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Neetu Dutta

Asst. Teacher, J.L.D.B,
Vidyalaya Dept. of Physical
Education Kalyani University
W.B, Kalyani, West Bengal,
India

Dr. Nita Bandyopadhyay

Asst. Professor, J.L.D.B,
Vidyalaya, Dept. of Physical
Education Kalyani University
W.B, Kalyani, West Bengal,
India

A case study on the backdrop of performance and pedagogic achievements of legendary Pullela Gopichand in badminton

Neetu Dutta and Dr. Nita Bandyopadhyay

Abstract

A legend becomes a legend after passing through many ups and downs and becomes a pride for the nation. The emergence of legendary Pullela Gopichand, an ace shuttler and Coach in Badminton comprises of such a long backdrop for its transformation from novice to a Champion. His proneness towards Badminton due to his family culture, his destiny was definite. Family patronage, parent's company, financial hardship and his 'gritiness' propelled him towards the summit of Badminton pursuit. To know the backdrop, a set of selected questions approved by the Jury and the information from his own Coach and mother were obtained. A set of questionnaire, approved by the Jury was applied for collecting the opinions of his concerned coaches. Gopichand's responses revealed that from the age of three till his declaration of the day in Badminton game, he never diverted his focus as he had decided at the school level that Badminton was his way of life. His Sports performance up to World Championship not only conferred him Sports laurels but the second highest Civic award of India. His coaching initiative and potentiality elevated India to a very high level where India is reigning in International Badminton. Gopichand proved his own Academy is worthy in terms of producing Olympic medalists with definite commitment.

Keywords: Case study, performance, pedagogy, backdrop

Introduction

A fame of a Nation depends on the works and performance of its members with remarkable achievements. From the ancient period we can find some eminent personality who raised the glory of the their Nation by their outstanding contribution to the world as well as honour their country in the world and get a distinctive place in global map in the course of time history

History of badminton in India is not less glorious as there are a number of excellent Badminton players has ruled the badminton arena. Among them the names which deserve some special mention are Sayed Modi, Nandu Natekar, Prakash Padukone, Madumita Bist, Aparna Popat etc.

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

Pullela Gopichand, one of the 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.

The backdrop of Sunil M. Gavaskar, the eminent Cricketer of the World a strong influence of his parents and environment (Shivaramakrishnan, 1989) [6]. The outstanding athlete of Kerala, Rghunathan was motivated and patronized by his teacher and parents (Krishna Kumar, 1992). There were 11 factors identified in the case study of Shivanthi Adityanor his outstanding contribution in sports. His gradual engrossment toward competitive Badminton ultimately compelled him to give up his higher studies (Dutta & Bandyopadhyay, 2018). 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 (Dutta & Banyopadhyay)

Correspondence

Neetu Dutta

Asst. Teacher, J.L.D.B,
Vidyalaya Dept. of Physical
Education Kalyani University
W.B, Kalyani, West Bengal,
India

The purpose of the study was to reveal the unknown information, to identify the hurdles and constraints overcame by a World Champion shuttler, to highlight the levels of performance, to motivate the young promising players and to focus the pedagogical ability of Pullela Gopichand in Badminton.

Review

Sivaramakrishnan (1989) [6] studied the life career and contribution of Sunil Gavaskar. A study on Padmashree P. M. Joseph, a pioneer Physical Educationist and a Father figure⁷ in the realm of Indian Physical Education, was conducted by Reddy (1993) [4].

Methodology

This is the case study of one of the Greatest Badminton player and Coach who has earned his eminence through his accomplishment in Badminton within the nation and world as well.

This case study encompasses the long journey in the realm of Badminton through ups and downs and enormous adversities.

Criterion Measures

1. Back ground of Performance.
2. Performance achievement.
3. Backdrop of Coaching.
4. Achievements in Coaching.

Preparation of Tools for Collecting Data

The principal tools used in case study are Questionnaire, Interview, Historical documents, Journals, Literatures, the Mementos, Materials and Documents in the archives and etc. To collect the data for the study interview and questionnaire were consider to be suitable tools for the study, apart from the Journals, magazines and archives records.

Construction of Tools

The tools prepared for collecting data from two different sources:

1. Primary Source (Personal Interview)-Construction of Questions.
2. Secondary Source-Construction of Questionnaire.

A. Primary Source

1. Interview with Pullela Gopichand

B. Secondary Sources:

The secondary sources of the study include:

1. Interview with Ex-Indian Coach Mr. S. M. Arif.
2. Opinion rating Questionnaire.
3. Literature source:
 - Star Sports.
 - The Hindu.
 - BAI documents.
 - Book.
 - Magazines

Construction of List of Questions

The interview conducted on the selected list of questions to attain the objectives of the study. The selected list of questions will be asked as per sequence to acquire the relevant information about Pullela Gopichand. The responses will be video graphically recorded so that no point will be missing along with taking notes. The similar interview will be conducted to know about Pullela Gopichand from mother

Subbaravamma and Ex-India Coach S. M. Arif and those statement will be recorded.

