**ST JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -27**

**IV SEMESTER - BA/BSc/BCA/BCom/BSW/BBA/BVC**

**END SEMESTER EXAMINATION: April 2024**

**(Examination conducted in May / June 2024)**

**GE 422 – General English- REGULAR**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time: 2 Hours Max Marks: 60**

**This paper contains FOUR printed pages and THREE parts**

**Instructions:**

**1. This paper is for students who have opted for General English REGULAR.**

**2. Adhere to the word limit indicated.**

**3. You are allowed to use a dictionary**

**4. Marks will be deducted if you copy from the passage.**

**PART A**

1. **Read the following article titled ‘Women’s Football in Kerala: Some Reflections from The Ground’ by Amritha Mohan.**

It was the weekend, sometime around six in the evening in December. At the Thrissur Corporation Stadium, some people—mostly men— were on their sunset strolls, while a few others ran, jogged, or huffed and puffed doing something in between. Some couples loitered by the shade of the trees around the stadium. Sitting on the concrete steps— which partially surrounded the stadium ground— seemed like the sensible thing to do to while away time until the football match began, but as soon as I sat, the heat seared through my clothes—an aftermath of the 30-plus-degree hot afternoon. In any case, I was warming up to the ground, soaking in the heat and the people present, some of whom looked like daily walkers/runners, chit-chatting their way through the exercise. A middle-aged woman, who seemed to be enjoying her leisure, and in whose proximity I sat, casually asked me what the time was. I answered, and asked her whether she knew about the football match that was going to begin soon. “What, here?” she asked, incredulously. I smiled feebly, slightly empathising with her, and signalled towards a flex board that announced the Kerala Women’s League (2023-24), the top-division league for women footballers in the state.

And I wondered, how *would* she know? Even I was here only because I made a series of phone calls to the organisers concerned, trying to decipher the date and time of the event. When I enquired with them about practicalities such as schedules and fixtures to finalise my travel plans the day before, I was asked to “follow their socials” and just wait, only to be informed personally that the football league had been postponed, and will begin four days later. I remember feeling uneasy and unsettled, because if somebody (like me) actually turned up on the date they publicised on their social media, they would be in for a rude surprise. But then, it looked like not many were surprised because after all, who watches women’s football in Kerala?

Such a question needed to be asked, especially as the inaugural event of the 2023-24 Kerala Women’s League for football happened without much fanfare, in the presence of a few dignitaries. It was doubtful whether any media offered to cover these matches; apart from the tournament’s and the playing clubs’ official social media channels, there wasn’t much noise about the whole sporting event. Announcements were sparse; match commentary was non-existent. Some of the spectators at the ground, who later ended up watching the match, simply happened to be there, they told me. But at the same time, a significant few continued to trickle down and leave, slowly and unceremoniously, as the game played on. And a few other spectators, who were women, turned out to be players from other clubs who were keen to watch their competitors.

I try hard to stop myself but it is difficult to not compare. I come from Kannur, in Kerala’s Malabar, a region that is often considered famous for its football culture, specifically Sevens Football. A lot has been said about the region’s “football-crazy” fans; this has been well-documented in popular media, documentaries, films as well as academic discourse. In the narratives around football, the sport has often been likened to “emotion” and “passion”, as something that is universally capable of evoking strong feelings, as something that holds the community together and fosters a sense of belonging. Such feelings are easily palpable, as I have experienced, if one were to watch a Sevens football match here. As Veena Mani and Mathangi Krishnamurthy (2021) note, the atmosphere at a Sevens football match is nothing short of cacophonic, and replete with loud announcements, shrieks and drum beats (p. 147). This begs the question: if a region and the communities therein are capable of eliciting and exhibiting such intense emotion for a sport like football, why was that absent when the players are women.

