

**The Western India Football Association**  
(Governing body of football for Maharashtra)



#Make It Happen  
#Paint It Purple  
#IWD2015

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015

**Celebrated all over Maharashtra**

WIFA observed International Women's Week from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

**In conversation  
with 13 Women in  
Indian Football**

**Grassroots  
Festivals across  
35 center  
4000+  
Participants**

**Football Schools |  
Hospitals |  
Colleges |  
Grassroots Center  
| NGOs | District  
FA | Clubs**

**Fancy Dress |  
Penalty Shootouts  
| Grassroots  
Festival | Tally  
Games**



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## Report on International Women's Day

**Western India Football Association** celebrated the International Women's Day in a befitting fashion all across Maharashtra from the week starting 1st March 2015. This report consists a round-up of all the activities conducted by its affiliated Districts, clubs, Grassroots centres, licensed coaches and active members of the football community across Maharashtra.



In our endeavour to promote Women's football in the state of Maharashtra our effort is to bring it up a notch every year. WIFA started the year with Overwhelming response in the Maharashtra Inter District Football Championship (MIDFC) Women's Open held at Jalgaon, where participation was up by 50% from the last year. The week starting 1st March WIFA had declared it to be Women's week and celebrated the joy of women in Indian football. Our Media team did an excellent job of highlighting the prominent girls in football from diverse fields; referees, players, grassroots leaders, physios, nutritionists, licensed coaches, administrators and the likes', informed Souter Vaz, Hon Secretary – WIFA.

'I would like to thank all the people involved in the celebrations and the festivities and I feel we are on the right track. Cheers to Women's Football!', added Mr.Vaz.

Mr. Henry Menezes, CEO – WIFA was upbeat and spearheading all the initiatives said 'We are celebrating Women's Week on the eve of the International Women's Day all over the state in districts like Mumbai, Thane, Satara, Kolhapur, Aurangabad, Jalgaon, Dhule etc.. In the headquarters here in Mumbai, it was very heartening to see a large number of girls coming out on the field and playing they were brilliantly backed by their parents which was very encouraging.'

'Our vision is to bridge the gap between genders and promote equality among them by encouraging with more women participation over the years. In fact the women's team ranks much higher in the world compared to the men. So we want



these young girls and their parents to look at football a lot more seriously and get involved and stay involved over the years. Its very important to create a conducive atmosphere for the girls to participate which help sustain our efforts', added Mr.Menezes.

All the stakeholders got involved and celebrated the day in different fashion, most of the activities were focused on grassroots celebration and festivals aiming maximum inclusion. The most important was getting parents involved and feeding them with vital inputs about nutrition and long term benefits of Football.

The festivities along with football were clubbed with drawing competition, fashion show, match between parents and kids, women's tournament, school contact programs, telly games, etc. The report is a pictorial description of the activities conducted during the week.

WIFA created two theme based banners for the leaders who had confirmed their participation to celebrate the Women's Day.

10 ft x 8 ft



15 ft x 3 ft



## Details of Activity

| Sr No. | District   | Organisers               | Venue                               |
|--------|------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1      | Aurangabad | Aurangabad DFA           | M S L College                       |
| 2      | Buldhana   | Buldhana DFA             | University Ground                   |
| 3      | Dhule      | Dhule DFA                | District Football Stadium Dhule     |
| 4      | Jalgaon    | Jalgaon DFA              | Zilla Krida Sankul                  |
| 5      | Jalna      | JDNA                     | J. S. College                       |
| 6      | Kolhapur   | Deepak Kunnapanvar       | Madhushrishti Vidyalaya, Gandinglaj |
| 7      | Kolhapur   | Maloji raje              | Kolhapur Stadium                    |
| 8      | Mumbai     | Bodyline                 | Cooperage                           |
| 9      | Mumbai     | PIFA Foundation          | Cooperage                           |
| 10     | Mumbai     | WIFA                     | Cooperage                           |
| 11     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | Fr. Agnel Vashi                     |
| 12     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | Ryan International, Nerul           |
| 13     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | St. Augustine, Nerul                |
| 14     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | MSSA Ground, Metro                  |
| 15     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | DD Upadhyaya School, Mulund         |
| 16     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | SL Marg School                      |
| 17     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | Municipal Ground Nahur              |
| 18     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | St. Anne's, Malad                   |
| 19     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | MPET School Dharavi                 |
| 20     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | St. Mary's Mulund                   |
| 21     | Mumbai     | Mumbai City FC           | Nair Hospital, Bombay Central       |
| 22     | Mumbai     | Astrengung United - NGO  | Matunga Flyover                     |
| 23     | Mumbai     | Football Leaders Academy | TIFR, Navy Nagar                    |
| 24     | Mumbai     | Mumbai FC                | Cooperage                           |
| 25     | Mumbai     | MDFA                     | Parel                               |
| 26     | Nagpur     | NDFA                     | Police Ground Nagpur                |
| 27     | Osmanabad  | Osmanabad DFA            | University Ground                   |
| 28     | Pune       | Pune FC                  | Maharashtra Mandal                  |
| 29     | Pune       | SAI Academy              | SAI Nagar Ground                    |
| 30     | Pune       | VMSA                     | Pune                                |
| 31     | Satara     | SDFA                     | Satara Institute                    |
| 32     | Thane      | Sanathayan Hariyan       | Everest World Society               |
| 33     | Thane      | Mumbai FC                | Millennium Park                     |



## JUHI SHAH: 'Whistling Away'

Juhi Shah is a post-grad in Sports Business Management from D.Y. Patil School of Business Management and also a referee associated with the Bombay Referee Association. She has played for the Maharashtra team on numerous occasions and in many tournaments. Her inspiration as a player is Abby Wambach, who is one of the most decorated female athletes in not just the United States, but also in the game

of football. Professional Referee Bibiana Steinhaus of Germany inspired her to take up refereeing and make an impact in the game of football.

