing with psychological characteristics of the top level athletes, mental rehearsals of the training task etc. Not only that, new field of psychology which has come up very fast and is still progressing in heaps and bounds is that is "sports psychology." It has helped coaches to coach more effectively and athletes to learn more efficiently.² No training in the sports field is complete without reference to the psychological study and psychological training of athletes. All other factors - biological and sociological being equal, psychological conditioning of an athlete decidedly determines his success or failure of competition.³

Sports psychology as an applied psychology, is the greatest blessing of the modern day sports science in this age. Within a short span of time, sports psychology has taken giant strides. The knowledge in all field of human endeavour, especially of behaviour, has expanded to such an extent that it is difficult


to discuss one aspect of behaviour without reference of others. Singer⁴ states that "sports psychology explores one's behaviour in athletics." At present the psychology aspects have been emphasized and have become increasingly vital in the study of psychological characteristics that limit the performance of an individual in a given sports at high level of competition.

⁴ In modern competitive sports, psychological preparation of an athlete or a team is as much important as technique of the different skills of the game on a specific lines. In modern competitive sports the athletes and teams are prepared not only to play the game, but also to win the games. And for winning the games it is not only the proficiency in the skills which bring victory but more important is the mental preparation, the spirit and the attitude of the athletes with which they play and perform the best in the competition.

Most people generally think of sport as a male activity and of most sport behaviour as masculine behaviours. If our typical sport behaviours are masculine, we might ask now female behaviour

in sport differs. In general, females are less competitive, less concerned with and affected by the competitive outcomes of winning and losing, more oriented to social values and more open to cooperative alternatives than are males.⁵

Sex refers to the biological features based categories of male and female and gender refers to the psychological features frequently associated with these biological state. With in sports psychology we usually focus on social psychological aspects of personality and behavior, and thus gender role are the terms typically used to refer to those characteristics and behavior.⁶

Even the most documented sex differences are neither universal nor absolute. Most investigators acknowledge that biological factors have some influence on behavior, but not that biological factors are absolute determinants. Even those gender differences with the strongest supporting evidence do not parallel the dichotomous biological sex differences. Instead, the behaviors of females and males overlap considerably. About 40% of females are more aggressive than the average male. Similarly many females are more competitive than many males. Even if biological sex


⁶Ibid.
has some influence on competitive behaviour, the social psychological aspects of gender in sport and competition pose more questions and implications for sports participants.  

Numerous variables influence sex differences when females and males are confronted with physical performance situations. Females and males may not necessarily experience and respond to sports situations in the similar way. Boys are more likely, even as young children, to express physical aggression than are girls and are less likely to feel guilt anxiety about the aggression they do express. Girls are found more likely to evidence "dependency behaviour" in a variety of situations, than are boys. Test of gender identification containing game choices almost invariably denote games of aggression as 'males' while other is usually an absence of these types of games among the choices considered appropriate for females.  

Some of the most puzzling questions about sports concern athletes motivations for engaging in them. Why have some athletes such as Arthur Ashe, Pele and John Benoit dazzled and inspired others with their talents? Why have some athletes persisted

7 Ibid.
in sport inspite of over whelming odds against their success? What motive the aggressive athlete: a John McEnroe fluctuating between brilliant performances and childish tantrums? Why do female athletes from Babe Didrickson to Martina Navaratilova often worry and confuse their followers and even themselves? What causes some athletes and even coaches (a Bobby Fischer, a Lance Rentzel, Mary Decker or a Woody Hayes) to continually struggle within themselves and with the society around them? The motivation of athletes are a fascinating study because they reflect the positive and negative values of the time, as well as the psyches of individual athletes. Two people engaged in the same sport may behave overtly in a similar manner, but each may express different feelings about his or her participation and may react differently to the stress of winning and losing.\(^9\)

Aggression behaviour is an overt verbal or physical act that can psychologically or physically injure another person or oneself. Aggression behaviour against another person is called extropunitive behaviours. Whereas aggression against the self is often labeled intropunitive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour is non-accidental, the aggressor intends an injury, and the behaviour

selected for this is under his or her control. The aggressor has selected the behaviour from various alternatives available in the situation including non-aggressive responses.\textsuperscript{10}

