CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
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SUMMARY

This study was conducted with the purpose of identifying stress-causing factors among university sportspersons as related to their performance. The possible areas of stress identified were social status of the family, socio-economic factors, environmental factors and available infrastructure in the institutions and university. During the course of studying these factors an effort was made to recognize the role of friends, club/associations, communities, coaches, trainers and sports administrators, institutions and universities in either minimizing the competitive stress of the athletes or their apathy towards the cause of stress for the sportspersons and thereby escalating their already existing stressful conditions.

The tool of this study was the questionnaire which included open form and closed form of questions, and a five points rating scale etc, according to needs, requirements of the study and which have relevance in identifying stress causing conditions of university sportspersons. The questionnaire was finalized after getting it duly approved and modified on the basis of suggestions of experts in physical education both in India and abroad.
The subjects of this study were 2000 male respondents belonging to South Indian Universities, from whom suggestions and opinions were collected randomly during the various inter-university competitions held for the year 2006-07. The tournaments during which the data was collected were Kabaddi at Karnataka University, Dharwad (Karnataka), Hockey at Annamalai University, Annamalai (TN), Badminton at Annamalai University, Annamalai (TN), Football at Madras University, Chennai (TN) Volleyball at Periyar University, Salem (TN) and Basketball at University of Kerala, Trivandrum (Kerala). The analyses and interpretation of the results were carried out in the form of tables and graphs.

FINDINGS

Faculty or Discipline of Study

This area does not indicate that the Faculty or Discipline of study of the students causes stress. Since 86 per cent are graduates and about 80 per cent have opted for Arts or Commerce, there is not much of a stress on the sportspersons relating to their academics. The students have got enough time on their hands to give justice to their subject of study, and at the same time, they can participate competitively. The faculty of study is not a stressor to the sportspersons as a majority was from the Arts and Commerce faculties.
Sports Achievement

The level of representation at the highest levels at the national level is something not too many sportspersons have managed (12.8 per cent at the higher side). Thus the advantage of experience, which is a very important factor in deciding between winning and losing, is lost out on many sportspersons. Since many of the sportspersons at the university level, have not had too much experience this could be a stumbling block in the form of choking up when the finishing qualities are needed. So this area might have to be looked into, which could be done by participating in more competitions so as to get a chance to perform well and reach the national level.

This is one area where a lot of indirect and direct stress can be generated by way of financial difficulties, support by the parents and siblings, the social status of the family. As was expected and not totally surprisingly, a large majority of the students from OBC (79.6 per cent) can generate a whole lot of related problems. Similarly more than half of the respondents (54.4 per cent) stated that the total dependents in their family are more than five, and 44 per cent of sportspersons coming from rural areas and a majority (66 per cent) are in the low income group-these throw up the harsh realities of Indian sport. Therefore the socio-demographical aspects of the family are a major stress-causing factor for the athlete, which has to be looked into for managing the stress of a sportsperson. Though the government is taking up various steps like starting sports hostels and academies, clearly as the result shows, these academies do not reach to the really talented as there are only a handful
of them in each state and only in a few districts. Sponsorships are not thriving in India, except in cricket and to a small extent in football and tennis and this could lead to real talents being nipped in the bud. So this is an important area, which has to be tackled in order to reduce the social stress on the sportspersons.

More than a third (34.8 per cent) of the fathers are agriculturists and more than half of them (51.6 per cent) have not studied beyond pre university level, which further compounds the problem of sportspersons. Similarly most of the mothers (67.6 per cent) are homemakers and 47.2 per cent have not studied beyond the tenth standard.

The sports background and the participation in sports activities is an encouraging picture, with many of the male members (30.8 per cent) of the sportspersons' families having participated at district level and above. But it is not the same case with the women, and most of them (71.2 per cent) have not participated at any level. This would not make much of a difference as the men make most of the decisions and therefore this factor would not be the reason for non-support to the athletes.