In an interview, she discusses the future of women in the sport.

**Q. What made you take up refereeing? Were you already playing football before you started refereeing?**

I always had a dream to represent India in football. But the opportunities for a player from a state like Maharashtra were less. Get recognized by scouts was getting difficult and at the very time when I felt like I was playing well and performing well the national tournaments disappeared for 3 years. Not being able to fulfill one of my many dreams I felt like it was time to do something different. To do something that would #MakeItHappen. I consulted a friend of mine who was also a referee and very soon I gave my name and wrote my exam at Bombay Referees' Association and started my refereeing career.

**Q. What has been your experience like till now? From the 1st match you did to your one of your latest/best matches you have done?**

I remember officiating my 1st match – a U-14 girl's match at MSSA. I did not have a proper refereeing uniform yet, so I wore an Orange Jersey I had, and started doing the match. I did not have any clue about how to run what position to take. I knew my basic signalling and hand gestures to give for fouls, throws, goal kicks, etc. Now thinking of one of the most competitive matches I did, I officiated a friendly match between Pune FC and ONGC at Cooperage stadium. The match kicked off at 9am in the gruelling heat. Both these teams being I-league teams surely made the match very competitive. Doing that match I realized the different between my 1st match and that match. My body language, the coordination with my assistant referees', the interaction with the players and coaches, everything seemed to be at a higher level than before.

It is always interesting to do men's competitive matches at higher level, no doubt that doing women's matches is what I need to do more as a referee but since managing studies and timing of matches gets difficult. I do my best to grab every woman's match that I can.

Q. What do you think are the issues women referees' in India face?

There was a time when we barely had any women referees' in Mumbai. But going out of Mumbai for national tournaments made me realize that there are a lot of women referees' across India but the major issue we all face was getting enough matches to do.

Every women referee in India cannot take up refereeing as a permanent job. It can only be a hobby. National tournaments take place only 2 or 3 times a year. Each tournament maybe for 15-20 days after that they have to go back home. What do they do when they go back home? Refereeing matches everyday can get very tiring. Also many states do not have competitive women's matches so they have to do with refereeing U-16 boys matches to help them improve.

We need to encourage these referees' by giving them more matches (even if it means refereeing boys matches).

Q. Nita Ambani had mentioned the start of a League for Women like the ISL. Will that help the referees'?

Her thoughts and plans for an ISL for Women will help improve the standard of football as well as refereeing in India. Referees' would be able to officiate matches alongside other FIFA referees' and learn a lot from them. We would get to officiate matches of high standard considering the fact that other international players would come in to play this tournament as well.

Q. #MakItHappen is the theme for this year's International Women's Day. Would you like to say some encouraging words to other women by including #MakItHappen?

We have to #MakItHappen by encouraging more girls to take up football/refereeing and thus improve the standard of football in India. We got to #MakItHappen.



## NUTAN DHANAWADE: FLAGGING FOR HER RIGHT !!

Being a graduate and having a job is one aim of life. But being able to officiate in a National Games Final with the likes of Maria Rebello (FIFA Referee) was a dream fulfilled for Nutan Dhanawade. From having no knowledge of the game to becoming a composed and confident referee, it has truly been an inspiring ride for this Maharashtra girl.

She was kind enough to share some of her insights on being a referee in one of the most popular sports in the world.

Q. What made you take up refereeing? Were you already playing football before you started refereeing?

I was an athlete when I came to know about refereeing from a friend. She told me that refereeing is very interesting and through it, I can stay in touch with my sports activities. That is when I decided to attain its training for 6 months. After completion of my training, I started to like it and to pursue with it. Wanting to do something unique, I made up my mind to become a referee. I never played football so I had no knowledge about it or its rules/laws. Now that I am an active referee, I enjoy it.

**Q. What has been your experience like till now? From the 1st match you did to your latest match?**

The experience has been amazing so far and I have enjoyed every part of it. I started off as an assistant referee and remained an assistant referee for a year. Having faith in me, I was given the chance to be a Referee for a Girl's Tournament. Looking at my talent and my confidence, I was appointed as a referee for the Junior National Matches (Girl's). I still enjoy being an Asst. Referee as well as the 4th Official. Recently, I got the chance to attend the Senior National Games (Women's). All these experiences has helped me enhanced my knowledge of the Laws and also the quality part of my refereeing.

**Q. What do you think are the issues faced by women referees' in India?**

There are many issues that women referee's face in India. People's mindset is such that in spite of a woman referee giving the right decision, it is still argued upon and there is a constant effort to overpower the referee. As not many Women's matches are played, there is less exposure.

**Q. Nita Ambani had mentioned about the starting a League for Women like the ISL. Will that help the referees'?**

It will be of immense help and it will also give us a platform to showcase our talent and skill. This will also instill awareness among women which will help Indian Women Football to grow in leaps and bounds. A platform like this also inclines the women of our country to take up refereeing as a career and excel in it.

**Q. You recently represented WIFA as a referee at the National Games. What was your experience going there?**

As the tournament was of a different level and the players were thorough with the Laws and Rules of the game, it was easier to handle them. A high standard of discipline was maintained throughout the tournament. The organization and the arrangement also made it a worthwhile experience.

**Q. You were selected to officiate the finals of the National Games alongside the likes of Maria Rebello. What did you learn from her?**

It was a dream come true. She is a FIFA referee and to do a match with someone as experienced as her made it worthwhile. I never thought that I will get to do a match with her. Refereeing alongside her was a learning session about match etiquettes. I could see her handle the match temperament with such ease and by keeping a very cool head. It felt like I am officiating an international match. It was an unforgettable moment.

Q. What do you find more challenging, refereeing women's or men's matches? Why?

Men's matches are more challenging as they are more competitive and there is a faster pace to the game. There are more fouls and misconduct to look at which also requires you to concentrate throughout the match.