The aggressive constructs is a complex one, that there are individual differences in the innate, potential to aggress and that the aggression can also be learned or stimulated by specific situations. When aggressive energies are expressed within the rules of a sport and channeled into skill by a mature athlete, then one may witness a powerful and inspiring performance. Aggression for aggression sake should not be sanctioned. It is self defeating and debilitating to others. The outstanding athletes enters competition with control and not with impulse. The aggressive athlete will be more active, eager, strong, highly motivated and likely to seek to vanquish any opponent.\textsuperscript{11}

Sports may be arranged in a scale according to the intensity and type of aggression inherent in each. Some sports require that a great deal of physical force to be directed against one's opponent where as others require forceful actions against the environment instead of direct aggression. Many sports, however,


\textsuperscript{11} Butt. Psychology of Sport, pp. 20-25.
require that individual aggress within structured rules and specified conditions stressful also is the fact that in many sports all out aggression in alternate with periods of total absence of action. Thus, in sport as in life, one problem is to encourage an optimum amount of aggression when called for, and to enable athlete to suspend aggression when that is called for.\textsuperscript{12}

The nature of aggression in sport should be considered the degree of ambiguity regarding aggression in the sport. That is, in some sports direct aggression in the form of physical act against the person of another player are encouraged with in the rules (American Football, Boxing and Wrestling) where as in other sports the directions, amount and incidences of aggression are highly subjective and dependent on the degree of aggression tolerated by fans, officials and team-mates (basketball, handball, ice hockey, waterpolo). The later groups seems to offer the most problems when attempting to curb aggression, because in these sports aggression is a somewhat vague construct, an idea left to each player and coach to explore with in each contest and with in various sets of social-cultural sanctions (officials, fans, national settings).\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
Most believe that aggression like many other forms of motivation, is elicited by a wide range of external events and stimuli. In other words, it is often "pulled" from without rather than "pushed" or driven from within. One factor that has often been suggested as an important cause of aggressive motivation is frustration - the thwarting or blocking of goal directed behaviour. In other words, people experience the desire to harm others when these individuals, or perhaps others, have prevented them from obtaining what they want. Frustration does increase the likelihood of aggression, especially when it is unexpected and viewed as unfair or illegitimate (Berkowitz, 1989). Another cause of aggressive motivation involves direct provocation from others.¹⁴

Anxiety is a state of mind in which the individual responds with discomfort to some event that has occurred or is going to occur (Kauss, 1980). The person worries about events, their occurrences and consequences, in general are the sources of anxiety. However, anxiety can be either somatic or cognitive in nature. The symptoms of somatic anxiety comprises mental worries and fears. In simple words, it is a type of emotional disturbances.¹⁵


Anxiety appears to be a general fear or foreboding a personality trait marked by a lower threshold to stressful events. To maintain internal balance, the organism must function with a certain level of anxiety always present. Anxiety in its broadest sense refers to the general state of alertness. It is related to the body's alarm system and provides for vigilance against disruptive forces in the environment. One must be anxious when crossing a street and transmit this anxiety to his children in order to ensure their survival in the modern city. However performance problems arise if anxiety produced arousal is too great. If the organism is continually threatened, heightened general anxiety measured by increased muscular tension, is the result - contemporary researchers have coined the terms state anxiety to denote a rather impermanent condition that may be caused by specific circumstances or feelings, and trait anxiety referring to a permanent or stable personality dimensions.\(^\text{16}\)

Anxiety is related to emotional stability, tough mindedness, and self confidence. The more stability, toughness and confidence a person has, the better he is equipped to handle anxiety and convert it in to something very productive.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{16}\) Cratty, Movement Behaviour and Motor Learning, p. 288.