Just about half of the respondents (56 per cent) have indicated that their family members currently participate in sports and fitness activities. Within the various limitations, most of the sportspersons (87.6 per cent) feel that the family members meet their needs adequately.
The understanding in the family is very good (68.46 per cent) and each family member supports (68.08 per cent) the other. They spend most of their time together with understanding and without many disruptions.

The communities' role in promoting excellence and thereby relieving the stress of the athletes to some extent is not clearly defined. Though an average lot (53.6 per cent) has indicated that their community encourages sports participation, and just below average revealing that the other promotional measures are organizing competitions (41.6 per cent), honouring prizewinners and providing incentives (40.4 per cent), promoting traditional activities of that community (16 per cent), it is not clear if such promotions were done with the clear intention to promote sports or for publicity. These promotions give a sniff of publicity stunts more than anything else and therefore on an analysis one can say that such programmes of the community not at all relieve stress. In this context it has to be noted that the community can to a great extent alleviate the sports tensions of the athletes by systematically promoting, or sponsoring an athlete.

Friends can help in managing stress of the sportspersons to a significant level. And it is rightly confirmed by a majority of the sportspersons that their friends play an important role in motivating the sportspersons (81.2 per cent), active involvement in sports (81.28 per cent), giving companionship (82.16 per cent) and to a lesser extent helping financially (67.44 per cent).
Clubs/Associations also help in promoting sports and to some extent act as stress busters for the athletes. A significant number agree that the clubs/associations support the representation (79.28 per cent), provide facilities and equipment (79.2 per cent), provide coaches (75.92 per cent), provide financial assistance (67.6 per cent) and arrange sponsors (63.28 per cent). Thus one can assume that the sportspersons have very little stress arising from the treatment of the clubs/associations towards them. But as far as satisfaction and management of stress is concerned the students are more comfortable with the approach of the clubs/associations towards their sport participation and are less stressed.

One of the major hurdles in the performance of an athlete in the colleges is the lack of coaching facilities. Neither are there sufficient coaches appointed in the colleges, nor are there adequate coaches being provided for each game. Only a few games are provided for with coaches, and it seems that this is an exercise done rather to satisfy the students rather than with the firm intention to promote sports. This is a rather direct and an important stress-increasing factor and to some extent is alleviated by the employment of coaches from outside agencies. This is usually done so as to provide coaching facilities only during the competition time and for a short period. So to what extent it decreases the stress on a long time basis is a matter of conjecture. Lack of coaches and long term coaching facility are major stress-causing factors for upcoming sportspersons.
Though facilities like jerseys, travelling and Dearness Allowance are provided, lodging facilities are not at all looked after in the interest of sportspersons’ welfare. Sportsmen are taken for granted and as long as they are given a roof on their head, the responsibility of the college is over. Usually the organizers provide unfurnished accommodation, many times accommodating several teams simultaneously and this is barely suitable for better performance. Similarly, sports kits are not provided in most of the colleges (40 per cent) and the sportspersons have to look after themselves.

Lack of incentives, grace marks and scholarships play their role in negatively impacting sport participation. Only about 47.04 per cent institutions and 54.96 per cent of the university sportspersons indicate the provision of the above, but even the other 52.96 per cent of the institutions and 45.04 per cent in the university for whom the above is not provided, participation in sport may not hold much significance, thus reducing practice time and seriousness in competition. In India where sport is not a profession, ultimately it is the academic qualification that provides bread and butter for the sportspersons. If facilities like grace marks and scholarships are not provided, sportspersons in the instance of not succeeding in sports up to the expected level and who are usually poor in studies will be left without a career either in sport or in studies. Therefore academic incentives are essential to reduce the stress for the sportspersons and allow them to concentrate more on sport.