Q. #MakeltHappen is the theme for this year's International Women's Day. Would you like to say some encouraging words to other women by including #MakeltHappen?

Refereeing is not that tough as it looks like. It's quite a challenge and you will end up enjoying it too. Once you get over the fear it all feels easy. You find your identity and self-confidence once you start enjoying it. I would like more women take up the challenge to become officials in men's matches and #MakeltHappen.



## Anjali Shah managing on and off the field

Anjali Shah is the co-founder of PIFA and a well-known business woman in Mumbai, India. She is a recognized promoter of football in India, especially women's football. She has served as an advisory on the Maharashtra women's football committee.

She managed the Maharashtra State U-14 Girls team that were runners up at the AIFF National Football Festival in Chennai, 2008-2009. She was appointed manager of the various Maharashtra Women's team since 2008. She represented Maharashtra at a coaching clinic held in Goa in 2009 with U.S. women's soccer coach Mr. Mike Dickey. In 2009, Anjali was the team manager of the PIFA Colaba FC U17 team that represented India at the FIFA recognized club tournament – Gauteng Future Champions 2009 held in South Africa. She has developed ties and collaborated with many European clubs / academies such as AC Milan, Liverpool FC, Everton FC, Real Madrid Foundation and Leicester City FC.

Anjali is currently the CEO of PIFA Sports Pvt Ltd that manages the Premier India Football Academy and PIFA Colaba FC teams, one of which plays the I league 2nd division. She is also the President of the "PIFA Foundation for the Benefit of Sports", an NGO for the development of football for underprivileged youth. She obtained her BA degree from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. She is also an ACE certified fitness instructor. She completed the Fundamentals of Movement course and Fundamentals of Coaching conducted by the English FA in UK. She has been in the driving seat of starting the "Girls Get Going" project which is a project that encourages girls to participate in sports and mentors them to stick with the program whereby empowering them mentally, socially and physically.

Excerpts of the interview with Ms. Anjali Shah and wifa.in

**Q. How tough/easy was it to convince the people around you that you would be taking up a career in Indian football?**

The biggest obstruction were the coaches and administrators who were not used to seeing an educated and independent woman enter a male dominated area.

**Q. What are the problems faced by women/girl athletes in India?**

Cultural norms that state that sports are meant for boys is the biggest one. Girls are usually clannish and join only if other Girls are participating. Also there are Misconceptions that Girls are not physically suitable to the demands of physical activity. In the city there is also the ever growing Academic pressure for all genders to excel in studies. Parents want to keep girls away from Boys which is one more deterring factor.

**Q. What do you think is the biggest issue faced by women in Indian Football?**

The biggest of them all is discrimination by the governing bodies – Govt Funds, Facilities, tournaments are never a priority for women athletes. The focus is primarily on men. Thus enthusiastic girls are disheartened due to lack of participation after training the entire season.

**Q. What structure do you propose for development of Indian football?**

The structure for women's football should start at the grassroots level. Young girls should be introduced and encouraged to play the game in a non-competitive but yet healthy environment thereby developing their love and addiction for this beautiful game. Young girls should be exposed to licensed coaches who will teach them the basic skills and confidence to take their game to higher level. Football in school should be made a compulsory sport. Regular tournaments should be conducted annually. Be it school, club or national. Regular clinics for elite players should be conducted by I league coaches. Seminars for the football players as well as seminars to discuss issues related to women. A counselling centre to redress women football issues.

**Q. Whom have you been inspired by?**

Leonardo da Vinci – One of the greatest minds in human history. He was a multi-faceted human being with the hunger to always learn and better himself, I have been following his ideology in everything I do.

**Q. Do you think somebody has been inspired by you?**

Many academies have been inspired by our professional approach to football

**Q. Advice for young budding talent?**

Start Young, work hard and keep focused and you will reach your goal.

**Q. How do you intend to celebrate this day if you were back in your hometown/state?**

I would like to empower each and every girl to make a choice to change her life through sports and the endless options it endorses.

Q. #Make it happen is the slogan for the International women's day; how do you connect with it? What message would you send out?

I totally connect with this slogan. The power to "Make it happen" for oneself lies within each one of us and we should do whatever it takes to unleash this power and accomplish our true potential.



## Kalpana leading from the front!

Kalpana Das is currently the head coach of newly inducted Pune FC women's team. Kalpana Das is an AFC B License coach by qualification. She has had a very diverse experience in the field of football on and off the field. She has handled a sports venue organisation, been a coach at

various sports clubs. She is also an instructor of the AIFF D License and AIFF Grassroots Instructor.

Women's Football scene in India is looking very bright and Kalpana Das is leading from the front. Our WIFA team caught up with her for International Women's Day

Q. How can sports be used to bring people together?

It can play a role in bringing people with different culture and thoughts together to create a social impact

Q. Football being dominated mainly by male in India, how to overcome those gender barriers?

The barrier has to start from one's own house and am sure that it would clean up the entire nation

Q. Have things changed for women's in football?

Yes, the players' physique and the game quality as well as an active participation by celebrity child

Q. What made you take up coaching?

Passion for the game and to create more passionate footballers like me

Q. As a coach have you seen any differences in players over the decades? How you manage their skill sets?

Yes, a lot of it in fact. The players skill have tremendously been enhanced through fun and SSG thus getting their full focus and improvement

Q. How did you first get into the game?

In school, joined the team only for fun never ever dreamed that i would build it as a career

Q. Do you see yourself working in the men's league?

Why not the coaches' job is the same

Q. Which team did you support as a child? Do you still support them?

Germany now it depends on performance but i love Chelsea

Q. What is your ultimate dream?

To become another Helena Costa in India

Q. How do you compare the Netherlands Team that came down to play 2 years back and our current Indian Team?

They were young and has been playing together as a team for long in a better infrastructure where as we lacked in period of training as our players are from different states and their daily training does not meet the required facility.

