CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Sports are as old as human society and it has achieved a universal following in the modern times. It now enjoys a popularity which outstrips any other form of social activity. Now a days sports has emerged as a great socio-psychological phenomenon. Even the so-called individual sports involve others for competition which, by definition is a social situation. Indeed the socio-psychological dynamics of sports groups are important components of sport psychology. It is known fact, that coaches are not always dealing with just the individual athlete, rather group performance is a practical issue, as the coach has to normally deal with the group of athletes, who make a team. No doubt, all the variables that influence individual performance operate on individual within groups also, but when team performance is an issue, a host of complex interacting socio-psychological variables are introduced. This does not mean that individual’s needs, abilities, personality, motives, values and interests are not considered, instead, it points out how difficult it can be to have diverse individuals working together in a group frame work.

Now sports psychology has emerged as a distinct scientific discipline. Many attempts have been made to help coaches and athletes in their pursuits in a number of ways like assessing the athletes on various psychological demands, providing psychological techniques for enhancing performance,
identifying problematic athletes and using various psychological intervention programmes. The area of development of socio-psychological profiles of athletes has created its own place because, on the basis of these profiles, not only the suitable athletes could be selected, but the training programme also be monitored as per the psychological make-up of participating athletes.

Singer (1972) has expressed that perhaps some day the coach would select athletes not only according to demonstrated skill and physical characteristics but according to the personality traits as well. If two players have similar ability, the deciding factor may be the presence in one of them of desirable combination of personality traits known to be associated with success in given sport.

Alderman (1974) supported this view when he postulated that one essential point which must be stressed is that regardless of how much ability, skill or fitness level a person possesses for a particular task or sport, the success or quality of his performance will, in the final analysis, probably depend on his particular psychological make up.

Apart from psychological characteristics required for the successful participation in sport, there are number of social characteristics which also play an important role. It goes without saying that motivation directs the athletes towards their goals. Most of the time coaches are able to observe their external behaviour which give us clues about their derive towards goals. But
in fact, at the very root of it, remains the well set pattern of values, which determine the direction of motivation. The values make the individual instrumental to accept or reject various ideas related to their activities, e.g. the individual having modern values, will be flexible in his/her attitude to accept novelty and changes in his pursuits, where as the individual possessing traditional values will be rigid in his attitude, hence he will, most of his time, feel hesitant in changing himself according to the current demand of his area of operation (Apter, 1986).

Personality functions are reasonably assumed as a basis of all types of behaviour. The person may or may not be co-operative, may have more or less competitiveness, possess positive or negative leadership qualities or may be emotionally stable or anxious, it all depends upon his personal make-up. Similarly, the level of achievement orientation will have the corresponding effect on other aspects of his functioning. The same applies to the values which form various pre-dispositions in the individual to find expressions in their sports behaviour.

Unfortunately till the turn of 20th century, sports has been conceived as a physical endeavour. However, present researches have established the physical attributes, but the socio-psychological attributes also play an important role in succeeding in competitive sports. In other words, it is the
inter-play of talent, training and other socio-psychological factors, which considerably contribute to the top performance.

No doubt with the development of scientific approach in sports psychology, there has been many attempts to help athletes and coaches in their pursuits in many ways like assessing the athletes on various psychological demands of sports, devising psychological techniques to improve performance, identifying the problematic athletes and applying various psychological intervention programmes. Though all areas listed above are important yet the personality variables, achievement orientation, and values have unique significance for the coaches and athletes to make effective plans and to perform better under gruelling conditions of competitions.

1.1 SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AND SPORTS PERFORMANCE

Most of the research work in physical education and sports was carried out in science related sub-disciplines like exercise physiology, bio-mechanics, nutrition, physical fitness, anthropometry etc. Researchers from these fields were of the opinion that factors present in these area were chiefly approachable for performance of a sportsman/team in competitive sports. As regard the role of socio-psychological factors in sports performance, it is comparatively over-looked and under emphasized.
Now researchers in physical education in general and sports psychology in particular have repeated, suggested and emphasized socio-psychological factors as a major area in terms of research enterprise and the important role these factors play in the ultimate performance of sportsmen (Singer and Kane, 1974).