\(^{17}\) Encyclopaedia of Sports Sciences and Medicine 1971 ed. s.v. "Mental Characteristics".
The effect of anxiety on performance depends directly on the type of task considered. In most cases a heightened arousal state has been found to facilitate simple performances. On the other hand, as anxiety reaches a certain level, a breakdown of psychological and physiological integrative mechanism is often seen to occur, resulting in less efficient performance in more complex tasks. Anxiety has a temporal relationship to performance. In general, anxiety levels increases prior to a dangerous situation until they become relatively high just before it is encountered. During performance anxiety is often lessened. Since the individual must concentrate on his own actions rather than on his internalized fears.\textsuperscript{18}

Anxiety may be motivating force or it may interfere with successful athletic performance. As a positive motivating force it can be instrumental in motivating the athlete to work harder to find new and better ways to improve performances and to help set goals. The athlete who uses his anxiety in this will seek out ways to improve himself. This not only reduces anxiety but helps him increase his athletic skills and his self confidence. As a negative motivator anxiety may interfere with productive as well as constructive thinking. Athletes may attempt to handle

\textsuperscript{18}Cratty, \textit{Movement Behaviour and Motor Learning}, p. 290.
anxiety by denying their mistakes, denying their weakness, and thus denying the need to work hard. This can lead to the development of poor work habits or athletic techniques. They often lead to failure and, in turn, lack of confidence and increased anxiety.¹⁹

Some-times anxiety may be helpful in tasks that require strength or power. But in some other events, a high level of anxiety may be detrimental. It is usually assumed that athletes at the hypo or hyper anxiety states perform distrosely. Therefore, keeping the optimum level of anxiety for the desired outcomes should be the tasks of coaches and sportspersons.

Apart from anxiety, motivating the athletes for short and long period of time is equally important. Motivation in general refers to the intensity and direction of behaviour. The direction of behaviour indicates whether an individual approaches or avoids particular situation, and the intensity of behaviour relates to the degree of effort put forth to accomplish the behaviour. Thus, motivation can affect the selection, intensity and persistence of an individual's behaviour, which in sport can obviously have

strong impact on the quality of an athlete's performance.20

Motivation is a process by which an individual is inspired, guided or coaxed to do something. It is one of the important conditions rather than the central core of life. In other words, it is that psycho-physical condition of the organism which causes an individual to work or strive to fulfill his needs. In the absence of proper motivation not only learning process but also life itself becomes an uninteresting uphill task. Motivation then is considered as that process by which a child may be prepared to respond to situation which are directed towards the achievement of certain predetermined goals or objectives. In this field of physical education and sports, no athlete can win or even show better performance without motivation.21

A theory which seems to have considerable intrinsic attractiveness and relevance when attempting to explain motivational factors in athletics and physical activity is the concept of need for achievement or achievement motivation. The reason for this viewpoint is simply that a great deal of emphasis in


21 Kamlesh, Psychology of Physical Education and Sports, p. 196.
sport is placed upon competing against some standard of excellence. Whether the standard of excellence is internalized (i.e. a person's personal level of aspiration) or whether it is external (i.e. a generalised goal set by one's culture or simply the outcome of competing against other people) is important when one realizes that constantly attempting to achieve certain goal in life is a fundamental aspect of human life. In a society which places high value on success, in athletics where intense emphasis is placed upon winning, and in ordinary motor performance where attaining a high level of proficiency is desirable, the importance of the basic need for achievement is quite obvious.\textsuperscript{22}

According to Atkinson, achievement motivation actually combines two personality constructs: The motive to approach success is the capacity to experience pride or satisfaction in accomplishment, and the motive to avoid failure is the capacity to experience shame or humiliation as a consequence of failure. Every one has both characteristics we all like to be successful, and we all feel good when we accomplish something. On the other hand, we all feel badly when we makes mistakes, perform poorly,