Construction of Questionnaire

The questionnaires which was meant for gathering opinion from Coaches, was drafted in view of the objectives of the study. There were 12 distinct components which would represent some specific data on a particular trait. Each component was comprised of at least five statements. The 12 components questionnaire was approved unanimously by the Jury comprising of five eminent Physical educationists from all over India. The components of the questionnaire were as follows

1. Drive
2. Aggression
3. Determination
4. Responsibility
5. Leadership
6. Self-confidence
7. Emotional control
8. Mental toughness
9. Coach ability
10. Conscience development
11. Trust
12. Appreciation.

The questionnaires approved by Jury of Six members will be responded by coaches who had coached Pullela Gopichand from time to time at different level. The responses were collected personally and by mail from the selected coaches.

The coaches' responses which follow the format of Likert Scale of which the negativity and positivity of the responses were segregated and accumulated of each factor were presented in the form of percentage score.

Results and Discussion

Data obtained from the Questionnaire from Coaches were computed as per format of the Likert scale. The scores were computed in respect to each component of the questionnaire and converted into percentile score. Thus, the mean percentile scores of opinions on each component of the Questionnaire, were considered and the results are graphically presented.

Interview Response

The researcher conducted an interview with Pullela Gopichand on 9th February, 2017 at the Pullela Gopichand Nimmagadda Foundation Badminton Academy, Hyderabad, A.P, India.

The responses of Gopichand revealed some unknown information regarding his life and struggle for excelling in Badminton. Despite born in a lower middle class family, he had chosen Badminton since his family members were prone to the game of Badminton. His educational background was good and his elder brother Rajasekhar was an engineer. A tremendous sacrifice and financial hardship of the parents could not make any hindrance in his way.

Pullela Gopichand started playing badminton at the age of three and his father used to accompany him during the age of 11 yrs. Three of his family members used to play Badminton. His education started at Ongale, his native village and his schooling and graduation completed at Hyderabad, A.P. His parents dreamt of his pursuing Engineering course but he travelled through some other path.

His primary impetus was his family members, who used to play Badminton regularly. A few relatives were opposed to

Gopichand’s choice of Badminton as his mission; but he did not pay heed to such discouragement. His performance record itself will say his level of achievement in global Badminton Tournament. A brief account of his performance achievement is as follows:

- 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.

Pedagogic Achievement

After winning the All England Badminton Championship in 2001, Gopichand decided to change his track for contributing to Badminton for India for further course. The age was also 27 years with certain injuries limited his capacity to take a further load.

At this juncture Gopichand made up his mind to choose the pedagogic task. As Gopichand stated that he conceived that with the then level of fitness status along with his unique skills he was keen to transmit his huge experience and skills to the further generation of India. During responding to interview, Gopichand persistently expressed his strong desire of open “Gopichand’s Academy for Badminton.

List of Students of Gopich and Academy:

- Saina Nehwal who was ranked 1 in the women’s singles category, Olympic Bronze Medallist.
- P. V. Sindhu, who is ranked 3 currently (previous 2nd rank) in women’s singles category, only Indian female Olympic Silver Medallist.
- 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.
- N. Sikki Reddy, who is ranked 17 & 23 in mixed & women’s doubles category.
- Pranaav Jerry Chopra, who is ranked 17 in mixed doubles

category (Best rank 13).

- Gadde Ruthvika Shivani.
- Rituparna Das.
- Satwik Sairaj 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).

Opinion of the Coaches

The opinion of the coaches, who had handled Gopichand in different forms and capacities on the basis of interaction and imparting training. Their observations thought to be highly valuable and their output of the effort claims to be very worthy.

Table 1: Score and Percentage of opinion of the Coaches on different factors

S. No	Factor	Score		Percentage	
		Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
1.	Drive	42	6	84	12
2.	Aggression	38	9	76	18
3.	Determination	40	9	80	18
4.	Responsibility	33	16	66	32
5.	Leadership	37	10	74	20
6.	Self-confidence	43	7	86	14
7.	Emotional control	34	16	68	32
8.	Mental toughness	33	15	66	30
9.	Coachability	42	8	84	16
10.	Conscience Dev.	38	12	76	24
11.	Trust	33	17	66	34
12.	Appreciation	48	2	96	04

In terms of performance capacity for achievements of Gopichand. The coach is a technical person who knows the underlying factors of coaching. Thus, their opinion was thought to be very significant. Accordingly, Table -1 shows the result of the coaches opinion as obtained from the questionnaire administered.

Table-1 shows both positive and negative response scores converted into percentage for each component. Fig-1, represents the graphical results of both positive and negative responses of the coaches regarding Pullela Gopichand’s qualities.