As regard the role of social factors like group cohesiveness, audience, leadership, attitudes and values, intra-team relations and socio-economic factors etc, which have been investigated by various researchers. Frost (1970) remarks on “Socio-Psychological phenomena in sports”. According to him "It is critically important that those studying the psychological concepts as they apply to the area of Physical Education and coaching be carefully attentive to the fact that social and cultural forces are operating constantly and a meticulous understanding of these are absolutely necessary in any attempt to unravel in many factors causing and revealing behaviour and its changes in sports setting".

The good coach knows that the team's or the player's maximum athletic performance is affected not merely by his physical, technical and tactical qualities but also by his psychological consideration (Wein, 1973, 1981; Lanniny, 1982; Starkes and Allard, 1983). Therefore, in order to explain and analyse man's fervent interest and competitive behaviour in sports, one must
examine his psychological and sociological dimensions in the movement context (Alderman, 1974).

The influence of psychological factors on sportsmen's behaviour is well recognised and decision processes are undoubtedly among the most influential. During a game each player must reach decisions under conditions of psychological stress and time pressure (Vallerand, 1983). There are so many socio-psychological factors like attitudes, personality characteristics, audience or spectators, group-cohesiveness, self-concept, intelligence, socio-economic background, values, achievement motivation etc. which influence the participation and performance of sportsperson in competitive sports. However, the investigator selected only three socio-psychological variables i.e., Personality, achievement orientation and values for present investigation. A brief discussion of each of these variables in terms of their relevance and importance in sports performance is being attempted in the foregoing pages.

1.1.1 Personality

Personality is term commonly used by people concerned with almost every aspect of human interaction. It has attracted the attention of psychologists, sociologists, educationist and sports scientists alike, since the human personality in many respects is the most complex phenomenon ever studied. The word personality is a derivation from 'Persona' which originally meant theoretical mask known by dramatic personae or actor in a play in the
days of ancient Greek civilization. Later on this term was also used by Romans.

Common belief still leans the meaning of appearance in its concept of personality. At the opposite extreme, Philosophers have used the word for the inner essence (core) of the individual, the ultimate reality that organises and controls his observable behaviour. However, to the psychologist personality is neither a false appearance nor an ultimate cause. Since people are product of their biological structures and their environment, personality has come to be regarded as the individuality that emerges from the interaction between a biological organism and physical and social world. It can be defined as an individuals typical or consistent adjustment to his environment.

Eysenek (1960) added two terms, character and temperament in his definition, which most personality theorists had tended to avoid by defining personality as the more or less stable and enduring organism of person’s character, temperament, intellect and physique, which determine his unique adjustment to the environment.

Ulrich (1968) considers personality as the sum of people's values and attitudes plus all of their traits and this 'sum' are always a dynamic organisation because it is the product of socialisation process of society.

Maddi (1970) elaborated the concept of personality in more comprehensive and meaningful way by stating "Personality is a stable set of
characteristics and tendencies that determine those commonalties and differences in the psychological behaviour (thoughts, feelings and actions) of people that have continuity in time and that may or may not be easily understood in terms of the social and biological pressures of the immediate situation alone.

Tutko and Richards (1971) had long ago identified a number of personality traits related to high athletic achievement such as drive, determination, intelligence, aggression, leadership, emotionality, self-confidence, mental toughness, responsibility, trust and conscience development.

Singer (1972) had also opined that since personality is determined by genetic factors but modified by environmental experiences, a strong possibility exists that personality influences activity-performance as well as gets modified by activity experiences. The personality mold is formed early in life but can be changed by later experiences.

Alderman (1974) remarked that personality though a highly ambiguous term, which is difficult to define has become a viable and useful concept for describing and categorising behaviour in physical activity and sports. The reason for this is that personality in its broadest context can be interpreted as representing the total psychological structure of the individual the way one thinks, feels, acts and behaves.
According to Alderman (1974), “Athletes are more social, dominant, extrovert, confidant, conventional, mentally tough and emotionally stable when compared to non-athletes”. These differences have directly or indirectly been attributed to the athletes involved in athletic activities.