or are unsuccessful in out achievement efforts.\textsuperscript{23}

As we can see, motives influence decision and in turn, practice is more effective and efficient in activities when athletes are highly motivated for his purposes. In turn it can be expected that skill will be improved and that athlete will develop more favourably in the sport of interest. But not all athletes reveal the same motive, nor are they developed to the same extent. Further more a person can show a high achievement motive for one activity. Characteristics have been modified that are associated with those people who have been termed high achievers. Through an analysis of their behaviour if then becomes possible to formulate notions about the training of others who do not demonstrate these same behaviour. If we can assume that achievement demonstrated in any given situation is reflected by capabilities and motivation then we readily reduce the importance of understanding motivation and how to improve the need to achieve in those who are apparently poorly motivated for special activities and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Gill, Psychological Dynamics of Sport, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{24} Richard M. Suinn, Psychology in Sport - Methods and Application (Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1982), p. 56.
The role and influence of gender on the psychological characteristics in general and the gender influence on specific psychological consideration to sportsperson with respect to attitudinal behaviour and response to sporting situations and performance outcomes, emphasise the need for assessing gender variations on psychometric parameters of sportspersons of different sports and games. This was the causative and motivating factor for the research scholar to undertake the present study, on these lines.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of the study was to assess the gender differences on Aggression, Anxiety and Achievement Motivation among different sportspersons.

**Delimitations**

1. This study was delimited to All India Inter University level male and female players.

2. The study was delimited to the following psychometric parameters:
   a) Aggression
   b) Anxiety and
   c) Achievement Motivation
3. The study was further confined to the following sports:
   a) Basketball
   b) Handball
   c) Volleyball
   d) Hockey
   e) Badminton
   f) Swimming
   g) Track and Field, and
   h) Gymnastics.

**Limitations**

1. Questionnaire research has its limitations as there may be some bias that may come into the mind of the subject which may indicate insincere responses which in turn can distort the final result. This was considered as the limitation of the study.

2. The test was administered at different points of time considering the availability of the subjects depending on their tournaments. This also might have affected the responses which also might be considered as the another limitation of the study.

**Hypotheses**

On the basis of available literature and the scholar's own understanding of the problem, the following hypotheses was
formulated:

1. There would be significant differences among sportspersons belonging to different sports, selected in this study on the selected psychometric parameters.

2. There would be significant gender differences on the selected psychometric parameters among sportspersons selected in this study.

Definition and Explanation of Terms

Gender

Gender refers to the psychological features frequently associated with males and females.\(^{25}\)

Aggression

Aggression may be defined as the energetic assault on animate or inanimate objects for a purpose.\(^{26}\)

Dollard and his colleagues (1939) which suggest that aggression is any sequence of behaviour the goal of which is to do

\(^{25}\)Gill, Psychological Dynamics of Sport, p. 79.

injury to the person toward whom it is delivered.  

**Anxiety**

Anxiety is a state of emotional and physical disturbance induced in a person by real or imagined threat. In psychiatry, the term refers to disturbance caused by traits that are only apparent to the individual, and cause him to behave in a way that is not relevant to the true situations.  

Anxiety is an uneasiness and feeling of foreboding often when a person is about to embark on a hazardous venture. It is often accompanied by a strong desire to excel.  

**State Anxiety**

State anxiety (A-State) is a transitory emotional state or conditions of human organism that is characterised by subjective consciously perceived feelings of tension and apprehension and heightened automatic nervous system activity.  

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Achievement Motivation

An effective arousal state directing behaviour in an achievement oriented activity cognitively appraised as potentially satisfying the need to do a job well and the need to be successful which results in emulation of successful rather than in hard work.31

Significance of the Study

Biological sex difference is a salient characteristic that influences much of our behaviour and interactions with others. Gender influence has scientific relevance in sporting situations which involves extreme complex behavioural issues. Understanding the psychological or behavioural parts of athletes provide useful information and guidelines which may be helpful to coaches and athletes. Therefore, the present study may be of significance in the following ways:

1. The study may determine the variations in selected psychometric parameters viz. aggression, anxiety and achievement motivation among male and female sportspersons.

2. The study may also help to assess the differences in the selected psychometric parameters among sportspersons of various sports discipline chosen in this study.

3. The result of the study may provide useful information and guidelines to coaches, physical education teachers and athletes regarding the behavioural characteristics of sportspersons and may thus be instrumental in effective psychological preparation of athletes.

4. The study in addition to provide useful information in the field of sports psychology, may help to trace the psychological profiles of inter university level sportspersons.