Q. You recently had selections for the Pune FC Women's Team, how was the response you got?

Good response but players are yet to know the importance of their career and what is it to play for an I-League team

Q. How has your progress been so far with the Pune FC Women's Team?

Yes it's challenging as we are not in the business of buying players but creating players

Q. Do you feel that the predicted ISL for Women's would make an impact on Women's Football in India?

Yes, drastic change will take place

Q. What are the difficulties you have to face every day?

In football no men or women, all are considered to be the same but yet when people hire they first see the gender rather than qualification and experience

Q. What made you leave Chennai and start from scratch in Maharashtra?

Football business dragged me to Mumbai but coaching I was always in I had been the Manager for Tamil Nadu's Senior Women's Team and always ensured that we reach Semi Finals , also formed Women's Police Team in Tamil Nadu and it was the first Govt. Team to recruit players after seeing the performance. I also still have my senior boys playing for 1st division in Tamil Nadu. During working period I motivated and supported my office colleagues to play football after work.



## MONIKA TARKAR: ABOVE THE BEST, LEADING THE REST!!

The All India Football Federation named Monika Tarkar as their Team Physiotherapist for the upcoming AFC U-14 Girl's Regional Championship, 2015 which will be held in

Kathmandu, Nepal.

Monika, 25, is an experienced physiotherapist who has worked at every level in football. She worked with the U-16 Girl's National Team for the AFC Qualifiers, 2014 held at Bangladesh. She has previously worked with the likes of Himachal Pradesh team in the Santosh Trophy, Indian Navy Gymnastics team at INS Hamla, VNFC INDIA during their German Camp and Tour and also for the International Tennis Federation (Women & Girl's).

She first started off as an intern and worked with the local tennis club in Pune. She would take fitness and injury prevention sessions with the U-16 & U-19 players which helped her gain experience. Looking at her dedication and work ethic she landed an assignment with HPE, India for the International Tennis Federation Championship (Women's Open) held at CCI, Mumbai. This gave her an opportunity to work on all kinds of injuries and also with many foreign players. She then also worked with quite a few local Pune football teams to enhance her knowledge and depth.

While working with the local football teams she realized that people still haven't accepted woman physiotherapists. They always want them to fail in some way. This kind of unsettled her for a few days but with renewed determination and commitment she came back to Mumbai and kick-started her career.

In Mumbai she started off with MSSA as their physiotherapist for U-12, U-14 & U-16 categories. Mr. Sudhir BT spotted her there. He asked her a few questions and was quiet impressed. He offered her to work with the Himachal Pradesh Football Team. Later she joined ICL (Super Division Team in MDFA) and worked with many other teams in MDFA. Her mother supported her constantly through everything, encouraging her to be unique and to pursue her dreams.

"Working with AIFF has been a privilege. I would like to thank them for giving me this opportunity. It's a huge honour," said Monika. "I also want to acknowledge the constant need to bring in something new with every session and to keep improvising on what we have already accomplished. I'm humbled and proud to help the current generation of players towards their ultimate goal. Finally, I would like to thank my mother who supported me in pursuing my dreams and help me reach where I am today."

Monika recalls the very 1st match which required her expertise, "One of the players got a direct hit to the chest and wasn't able to breathe. His pulse was low and had abnormal breathing when I started to resuscitate him. From the time of resuscitation to reaching the hospital, I got him to start breathing again and get his heartbeat to normal. At that moment I felt I was born for this."

"I am proud to see what Monika has accomplished. During her 1st assignment with the U-16 National Team, she showed wonderful knowledge and depth along with experience. It's a result of her hard work that AIFF has appointed her for the U-14 Girls' Team," said Sapna Rani, who is the Manager for the U-16 Girl's National Team.

"Monika has the quality, commitment and professional experience; the best I have ever come across. She has that eye for detail and also the hunger to learn more. When you accept criticism and come back stronger, it shows what you're made of. She has the mettle and also the persona to be one of the best physiotherapists in the world," said Sudhir BT (Coach, KNVB, Holland).

Eva Carneiro has been Monika's inspiration and she would like to emulate her one day. Monika loves Manchester United Football Club and would one day like to work with their medical staff as it would be a dream come true.

"Beyond the horizon, lies a dream; your vision is your dream and you are the only path to #MakeItHappen," is the message she wants to pass on to the women of this country.

Monika is looking to get her Masters in Sports Physiotherapy from Germany and get an upgrade on it from the UK. She wants to learn and adapt the recent rehabilitation techniques and technologies. She wants to specifically work on prevention of injuries and faster recovery of players. Her aim is to one day get all the latest technology in India for the betterment of Indian Football.



## Kimberly Miranda: Inspiring Young Minds.

From acting in Chak De India to watching the Quarter-finals of the 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP in South Africa, Kimberley Miranda has experienced it all. She devoted herself to helping out the underprivileged when she worked with Magic Bus for 5 years. An AFC 'C' License coach herself, Kimberley is head strong & holding her own to inspire young girl's and help them achieve their dreams.

She was relaxed and affable throughout her interview.

### Q. How important is sports in people's life?

Playing sports helps you to improved physical health. Sports play a primarily positive role in youth development, including improved academic achievement, higher self-esteem, fewer behavioural problems, and better psychosocial. It helps in building friendships and relationships.

All over the world, sports is being used to address various issues like health, peace, gender equality. Over the past few years more and more people are accepting the fact that through sports, numerous issues can be dealt with.

### Q. How can sports help in bringing people together?

Its quiet simple....Take a football and walk into a park. There will be kids who will swamp you wanting to play. That's how people & communities come together through sport! Sports use the fundamental values to communicate and to inspire positive change amongst both individuals and communities. That's the power of Sport!

### Q. Have things changed for women in football?

Not by leaps and bounds but there are positive changes seen in women's football. As FIFA stresses on the need to develop women's football all over the world, there are few nations that have professional leagues for women. I hope my country moves in that direction and someday girls will make a career out of it and can proudly say that they play professionally.

