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A study on contribution of legendary Gopichand for eliciting phenomenal change in Indian badminton

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to focus the unprecedented contribution of Pullela Gopichand in the realm of Indian Badminton. The study was two dimensional- the performance pursuit and the contribution of Gopichand in Coaching Badminton. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Interview method was applied to collect the data. Results show that Gopichand had been winning laurels consistently from his early age of Sub-junior level and gradually achieved almost all the National titles. It is more interesting that he had bagged almost all the International titles in Badminton except Olympic medal. Gopichand was the second Indian shuttler who won All England Badminton Championship. At the present juncture, Gopichand is the most successful coach who have built up his own Academy that has become the centre of excellence and production of talented shuttlers for international Badminton competition.

Keywords: Legend, badminton, contribution, phenomenal

Introduction

The fame of a Nation depends on the works or performance of its members with remarkable distinction. In the history of our Nation there were a number of such personalities who raised the glory of our Nation by their outstanding feats to the society and world as a whole. In this way man had earned distinctive place in global map in the course of time. There is no exception in the field of sports too.

Sports and games in modern world has become a tremendous social force and has become an integral part of a culture. It has also become a socio-political tool for better understanding and fraternity among the global nation.

The skill acquired to accomplish an excellence in sports, is correlated with achieving more values in society. Human skill in sports has reached such an unbelievable extent, that a performance is identified as a unique performer like "Hockey wizard", "Messy Magic", "Magic Johnson" etc. A researcher conducts a study to diagnose a particular situation and highlight the achievement of distinguished personality in sports. Various study dealing with the contribution of eminent personalities in the field of Badminton in India.

Thulasee Das (1983) studied on Olympic athlete Suresh Babu, Mary (1981) to investigated the achievement of the famous Basket Baller John Robert Wooden, Sivaramakrishnan (1989) studied the life career and contribution of Sunil Gavaskar. A study was conducted by Reddy (1993) on the contribution of Padmashree P. M. Joseph, a pioneer Physical Educationist and a Father figure' in the realm of Indian Physical Education.

The purpose of the study is to present the nature of performance at various level of Badminton Competition, to reveal the underlying facts for success in Badminton participated by Pullela Gopichand and to highlight the pedagogical ability of Pullela Gopichand and its outcome output.

On this backdrop, when selecting the problem of the study, the contribution of Gopichand appeared to be pertinently relevant because the focal point of this case study is "Contribution" of Pulella Gopichand.

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Methodology

The subject of the study

Pullela Gopichand is a legendary Indian badminton player and a successful coach as well. He had made India proud by winning several glorious international Badminton tournaments. Pullela Gopichand one of India's renowned former Indian Badminton Player, next to Prakash Padukone. Padukone and Gopichand are the only two Indians to win the All England Badminton Championships in 1980 and 2001.

Now he founded the Gopichand Badminton Academy, a badminton training facility in Hyderabad for budding talents of India.

Obviously, the subject of this study was chosen, who has been awarded the third highest civil honour in India—'Padma Bhushan' for his commendable contribution to the society as a whole. Above all, he has conquered the highest thrones of India in the field of sports—"Arjuna" for outstanding Performance and "Dronacharyya" for effective Coaching in Badminton. Moreover, the subject of this study is also a possessor of "Rajib Khel Ratna" award for sports.

Considering the contribution in Badminton, not only winning matches in numbers of International and National Championships; but also rearing up the young promising Indian Shutters, were taken for consideration. As a Coach, he has a commendable contribution to the Nation. Two dimensional potentiality of Pullela Gopichand has enriched Indian Badminton for two consecutive decades. Nurturing the young and talented players by providing academic experience in Badminton with unquestionable dedication, has elevated Indian Badminton to a remarkable height.

For the convenience of the study for its two dimensional approach, the researcher envisaged this bi-focal' case study with two facets. They are:

- a) Performance Pursuit of Pullela Gopichand in Badminton.
- b) Pedagogical Pursuit of Pullela Gopichand in Badminton.

Preparation of tools for collecting data:

The principal tools used in this study are Interview, historical documents, Journals, Literature, the Mementos, Materials and Documents in the archives etc. To collect the data for the study interview was considered to be suitable tools for the study, apart from the Journals, magazines and archives records.