On the basis of the available documentary evidence, it can be presumed that since the environmental situations have a great impact on the psychological make-up of an individual, there is every possibility that those who participate in athletic activities for a prolonged period, cultivate such psychological attributes which help them in becoming successful in their respective fields of specialisation. As far as the development of personality, through sports is concerned, it is a well-known fact that, from cradle to the grave the individual acts, reacts and interacts with his physical movements and in the process, he gets transformed into a confident disciplined, aggressive and intelligent social being.

1.1.2 Achievement Orientation

Achievement behaviour and specifically competitive achievement, is one of the most prominent features of sports and physical activity. Furthermore, wide individual differences in competitive achievement behaviour are well recognised. Some children in elementary physical education classes eagerly take on all competitive challenges while others dread any evaluation. One entrant in a community road race might set a personal
time goal, another might challenges a colleague, and still another might just run for fun and pay no attention to either time or other runners. Such differences in competitive behaviour reflect personality or individual differences in achievement motivation and more specifically in competitiveness.

Most sports psychologists researching and writing about sports achievement behaviour, discuss competitiveness as sport-specific form of the more general achievement motive. Martens (1976) explicitly states, "Competitiveness is defined as a disposition to strive for satisfaction, when making comparisons with some standard of excellence in the presence of evaluating others in sport ".

General achievement motivation is widely recognised as a capacity to experience pride in accomplishment or a disposition to strive for success across varied achievement situations and standards (Atkinson, 1964, 1974; McClelland, Atkinson, Clerk & Lowell, 1953). Murray (1938), who first discussed achievement motivation as a personality, disposition, more explicitly described the need to achieve as the desire to accomplish something difficult; to master, manipulate or organise physical object, human beings, or ideas; to do this rapidly and as independently as possible; to overcome obstacles and attain a high standard; to excel one-self; to rival and surpass others; and to increase self-regard by successful exercise of talent.
Murray et al (1938) believed that "need achievement is manifested in behaviour expressing a desire for accomplishment, prestige, ambition, the need to overcome obstacles, to seek challenges, to exercise power etc.

"Behaviour is structure in action" (Kamlesh, 1983) and it is a psychophysiological phenomenon being "caused and directed by intricate combination of motives and emotions, some of them internal and others external, some physiological in nature and others psychological, some genetic and others environmental, some conscious and other unconscious, some individual and other social". Frost (1971) said "The urge to run and play when young, to excel when competing, to struggle when hindered, to prove something when challenged, to escape when confined, to be aggressive when angered, and to flee when frightened are typical instincts of men as he matures, develops and moves through life's many dangerous and competitive situations".

The urge to achieve something in play or sports is as good as the urge to become a doctor or a scientist. Singer (1984) emphasises that "most kids in sports probably want to attain some level of success. Sport perceived by its very nature provides conditions that bring out a degree of achievement orientation in those who decide to compete". The awareness of "deciding to compete" or engage in conscious rivalry may come to an individual much later in life but the psychologists, for sure, know that the element of competition is
inherent in play whether the child is in the know of it or not. Hence, achievement oriented motivation is inextricable part of human behaviour—whether it is in work or in play. (Watson, 1982). Singer (1984) observed that achievement motivation is typically considered with behaviours in the context in which there is

i) reference to a standard of excellence or competition against others, which allows for evaluation as to level of success (or failure)

ii) a degree of challenge (uncertainty as to outcome)

iii) a personal sense of responsibility for the outcome.

Singer (1984) quotes Alschuler, Tabor and MacIntyre on this issue when the desire for achievement becomes a dominant for the person. It is expressed in restless driving energy aimed at achieving excellence, getting ahead, improving upon past records, beating competitors, doing things better, faster, more efficiently and finding unique solutions to difficult problems. People with strong achievement motivation generally are self-confident individuals who are at their best taking personal responsibility in situations where they set challenging goals, demanding maximum effort, but goals which are possible to attain.

Despite all this, performance at a task especially in physical education and competitive sports might not be significantly linked with the level of
achievement motivation because at times even a highly motivated individual may not have higher sports achievement to his credit though he possesses a very strong “Striving ability.” Better performance, it would seem, is not necessarily related to greater achievement. It is possible that a poor athlete displays a high motivational drive while a “Physically endowed” athlete manifests a general lack of motivation yet the “Winning mind” is gifted with the desire to prove he is the best and “an over powering desire to excel”, against all odds such as individual would be unwilling to lose.