### Q. What made you take up coaching?

It was never planned. After graduation I started working for an NGO. They used sports as a tool for development. I was assigned a group of U-14 girls and boys. Daily I would meet these kids and train them in football, but I realized that my life was being transformed as it wasn't just coaching them. They were helping me become a better person & be sensitive to various issues.

Within a few months working with the NGO, I was recommended to take part in the International Coaching Course organized by KNVB, Netherlands. That's where my formal training began as a coach. Thanks to the Dutch and my students that inspired me, I am in this field.

### Q. As a coach have you seen any differences in players over the decades?

There have definitely been positive changes. The game has become more scientific and organized these days to which players have adapted well.

### Q. Do you think today's coaches should be aware that the way they were coached might not be the best method now?

Personally, it doesn't matter. Coaching has evolved over the years. Coaches work hard to bring new techniques and ways to train players and make it more interesting. During my time coaches gave us the best they could in limited time and resources. As times change and we

progress in every field, we have to adapt and that's what we are doing. We are adapting to the changing phase in football.

**Q. What should coaches keep in mind when they move between different levels?**

We should be open to learning new things and adapt quickly to the fast changing times of football.

**Q. What more could football do to rid itself of all forms of discrimination?**

All over the world football is being used to deal with various social issues. Discrimination in its various forms is one of the major issues being dealt with. It's more of a state of mind than anything else. Maybe if we all took our religion seriously and practiced what is in our holy books we could get rid of discrimination, because every religion is based on love and where there is love for humanity there cannot be hate or discrimination.

**Q. How did you first get into the game?**

I used to be a hockey player, but our college participated in football tournaments. I was asked to attend the junior state level selections only for the experience. I got selected and made my first trip to Assam as a part of the Maharashtra junior team.

Initially, I played football as an off season sport. But after the representation, I started playing more of football and made many friends along the way. That's how I got into the game. At the time I never felt I would become a football coach someday, but it feels good to inspire young girls to pursue their dreams.

**Q. Do you see yourself working in the men's league?**

My area of interest is youth development and grassroots, but nevertheless if given an opportunity I wouldn't mind working in the men's league to gain experience.

**Q. How would you compare the Netherlands Team that came down to play 2 years back and our current Indian Team?**

I stayed with the CTO team that came to India for almost two week's & got to know a lot about the players and coaches. As I have never been around the Indian team, I wouldn't be able to compare.

What I really liked about the CTO team was the players were more open and interactive with the coaching and managing team. Also they had to make time to study while they were here in India. Education was an integral part of the team and they gave equal importance to their studies.

**Q. Future Prospects?**

I intend achieve higher level coaching qualifications to help with the youth development and grassroots program.



## Dipali Pandey the official Medico, fixing the Indian National Women's Team

Dipali Pandey is the Physio of the Indian National Women's Football Team. This is her first term as the physio of the National Team and the upcoming Olympic Qualifiers will be her 3rd Tournament. The WIFA team had a Q&A for this Women's Day.

### Q. What are the problems faced by women/girl athletes in India?

I feel lack of support from family, government, media and general population, because they know only know the athlete who are famous and have achieved something not the one who are working hard since so many years and should be recognised for their work.

### Q. What do you think is the biggest issue faced by women in Indian Football?

For the duration I have worked with, I feel more facilities and exposure will enhance their performance to the already fantastic quality of game they play.

### Q. What structure do you propose for development of Indian football?

From where I see there's already a good structure formed by AIFF for the development of Indian football. I hope it is and will be implemented correctly in future. Also there are organizations like WIFA working from grassroots and I am sure Indian football will reach new heights soon.

### Q. Do you think somebody has been inspired by you?

I never thought about that! I just keep doing my job on and off the field, but I get inspired everyday watching the players putting in their best.

### Q. Advice for young budding talent?

I would like to say that stay away from distractions, know your priorities, work hard each day and never quit!

### Q. How do you celebrate this day if you were back in your hometown/state?

I would have spent more time with my mother, as she keeps complaining that, I am never home and I don't give her much time. So I would have dedicated the entire day to her.

### Q. #Make it happen is the slogan for the International women's day; how do you connect with it? What message would you send out?

I started working with the boys' team and initially I was told there is no place for a girl to be in a boys' team this is just an example but there barriers each one has to face in life and it's easy to going low than to overcome it. So whatever it may be just "MAKE IT HAPPEN"



## Bembem role model for Indian Football

A name synonymous to the Indian's women's football team is Oinam Bembem Devi. Known for her excellent ball control, footwork and dribbling, the midfielder was born in Imphal, Manipur. Oinam Bembem Devi

started her journey as a footballer back in 1991 when she was selected to represent the Manipur u-13 team in the sub-junior football tournament.

The turning point in her career came at the 1996 Asian Games, where the Indian national team were drawn in a group alongside Japan and neighbours Nepal. They lost to Japan 1-0 and won against Nepal 1-0 to progress from the group with Japan. In round 2 they would be drawn in a tough group alongside the national teams of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and North Korea. They lost all their matches but by then Oinam Bembem Devi had announced her arrival at the national stage.

All India Football Federation (AIFF), the All Manipur Football Association awarded her the Best Women Footballer of the Year of Manipur in the same year. In 2013, after a gap of 12 years the 2nd Women's footballer of the year of India was awarded, which was again awarded to Bembem.

**Q. How tough/easy was it to convince the people around you that you would be taking up a career in Indian Football?**

It was not very difficult as in my state there was a lot of awareness about women's football. My dad always pushed me to study but never objected on playing football and rest of my family members were very supportive.

**Q. What are the problems faced by women/girl athletes in India?**

There are many different problems in different area of our country. But nowadays women are making progresses in every sport in India and abroad. I would like to say that the main problem faced by our women athletes is encouragement and they should not be jailed in the walls of the house but left as free birds to reach new heights of accomplishment.