It is also not that Kerala was alien to women’s football. As I spoke to veteran women football players as part of my fieldwork, it was evident that Kerala did have a culture of watching and cheering on women’s football in the 1980s-90s. These were called “Exhibition” matches, where women players—once the dates for the tournament were set—took on the effort to form random teams and play against each other. Such matches were commonly held as part of most football tournaments held across Kerala. Usually, these would happen in that lull between two men’s Sevens football matches, or sometimes during its unexpected breaks. “It was our homemade version of a women’s football tournament”, says S. Lalitha, a veteran football player from Thiruvananthapuram. “Although it was conducted during break-time, as some form of entertainment, if you will, it was quite an encouragement for us as players, to witness a crowd that shouted our names, to play in a gallery that thronged with spectators. We’d hear announcements booming with our names,” she reminisced. Football coach Seena C.V from Ernakulam, who was also formerly an international player, echoed the same sentiment: “It was a thrill to feel so many eyes and ears cheering for me. Some would even garland me with cash after the match. That energy was something else,” she says. Similarly, a photograph from the 1987 Nehru Cup at the Kozhikode stadium reveals how the stadium had a designated gallery just for women, and how women were visible spectators of the sport in Kerala. These instances further demonstrate the slow transformation of a gendered culture of football spectatorship as well as play in Kerala; as veteran football player G. Ayona noted: “Women have much more exposure and opportunities to play now than before, which is welcoming, but it feels like an active culture of watching and showing up for women’s football is lacking now—it certainly seemed different back when I played”.

Cut to the Women’s League today, one wonders why this is not replicated, if not redesigned, in tandem with the resources available at present. It is a common sight (and sound) in Kerala: loudspeakers, tied onto jeeps trudging through its narrow village roads, enthusiastically blaring announcements of Sevens football matches. I too wished to hear the names of a few women footballers on the loudspeaker but did not hear any. However, this is not an isolated event: I witnessed a similarly related situation at the senior women’s inter-district football championship held in October 2023, in Kasargode, where there were no announcements, and no noise really, to at least let people know that women were playing football here. When the ball went outside the ground during a game, the players themselves crossed the fence to retrieve it—and not the ball boys (or girls). It was as if a lukewarm carelessness permeated the whole atmosphere, as women went about their business, playing football with the cards they had been dealt with.

**PART A**

**Answer the following questions in about 5 to 8 sentences each: (4X5=20)**

1. “It is a common sight (and sound) in Kerala: loudspeakers, tied onto jeeps trudging through its narrow village roads, enthusiastically blaring announcements of Sevens football matches. I too wished to hear the names of a few women footballers on the loudspeaker but did not hear any.” Do you think there will be a difference if the announcements of women’s football matches were made using loudspeakers as is the case of men’s football? Give reasons for your response.
2. What difference would it make if women administrators were put in charge of women’s football? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What observations does the writer make to indicate a significant disparity in the level of audience involvement between sevens football and women's football?
4. “It was a thrill to feel so many eyes and ears cheering for me. Some would even garland me with cash after the match. That energy was something else,” she says. Similarly, a photograph from the 1987 Nehru Cup at the Kozhikode stadium reveals how the stadium had a designated gallery just for women, and how women were visible spectators of the sport in Kerala.” What factors stop female fans from attending sports events in stadiums? Do you think having separate stands for women in stadiums will see more female fans actively watching the game? Give reasons for your response.

**PART B**

**Answer ANY TWO of the following questions in about 150 words each:(2X10 = 20)**

1. The above excerpt talks about the state of women’s football in Kerala. Do you think this is the case in the state that you come from? Elaborate using relevant examples.
2. Society perceives certain sports as a "men's game" or a "women's game". Have you ever come across any such instances where you were told that some games are exclusively for certain genders? Explain with examples that you can pick out from your experiences.
3. “At the Thrissur Corporation Stadium, some people—mostly men— were on their sunset strolls, while a few others ran, jogged, or huffed and puffed doing something in between. Some couples loitered by the shade of the trees around the stadium.” The above lines illustrate that men have easy access to public spaces at all times of the day. Is the lack of female participation in stadiums an extension of the absence of inclusivity in public spaces? Discuss using relevant examples.

**PART C**

**Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in about 250 words: (1X20=20)**

1. Recently there were arguments regarding the fairness of the involvement of transwomen athletes competing in women’s athletic events. How do you think the inclusion of transwomen in sports challenges the traditional notions of gender?
2. “The Norwegian women's beach handball team is in a battle with the sport's governing bodies to wear less-revealing uniforms. After the team's repeated complaints about the required bikini bottoms were reportedly ignored, they wore shorts during a recent game in protest and were fined 150 euros (around $175) per player.”

Many a time, in sports, women are pictured and telecast from the point of view of men, often sexually objectified in a way that overshadows their skills and accomplishments. Does this objectification affect the participation, representation and experience of women in the sporting world? Discuss using the above example and others you may have come across.