Singer (1984) found that “future outlook, goal expectation, instrumental satisfiers, need for social approval, need to avoid failure or to achieve success, self esteem, need to achieve”, as well as locus of control were associative factors of achievement orientation.

1.1.3 Values

The term “value”, though seems to be a simple term but it have many dimensions. Jules (1963) defines it as something that one consider good such as a “Love, Kindness, Quietness, Contentment, Fun, Honesty, Decency, Simplicity etc.”

Humanity’s survival as a species in the rapidly changing world depends largely on the quality of its value system. Historically it has always been a function of institutions of society to realise and transmit values. The survival of human kind in future would depend not so much upon its biological nature,
but upon its value system because values shape philosophy, which ultimately influences thinking and behaviour of people. Therefore, values would dictate what choices and decisions people will take in different spheres of life and sports being no exception.

The role of sports in society was rightly glorified by Boyle (1963) when he stated that sports as a social institution permeates and mirrors many levels of society which influence status, human relations, clothing style, concepts of heroism and values. Thus, it can be suggested that sports provide a means of expressing and developing sum of the dominant values of society among participants.

Edward (1973) aptly summarises this point by noting that sport is a social institution, which has its primary functions in a disseminating and reinforcing the value regulating behaviour and goal attainment and determining acceptable solutions to problems in a secular sphere of life. The participation in sports serves to transmit the values of the larger society. It is felt that students with a background in sports are more aware of their social relevance than those who have not had the opportunity to participate in sports.

Green (1964) considers the values a relatively enduring awareness plus emotions regarding an object, idea or person. In practice they are feeling about what is good and bad or what should and should not be. These are used as criteria to judge alternatives and are imperative since the norms of the society.
are based on them. While norms are like rules, these values are broader and more abstract concepts.

Coughlan (1969) said, “values have been variously viewed as preference criteria, objects, possession of personality and status, characteristics and state of mind that absolutes inherent objects, present in and/or identical with his behaviour”.

According to Inlow (1972) “values are the determinant in man that influence his choice in life and that thus decide his behaviour and action” Rokeach (1973) considered value to be a type of belief centrally located within one's total belief system about how one ought or ought not to behave or about some end state of existence worth or worth not attaining.

Values are defined as reasonably permanent identification of the individual with ideal or more desired human actions. They are considered by Spranger (1978) as deeper layers of human personality, character and action developed in interaction between inherited structure and environmental situations. Values are the most distinctive features of culture, because it becomes society’s best means for survival. System of value, evolve out of people’s traditions, religions and history.

Values may be classified in many ways but for the purpose of present study they are classified into two categories. One category concerns good or bad, right or wrong, which are generally refereed to as moral and ethical
values. The other category involves choosing among alternatives both abstract and materialistic, where the choices are neither inherently good nor bad. These values are individualised, highly personal and can vary anywhere from a choice between attending a movie or play hockey or football rather than golf.

Values are constantly interpreted and promoted from one generation to the next. These are not passed on in the genes, through heredity. They are, however, inherent in the culture into which one is born and are acquired as a member of the society. The development of value system is life long process and is philosophically formulated. It begins at an early age and continues throughout life. One learns through experience, maturation and study to evaluate, reshape and restructure value.

As part of society, sport reflects the prevailing value trends of the broader culture. It is, in fact, a highly symbolic and condensed medium for cultural values, a vehicle by which many young people come to learn about the core values of their culture. Perhaps this is why the adage that sport builds character, persists. Unfortunately, sport transmits the full range of prevailing values, producing and reproducing social practices and relations that have contributed to daunting challenges in a society fragmented by prejudice and discrimination, poverty and drug abuse, and inadequate education. While sport also serves as a site of resistance to many of these dominant cultural forces, most forms of resistance have been marginalized. In general, sport has
done little to transform dominant social values to enhance personal
development and promote social justice for a majority of participants.