**Q. What do you think is the biggest issue faced by women in Indian Football?**

The more the exposure tours that come our way, the faster will we progress and climb up the FIFA Rankings.

Q. What structure do you propose for development of Indian football?

There should be a women's league like ISL, so that our women's get to play with foreign players gain experience from their style of play and in terms work hard for Indian women's football.

Q. Do you think somebody has been inspired by you?

Yes I am sure many of them get inspired by my play because I work hard whenever I am on the field and I give to full strength and concentration to contribute for my team.

Q. Advice for young budding talent?

If you are a good footballer there will be opportunities and when you get them work hard, be honest, concentrate on the game, follow what your coaches and seniors guide you, maintain discipline in and off the field.

Q. How do you celebrate this day if you were back in your hometown/state?

Actually this year we were planning to organise a football match between National Team Players and the new budding talent in my state. Also we thought of inviting the ex-Indian player who had contributed a lot of the women's football so that they can guide the upcoming players.

Q. #Make it happen is the slogan for the International women's day; how do you connect with it? What message would you send out?

We think about lot of things during the course of our life. I feel that every women who decides to choose a path which is different and unique should always strive for her dreams. I feel that I made it happen so my message to every women's would be whatever you desire is just "MAKE IT HAPPEN"



## Abeer Arsiwala: Constant Endeavor to Succeed

Because the story of women's football is a story of hope in the face of overwhelming odds, of players wanting to follow their one true love – Football – but being thwarted at almost every turn, and of determination in the face of almost total indifference. If this were a film, it would be a

low-budget plucky Indian-flick that would reach its apotheosis when, the player pulls off the ultimate coup: getting selected for the Indian Football Team.

The story of Abeer Arsiwala, 19, is one such story. A self-confessed The Blind Side, Sandra Bullock & CR7 fan; she took inspiration to achieve the goals she set for herself. Having a sweet tooth, she loves deserts and like all teens watches Vampire Diaries. She loves travelling and plays football whenever free.

In her first interview, we get her talking;

**Q. Did you ever dream of playing for the Indian Girl's Football Team?**

When I started playing football I wasn't sure our country had a football team but when I got acquainted with the same it became my goal and it still is.

**Q. What helped inspire the dream?**

My biggest inspiration has been my mom. She has always backed me and encouraged me to do things I'm capable of, to attain my potential.

**Q. Did you watch a lot of football while growing up?**

Not really. I saw my brother's play. They were my very first coaches but I didn't watch matches on TV as such.

**Q. With all the football out there, what do you love watching the most?**

It will come as a surprise but I did not watch a lot of football. In my defence, all the EPL matches are after my usual bedtime. But I'm working on changing that and to start watching more football.

**Q. What difference do you see with the coaching at the youth level and now at the national level?**

There's quite a lot of difference. The standards are quite high as it should be. They focus more on the team than individuals. There is more emphasis on all round play and fitness.

**Q. Tell us about any funny incidents that occurred while you were playing?**

One of my teammates had a knack of diving during crucial games without anyone tackling her or coming close to intercept the ball from her. That was very funny to watch.

**Q. Maharashtra has been conducting Inter-District Women's Tournaments since 2 years. How's the experience been? Should other states also conduct similar tournaments?**

Yes definitely. Every state should have such tournaments as it's in these tournaments we find hidden talents in the state. My experience was good for both the years.

**Q. WIFA is organizing a Grassroots Program for Girl's on 8th March to honour International Women's Day, what are your thoughts on it?**

I think it's amazing that someone's taking the initiative to do something for women in this male dominated sport in our country.



## Super Striker Bala!

NGANGOM BALA DEVI better known as Bala, India's prolific striker, AIFF's Player of the year 2014. In the recently concluded 2014 SAFF Women's Championship Bala Devi scored five goals in an 11-0 thrashing of Afghanistan. She also scored two goals in a 5-1 win over Bangladesh. She scored 11 goals in her first 3 games at the tournament. In

the final against Nepal scored four times in a 6-0 victory to win the championship and finish the tournament with an astounding 16 goals in just five matches, almost three goals every game.

**Q. How tough/easy was it to convince the people around you that you would be taking up a career in Indian Football?**

It wasn't very tough to convince people as many girls use to play football in my state. But I heard some of them saying that it's better to study and stay at home for a girl instead of playing football. My family was very supportive.

**Q. What are the problems faced by women/girl athletes in India?**

I think earlier it was difficult as there were very less facilities for women's athletes. It's been much better now but it should improve more.

**Q. What do you think is the biggest issue faced by women in Indian Football?**

The biggest issue is encouragement and motivation which is almost nil from public. We have a very great support from AIFF and organizations like WIFA but it would be overwhelming that people know us and admire us for what we perform for our country.

**Q. Do you think somebody has been inspired by you?**

I am sure people are getting inspired each day because I give my 100% on the field.

**Q. Advice for young budding talent?**

To the young talent, I would like to say that whenever you get opportunities work hard, be in discipline, know what be best for you and never give up.

**Q. How do you celebrate this day if you were back in your hometown/state?**

Every day is a women's day, I celebrate every day of my life.

**Q. #Make it happen is the slogan for the International women's day; how do you connect with it? What message would you send out?**

I can relate with it so much because when I started playing football I always wanted to play in the senior team. It was my dream and I worked really hard to reach where I am today. But I never disclosed my desire to anyone. I would say whatever your dream or desire are don't just think and MAKE IT HAPPEN.



## Multi-faceted player and Coach

### DURVA VAHIA

The best player from Maharashtra, part of the Indian National Women's Team camp – DURVA VAHIA. By qualification she is an AIFF Grassroots Leader, AFC C License Coach. She currently performs many roles as a pro

player and a pro coach!