Interview by the researcher with Pullela Gopichand:

The interview was conducted on 9th February, 2017 at 11.00 am at Pullela Gopichand Nimmagadda Foundation Badminton Academy, Hyderabad, Telangana. His responses to our approved list of questions, has been summed up. The information, as provided by Gopichand were recorded and corroborated with the documents and information from secondary sources.

Personal Interview with Padma Bhushan Pullela Gopichand and Others

Personal Interview is a survey method of data collection which employs a set of questions for converging responses. The components of Personal Interview were the researcher, the interviewer, interviewee and the interview environment.

A personal interview was arranged well in advance at Gopichand's Academy—in Hyderabad, Telangana in India on 9th February, 2017 at 10.00 am. The interview was conducted as per approved list of questions. Despite tight preoccupation of Gopichand, he answered most of the queries as desired by the researcher.

Reliability of the interview

The data obtained by the researcher through the responses of Pullela Gopichand were found reliable while cross examined with data of secondary sources.

Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of the study include:

1. Interview with Gopichand's parents.
2. Interview with Ex-Indian Coach Mr. S. M. Arif.
3. Opinion rating Questionnaire
4. Literature resource :
 - Star Sports.
 - The Hindu.
 - BAI documents.
 - Book.
 - Magazines.

Preparation for Interview with Mother and Others:

A prior appointment was sought for conducting the interview well in advance with Madam Subbaravamma, mother of Gopichand. The preparation was done after obtaining the ascent of Gopichand's mother, who communicated the date of interview to be held on 9th February at 11.00 am.

The set of structured questions for Gopichand's interview were used to repeat some selected questions for cross-checking of Gopichand's responses. Some more unstructured questions were prepared to collect more relevant data.

The video recording appliances were employed. An assistant was kept ready to jot down the responses in brief.

Reliability of the Interview with Mother and Others

Since Gopichand's mother was very much conversant regarding his long journey till date, as a performer and coach as well her responses were really valuable despite secondary source. She had mentioned a number of facts, incidents and phases of success and failure, conformed the responses of Gopichand during his rejoinder.

The interview with Mr. S. M. Arif (Gopichand's Coach) was the authentic secondary source in this regard.

Such responses of Madam Subbaravamma appeared to be authentic and found reliable.

Results

The output and responses received from interview were comprehended as under

Achievement in Sports as Participant

1. Pullela Gopichand won the Junior National Badminton Championship at the age of 18 years. As he began to enjoy success as a player, he realized the importance of receiving professional training. He moved to Bangalore (Bengaluru) where he joined the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy run by the legendary badminton player.
2. After a severe knee injury he made a remarkable comeback to win his first National Badminton Championship title in 1996 and won the National title for consecutive 5 years until 2000. In 1996 he also won a gold medal in the SAARC badminton tournament and defended the crown next year.
3. He played professionally in Germany from 1997 to 1999, and represented India in three Thomas Cup tournaments. His good form helped him winning two gold medals and one silver medal at the Indian National Games, held at Imphal, in 1998. The same year he won a silver medal in

the team event and a bronze medal in men's singles at the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

4. His streak of successes continued over the ensuing years and he won the Toulouse Open Championship in France and the Scottish Open Championship in Scotland in 1999. The same year also saw him emerge victorious at the Asian Satellite Tournament held at Hyderabad.
5. He reached the peak of his career in 2001 when he won the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships at Birmingham. He beat the then World No. 1 Peter Gade in the semi-final and proceeded to defeat China's Chen Hong by 15–12 and 15–6 in the final match to lift the trophy. In doing so, he became the second Indian to achieve the feat after his mentor Prakash Padukone, who won in 1980.

Coaching Career

After winning All England Badminton Championship–2001, and after receiving applauded felicitation from different corner of Government and Non Government Organisations it transpired that Gopichand might have achieved his optimum goal since almost all the National and International laurels were under his possession. At this right moment Gopichand started thinking about himself and also proposed and suggested by some important personalities who were closed to him regarding opening an academy.

At this juncture Gopichand made up his mind to concentrate and initiate a centre for coaching or an academy so that he can imbibe and impart systematic coaching. He set the goal of nurturing the young talent of India and would produce a number of quality performer in Badminton.

The initial motivation was by the Chief Minister, the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2001, when he was offered a land of 5 acres which was leased out for 45 years. Perhaps this might be the moment for setting out of Gopichand's journey as a badminton coach. Since Gopichand was very serious about Indian Badminton, he never left the dream of founding an academy under his leadership despite financial uncertainty.