Snyder and Spreitzer (1989) noted, ‘sports by its nature is microcosm
of the society itself. The values of society are mirrored in its sporting rites,
rituals, habits, language, goals and passions. Competitive, aggressive and
individualistic societies structure their sports to emphasize the glories of
winning and disgrace of losing. Co-operative, serene, and group centred
societies play their games to enhance the communal, playful and joyful traits
of their social life:

Values have been a great concern of researches in past and still
continue to be an area of concern for coaches, physical educationists and
scientists concerned with sports excellence.

In India selection criteria of talent hunt scheme to identify young
children to give high performance in specific events or games are mainly
based on physical, physiological and skill tests. Socio-psychological norms
need to be given due importance in selection process.

Apart from this, socio-psychological elements are completely missing
in today’s planning of sports, training of individual athletes, team sports and
during the competition performance. Coaches and athletes need to be made
aware of socio-psychological influence so that their planning and training can
be based on these elements to seek high performance in competitions. Thus,
the present investigation was planned to explore the various Socio-
psychological elements among University level athletes.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study was titled as “A study of socio-psychological
characteristics of university level individual and team athletes”.

1.3 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

The operational definition of the terms used in the above statement are
as follows:

1.3.1 Socio-psychological

In the present investigation the term socio-psychological has been
conceived as a group of social and psychological factors, which influence
athletes with each other. The values have strong social background and the
qualities of introversion/extroversion, neuroticism/stability and social
desirability all have root in psychology. In this sense, the variables included in
the study have been collectively termed socio-psychological parameters.

1.3.2 Athlete

A sportsman competing in an organised sport (team/individuals) The word
“Athlete” have been used throughout the present study in a broader sense for
the individual who involve himself in any competitive sport.
1.3.3 Rural

Athletes belonging to villages which comes under village Panchayat were considered as rural athletes.

1.3.4 Urban

Athletes belonging to cities under the jurisdiction of urban authorities were considered as urban athletes.

1.4 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The study was delimited to five individual sports namely cycling, judo, swimming, track and field and weight lifting and five team games i.e. basketball, football, handball, hockey and kabaddi.

2. The subjects falling in the age group of 17 to 25 years were included in the study.

3. The students who took sports as a competitive pursuit only were included for their assessment.

4. The data in all sports disciplines were collected on male samples only.

5. The study was further delimited to the players of Panjab University (Chandigarh), Punjabi University (Patiala), Guru
Nanak Dev University (Amritsar) and Punjab Agriculture University (Ludhiana).

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study personality, achievement orientation and values of university athletes.

2. To find out the difference between individual and team athletes on socio-psychological characteristics.

3. To compare rural and urban athletes on these socio-psychological characteristics.

4. To find out the inter-sports differences on personality, achievement orientation and values.

1.6 HYPOTHESES

1. There would be difference in individual and team game athletes in terms of their personality, achievement orientation and values.

2. Rural and Urban athletes would differ in terms of their personality, achievement orientation and values.

3. The inter sports discipline differences would occur on socio-psychological variables.
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Coaches, while making programmes, for their athletes for training and competitions must be well versed with socio-psychological make up of the athletes to achieve high performance. It is evident from the performances of athletes in national/inter-national competitions that despite providing modern infrastructure, healthy diet, scientific physical and technical training, something is missing between the effort and success. There may be the lack of understanding of socio-psychological profiles by coaches and athletes. The present investigation will help coaches and athletes to be conscious of socio-psychological elements to be cared for their planning, training and competition. To identify the sports talent at young age from socio-psychological point of view, this study will help coaches, sports organisers and govt-agencies dealing with such schemes.

In the past most of the elite athletes had not heard of sports psychology or sports sociology and did little for training the mental and social side of their games. Many of these athletes possessed excellent psychological skills, but the development of these skills occurred largely by chance and without conscious recognition. Efforts to improve performance of the vast majority of athletes consisted only of looking for advances in physical training, conditioning, biomechanics, and equipment. In contrast, all of today’s athletes probably have heard of sport psychology. They are now seeking the expert services of sports
psychologist and sports Sociologist as the ‘competitive edge’ to finish a step ahead in the competition.

Alderman (1974) opined that in order to explain and analyse man’s fervent interest and competitive behaviour in sports, one must examine his psychological and sociological dimensions in the movement context.