As a player she is part of the National Team Camp, she is the Vice-Captain of the Maharashtra team and also plays for the Bodyline Sports Club in the Mumbai Women's league.

As a coach she is currently working with the Indian Football School, as a Goalkeeper Coach, As a Grassroots Leader for the Mumbai City FC. As an Under 15 Mumbai FC Coach and also she run a football academy in her vicinity called the 'Football Leaders' Academy'.

WIFA in conversation with Durva Vahia.

**Q. How tough/easy was it to convince the people around you that you would be taking up a career in Indian Football?**

It was very difficult because there was lack of awareness about women's football when I decided to take it up professionally. Luckily for me my parents were open about me taking up new career option.

**Q. What are the problems faced by women/girl athletes in India?**

For a women athlete the problem faced is lack of sports culture and being acted in every circle. Professional careers like medicine and law have a pathway which is already structured, but being in this field for 11 years I am still paving the path.

**Q. What do you think is the biggest issue faced by women in Indian Football?**

I think it's about lack of awareness of about women playing football at every level – may be district, state or national.

**Q. What structure do you propose for development of Indian football?**

AIFF has proposed an I-League for women, which I feel will definitely improve the playing standard of Indian football. In addition WIFA holds annual inter district tournaments which will greatly help the quality of football in Maharashtra.

**Q. Do you think somebody has been inspired by you?**

I really hope so, because me being a part of the Indian team is not just a personal achievement but it is the beginning of a pathway I hope girls would follow.

**Q. Advice for young budding talent?**

The road is not easy, lot of people will advise you and there will be lots of moments when you will feel like quitting but always remember why you started in the first place. No matter what people tell you always believe in yourself.

**Q. How do you celebrate this day if you were back in your hometown/state?**

Back home I celebrate it with most inspiring women whom I know — my mother, sister and grandmother. They have been fighting for women's equality since before I was born and showed me the pathway to be the women I am today.

**Q #Make it happen is the slogan for the International women's day; how do you connect with it? What message would you send out?**

I think #MAKE IT HAPPEN is very apt because life isn't about saying and planning it's about actions and what we do with what we have.



**INDU CHOUDHARY at the helm of it all – Manager, Indian National Women's Team**

**Q. How tough/easy was it to convince the people around you that you would be taking up a career in Indian Football?**

Initially, it was not easy at all. But looking back now, I would say if your family, parents supports you in your decisions then the hurdles seem less and you can scale heights easily.

**Q. What are the problems faced by women/girl athletes in India?**

Exposure in general. There are many athletes in our country who made us proud but have faded away into oblivion. That's sad.

**Q. What do you think is the biggest issue faced by women in Indian Football?**

I would say it's the lack of exposure as a whole.

Q. What structure do you propose for development of Indian football?

We need to create a structure where every women/girl (players, coaches, referees, admin etc.) understands football. State Leagues, Grassroots Development and more support from State Associations along with media attention would be really helpful.

Q. Do you think somebody has been inspired by you?

Not sure about that but I am following a few legends not specifically from Football but who inspire me to stand strong for what is right.

Q. Advice for young budding talent?

Take up the challenges and keep going.

Q. How do you celebrate this day if you were back in your hometown/state?

I would have celebrated with all the lovely ladies in my life – My mother, Bhabhi's, friends, nieces and all the counterparts who has helped me tirelessly.

Q. #Make it happen is the slogan for the International women's day; how do you connect with it? What message would you send out?

If you want something, you can't wait for someone to make it happen for you – go out and do it.



**Nidhi Kaur Gandhi:  
Better Nutrition,  
Better Performance.**

Football is a physically demanding sport that requires a

combination of speed, agility, and endurance. Football players need proper nutrition on a daily basis to stay energized and ready for the intensity of practice or a game.

Nidhi Kaur Gandhi worked with Mumbai City FC to ensure players perform at their optimum level and are able to give their all in each and every match right till the very end.

Q. What made you want to be a nutritionist?

Nutrition was an upcoming field when I finished schooling and the fact that the food we eat influences our health as well as risk factors for each disease state right from birth to old age made me pursue this field.

Q. Best thing about your work?

The best thing about my work is that by correcting a few dietary practices and making a few lifestyle modifications, I can help people live a healthy life. So when the clients follow their diet with perseverance, the results are evident and that is the most gratifying thing.

Q. What makes you want to keep evolving in your field?

Nutrition is an ever evolving field with new studies and recommendations that constantly come up. The desire to be updated with the current concepts, distinguish between the right and the wrong ones and put them into practice drives me to keep evolving in my field.

Q. Biggest Challenge?

Biggest challenge is to set goals for the clients that are realistic and hence can make a difference in their life.

Q. Where would you like to see yourself one day?

I would like to see myself as a nutritionist for the national men's and women's football team.

Q. Any aspiration to work for a big team?

I would like to work with the players and experts at Manchester United F.C.

Q. How do you deal with the pressure?

Pressure is a part of the job and the best way to deal with it is to be organized, prioritize and manage your time well. That's what I try to do.

Q. Earlier people used to feel awkward looking at a female nutritionist working with them. Have things changed for the better or for worse?

Yes, I must say things have changed for the better. Earlier most of the assistance regarding dietary practices was provided by coaches but today players and various sports organizations do recognize the need for a nutrition specialist to look after the nutritional requirements of the players. It is not awkward for a female nutritionist to work with a team anymore. The players look up to you with equal respect that they would have otherwise had for a male nutritionist and are very keen on knowing about the correct nutritional practices that will help them excel in their sport.

Q. Do you feel it's necessary for a women's team to have a woman nutritionist?

Training, right nutrition and recovery work together in the making of an athlete, so I believe every sport should have a nutrition specialist to help the players understand and meet their nutritional requirements. It would be crucial for the women's team to have a woman nutritionist because she will have a better understanding of the pressure they are put through and hence will be able to help plan appropriate nutritional strategies to meet the training requirements, aid in recovery and eventually contribute to improved performance.