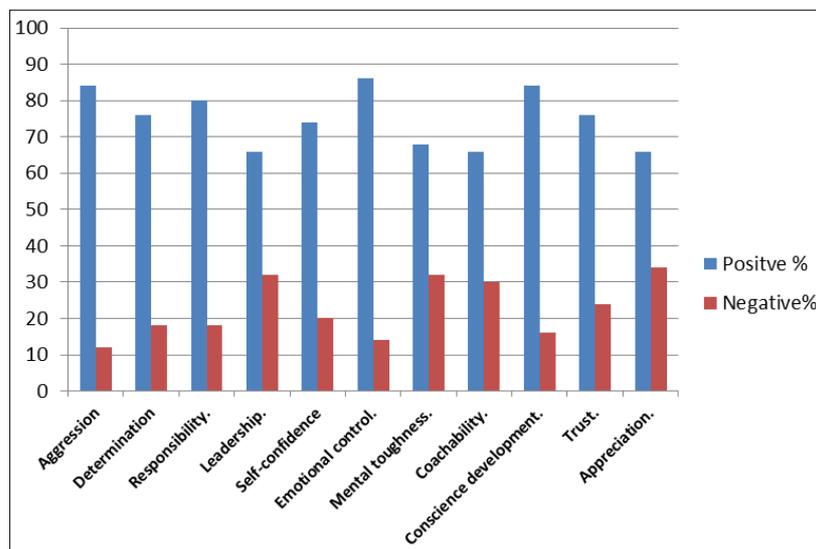


Fig 1: Graphical presentation of percentage of Coaches opinion on Gopichand’s performance component

Analysis of the Coaches Opinion

The coaches had a completely different role as they were rather his masters and built up Gopichand's career since everyday they have handled Gopichand for years together. Gopichand gradually transformed from a low level to summit of Badminton performance. The coaches also knew his strong and weak points he had and how intense was his Desire, Determination, Self-confidence, Coachability and Mental toughness. Most of the coaches, were also aware of the fact that how Gopichand used to strive for zeroing, his weaknesses or flaws to reminding this point. Mr. S.M. Arif, the Ex-Indian coach, stated that Gopichand did not want to keep any flaws in his game. Every training and practice session had to help him to get at least 1% better than the previous day, that was of his key of success. Gopichand's childhood friend Prabhakar highlighted this point that he had seen Gopichand training on defensive play only for one full week after he failed to return Dipankar Bhattacharya's smash in a competition. The coach also experienced that Gopichand's inquisitiveness in a game or new drill e.g. set drill he used to ask his coach about utility of and at the end Gopichand used to follow and practice the same work out to his optimum capacity at all the times. The most important component highlighted by his coaches that he was very keen, energetic, co-operative and disciplined badminton player who used to turn up in the court for work and remained on his toes. Such Coachability is always desired by all coaches. Gopichand's Coachability under such context is really exemplary.

Mr. S. M. Arif had a close vision over Gopichand and his conclusive remarks on Gopichand's grittiness, tenacity, self-confidence and Coachability were unique and that is mystery of Gopichand's success, Mr. S. M. Arif stated that existence of all these qualities made Gopichand a "Champion" of the world.

Gopichand was offered to act as a coach from some countries with lump some salary along with their citizenship (Sharma & Sharma, 2011) [5]

Conclusion

This case study featured the overall impression about Gopichand. Success in sports is attained through persistent effort. It is only possible while the individual have the grittiness to achieve the goal.

From the early stages of life Gopichand had a high tenacity in achieving the desired goal. The game of Badminton, he had chosen at the age of six, due to regular insistence of his elder brother. But, once he had chosen the game after leaving Cricket- his most favourite one, he never looked back. His strong conviction for the love of Badminton, rather a less popular game in India, was remained unaltered despite disagreement with some of his relatives and close family friends. Even the attraction for becoming an engineer and earning lot of money- could not distract him from his mission. The success of Gopichand's sports career was a queue of the unprecedented patronage of his parents, especially his mother Subbaravamma and other family members who sacrificed each and every comfort for Gopichand's success. A relentless toil and tremendous hardship of Gopichand and his family members supported Gopichand to cross the torrent river of adversity.

As Gopichand was not a 'Gifted Player', he could not compromise with the hard work that might have helped him in reaching further height. He not only performed hard work for preparing himself, but also his inquisitiveness regarding the application of training protocol to understand how those work

outs would improve his performance. Those experience and knowledge perhaps helped him a lot while he decided to act as a Coach for the youngsters after leaving competitive sports career.

To have a 'Come back' following severe injury, manifested his high level mental toughness. To become National and International Champion after a long break was not an easy matter. A tremendous mental toughness of Gopichand, is an example of an 'Injured Gopichand' converted into 'Champion Gopichand'.

While completing this case study it transpired to the researcher that apart from a World Champion player, Gopichand is a person who possesses many human qualities with high dedication, firm conviction, grittiness, positive attitude, optimism, self-confidence and philanthropy enveloped with patriotism. Gopichand's belief in Indianized-form is a great sign of patriotism.

Thus, Gopichand is a true 'Role model' and 'Inspiration' for the forthcoming generations and that is evident by the emergence of huge enthused talented disciples of Padmabhushan Gopichand who are reigning National and global Badminton arena.

Gopichand might have succeeded to repay the debt to his family and friends who owed him consistent patronage.

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