After receiving the land Gopichand formulated the plans and approached Nimmagadda Prasad, a distant relative, Mr. Prasad was convinced and immediately offered \$5 lakh and assisted to raise further \$2 million. Later he contributed \$1.25 million in addition. Gopichand's wife Ex-Olympian P. V. V. Lakshmi also extended her support to raise contribution and monetary support.

Gopichand stated, despite all these ventures for money the budget could not be met with. Then he decided to mortgaged his family house to raised the remaining money. Gopichand lamented that acquisition of the plans was delayed due to adequate fund. After construction of the academy Government of India sent the Common Wealth Games team to train the Indian team in his academy. This proved that the academy set up by Gopichand was off an International standard.

In 2008, Gopichand also appealed to Bollywood Industry to come forward. Despite Saina Nehwal success in international tournaments, Gopichand was confronted with severe financial crunch, since running the academy cost \$3 lakh per annum. The running cost for the academy was \$1 Lakh per annum for 60 players and coaches.

Since Gopichand is running the show, he is the first person to step in academy at early 4.30 am and he used to stay in the academy till 8.00 pm to look after the trainees, batch by batch. Gopichand humbly conceived that his presence with action

was essential.

At present, while, the researcher was interacting with Pulella Gopichand, the World knows him as a most successful coach. Hence Gopichand – a successful performer transformed into a successful coach.

Discussion

Considering the contribution in Badminton, not only winning matches in numbers of International and National Championships; but also rearing up the young promising Indian shuttlers, were taken for consideration. As a Coach, he has a commendable contribution to the Nation. Two dimensional potentiality of Pulella Gopichand has enriched Indian Badminton for two consecutive decades. Nurturing the young and talented players by providing Academic experience in Badminton with unquestionable dedication, has elevated Indian Badminton to a remarkable height.

Gopichand beliefs in hard work out and training that meets the demand of the present state of International competition and that he puts in action to his disciples with all sincerity. The mystery behind the success of his numerous students of his academy lies with that phenomenon.

Conclusions

A. Performance pursuit

- Under-14 State Champion (A. P.) – 1987.
- Junior National Champion – 1991.
- Senior National Champion 1996 – 2000, consecutive 5 years.
- SAARC Gold medal – 1996.
- National Games 1998 – 2 Gold and 1 Silver Medals.
- Commonwealth Games 1998 – 2 Silver, 1 Bronze
- French Open Title – 1999.
- Scottish Open Title – 1999.
- All England Open Championship Title – 2001.

B. Contribution as a Coach:

- Gopichand is the founder of Nimmagadda Prasad Gopichand Badminton Academy, Hyderabad, in 2008.
- A 5 acres of land was awarded by government of Andhra Pradesh as a mark of felicitation for winning All England badminton Championship title 2001.
- He pledged for producing future Champions of Badminton in his academy.
- To comply with his pledge, he remains in the academy from 4:30 am to 8 pm– manifests his dedication and commitment for the nation.
- Existing number of trainees of different age groups in Gopichand's academy are–160 (approx.).

While asked about his Notable, focused and promising disciples shuttlers of his academy under his guidance; he did not forget to mention the following names:

- Saina Nehwal who was ranked 1 in the women's singles category, Olympic Bronze Medalist.
- P. V. Sindhu, who is ranked 3 currently (previous 2nd rank) in women's singles category, only Indian female Olympic Silver Medalist.
- Srikanth Kidambi, former world ranked 3 in the men's singles category.
- Parupalli Kashyap, who is ranked 6 in the men's singles category.
- Prannoy Kumar, who is ranked 14 in the men's singles category.

- Sameer Verma, who is ranked 19 in men's singles category.
- B. Sai Praneeth, who is ranked 15 in men's singles category.
- Gadde Ruthvika Shivani
- Rituparna Das.
- Satwiksairaj Rankireddy
- Ramchandran Shlok.
- Gurusai Datt, who was ranked 19 in the men's singles category
- Arundhati Pantawane, who was ranked 42 in women's singles category (Currently coach at PGBA).
- Arun Vishnu, who was ranked 44 in mixed doubles category (Junior National coach and coaching doubles players at PGBA).

Reliability of the Interview

The data obtained by the researcher through the responses of Pullela Gopichand were found reliable while cross examined with data of secondary sources.

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