Q. What changes would you like to bring about in Indian Women's Football?

I would like to change the perception of us Indians towards Women's Football. I would like people and organizations to see Women's football in the same light as Men's football, give it the same amount of importance, encouragement and provide facilities.

Q. How would you like to change the perspective of people in terms of successful women's?

I would like people to understand that women today are as capable as men. They are good at multitasking and can handle all the roles in life pretty well. So don't stop her from growing and don't make her compromise on her dreams. Give her a chance and she will show you what it is worth.

Q. When you finish your tour with the team, do you stay in touch with the injured players keeping a tab on their recovery? Do you think it is important to do so?

I was one of the nutritionists who did not travel, so I would stay back with the players who are injured. The injured players are an equally important part of the team as the fit ones, so along with the other officials from the medical team, it is our duty to provide all the support and facilities they need to help them in speedy recovery and to keep a tab on them even if it extends beyond the league.

Q. A message for all women out there?

My message to women out there would be:

It is our time to shine, fight for your rights, have faith in yourself and ignore what others think about you. Give yourself priority because it is our time to #MakeItHappen.

Q. Key to being a successful nutritionist?

The key to being a successful nutritionist is to have confidence in your knowledge, keep yourself updated with the latest research and trends and creatively facing all the challenges.

Q. Future Prospect?

I would like to make a place for myself in Indian Football and help in the upliftment of the sport.

**ORGANISERS: AURANGABAD  
DFA**

**Venue:** M S L College

**District:** Aurangabad

**Coaches and Leaders:** Shaikh Azhar



**ORGANISERS: BULDHANA DFA**

**Venue:** University Campus

**District:** Buldhana



**ORGANISERS: DHULE DFA**

**Venue:** District football Stadium Dhule

**District:** Dhule

**Coaches and Leaders:** Rohit Ahire,  
Prashant More, Deepak Patil,  
Abhijeet Bhamre, Sufiyan Rangrej,  
Swapnil Diraris, Sakla



**ORGANISERS: JALGAON DFA**

**Venue:** Zilla Krida Sankul

**District:** Jalgaon

**Coaches and Leaders:** Abdul Moshin  
Shaikh, Gunja VishwaKarna,  
Liyaqat Ali, Sameer Shaikh,  
Vaishali Sharma, Rahil Ahmed,  
Vivek Alwani, Kishore Singh,  
Hidayad Sayyed



**ORGANISERS: JDFA**

Venue: J. S. College

District: Jalna

**Coaches and Leaders: Baber, Sunil Hastak, Shaikh Mujaaed**



**ORGANISERS: DEEPAK KUNNAPANVAR**

Venue: Madhushrishti Vidyalaya, Gandinglaj

District: Kolhapur

**Coaches and Leaders: Deepak Kunnapanvar**



**ORGANISERS: KOLHAPUR SA**

Venue: Shahu Maharaj Stadium

District: Kolhapur

**Coaches and Leaders:**



**ORGANISERS: BODYLINE**

Venue: Cooperage

District: Mumbai

**Coaches and Leaders: Juhi Shah, Kimberly Miranda, Abeer Arsiwala, Marshal John, Ajay Shetty, Fenny Fernandes, Pramod Brid, Felix**



**ORGANISERS: PIFA FOUNDATION**

Venue: Cooperage

District: Mumbai

**Coaches and Leaders: Nirvan Shah, Anjali Shah, Nagesh Swami**



**ORGANISERS: WIFA**

Venue: Cooperage

District: Mumbai

**Coaches and Leaders: Fenny Fernandes, Priya Tiwari, Kimberly Miranda, Sydney Alexander, Durva Vahia, Sanaya Arsiwala, Juhi Shah, Abeer Arsiwala**



**ORGANISERS: MUMBAI CITY FC**

Venue: Multiple venues

District: Mumbai, Thane and Raigad

**Coaches and Leaders: Dinesh Nair, Durva Vahia, Nanu Raul, Finn Fernandes, Crystal John, Sunil Poojari**



**ORGANISERS: ASTRENGUNG UNITED - NGO**

Venue: Matunga Flyover

District: Mumbai

**Coaches and Leaders: Shungar Raul**



**ORGANISERS: FOOTBALL LEADERS ACADEMY**

Venue: TIFR

District: Mumbai

**Coaches and Leaders: Durva Vahia, Priya Tiwari, Arshad Hussain, Kundan Chandra**



**ORGANISERS: MDFA**

Venue: Parel

District: Mumbai

**Coaches and Leaders: Durva Vahia, Priya Tiwari, Kundan Chandra, Marshal John, Fr. Lawrence**



**ORGANISERS: NDFA**

Venue: Police Ground Nagpur

District: Nagpur

**Coaches and Leaders: Sunderraj Francis**



**ORGANISERS: OSMANABAD DFA**

Venue: University Ground

District: Osmanabad

**Coaches and Leaders:**



**ORGANISERS: PUNE FC**

**Venue: Maharashtra Mandal**

**District: Pune**

**Coaches and Leaders: Kalpana Das**



**ORGANISERS: SAI ACADEMY**

**Venue: SAI Nagar Ground**

**District: Pune**

**Coaches and Leaders: Sameer Shaikh**



**ORGANISERS: VMSA**

**Venue: Pune**

**District: PDFA Ground**

**Coaches and Leaders: Vinay Murgud**



**ORGANISERS: SDFA**

**Venue: Satara Institute**

**District: Satara**



**ORGANISERS:  
SATHYANATHAN HIRIYAN**

**Venue: Everest World Society**

**District: Thane**

**Coaches and Leaders: Sathyanathan Hiriyan**



**ORGANISERS: MUMBAI FC**

**Venue: Millennium Park**

**District: Thane**

**Coaches and Leaders: Kundan Chandra**

















Projects



Partner



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