Some of the factors directly related to the performance like travel to practice, total practice in years and hours per day give some insight into the stress faced by the
athletes. Majority of the students walk (58.8 per cent) to the practice sessions and a reasonable number of them use the public transport (25.6 per cent). Only some of the students can afford to have their own vehicles (14 per cent). Daily walking to and fro from the practice session will take its toll on the sportspersons in the long run which will eventually tell on their performance. Similarly not many sportspersons (33.2 per cent) have participated in competitive sport for more than four years, which make them relatively inexperienced. Likewise, almost an equal number (57.2 per cent) practice for less than two hours a day. Though this may not be the direct cause of stress, it can be more of a result of unfavourable conditions, which the sportspersons face in their homes and institutions. This is more indicative of the stress which a sportsperson has faced in the form of lack of coaches, and average support in the institutions, lower economic family conditions etc. This could have resulted not only in the sportspersons starting their competitive sports later in life but also causes them to spend less time on practice.

Similarly certain general and specific stress prediction factors were analyzed based upon stress producing situations, which would normally exist during the sports performance of a sportsperson, which are as follows:

1. Fear of practice leading to avoidance of practice sessions
2. Sense of loneliness due to lack of equally serious compatriots in practice sessions
3. Frequent interference by the captains during practice and competitions
4. Relationship between captain and the teammates
5. Lack of temperament
6. Lack of adequate and appropriate stress managerial techniques
7. Fear of failure
8. Changes in rules and organizational policies
9. Anxiety about representing the university, state and the nation
10. Situations which demand the sportspersons to take the responsibility of the captain or the coach
11. Lack of incentives for successful performance
12. Lack of feedback from the coaches or lack of self-evaluation to appraise oneself
13. Lack of counseling
14. Ambitions to achieve

In terms of general stress causing factors, all the eight factors have scored more than 70 per cent of the score which indicates that the sportspersons are positive about situations like, taking up greater responsibility, need for reward for performance, opportunities to analyse performance, weekend counseling, and aims to represent the country. This indicates that these situations can be encouraged in order to reduce stress and to focus on sports performance.

In terms of specific factors, certain factors such as loneliness in training, frequent instructions from captains, relationship with coach, jealousy, fear of performance, policies in sport are some of the areas, which the majority of sportspersons feel, create stress. Finally, for the successful management of stress,
such general and specific factors identified as increasing stress should be well managed and those that reduce stress should be developed.

**CONCLUSIONS**

On the basis of the discussions and findings, the hypotheses can be established and the following conclusions can be drawn and measures to combat the stress enhancing factors can be prescribed.

1. The majority of sportspersons have enrolled themselves in either the arts or the commerce faculty, so by all probability the academic compulsions do not restrict a sportsperson's sports commitments and therefore does not add to the stress of competitions.

2. With the lack of greater number of competitions, there appears to be lesser achievement by the sportspersons. The lack of competitions and poor participation at the national level are a major area of concern. A large number of sportspersons have not participated beyond the inter-university level and only a few of the others have secured some medals at the national levels. The Lack of exposure at the highest level is sure to pressurize the sportspersons during competitions, and thereby extracting mediocre performance from them. Similarly, the years of sport participation is not at the required levels. The reason for this could be that the sportspersons start at an older age due to lack or absence of proper guidance. It is an agreed fact that a sportsperson matures with competition and therefore to tackle such a situation it should be ensured
that the child gets an exposure into sports at an earlier age. Additionally, the sports clubs/associations and institutions can be persuaded to support the sportspersons financially and morally to participate in a greater number of competitions and be the causes for making the sportspersons compete at the national level.

3. The socio-demographical aspects of the family can prove to be a barrier as far as reducing stress of a sportsperson is concerned. Family conditions, background and support can be an important consideration when discussing the stress factors of sportspersons. As was expected, most of the students come from a poor family, with joint status, and belonging to the backward caste. As observed by the investigator, this is the usual occurrence since the more affluent people opt for expensive careers and sport is means the more of recreation and survival for the lower income groups.

4. Even if sports background and support is satisfactory, the other factors like education and occupation might cause a hindrance for optimum participation by the sportspersons. The educational background of the family members is not adequate and notable sports background is possessed mostly by the men folk. Though the understanding in the household and the companionship among the siblings is satisfactory, it is the economic and the educational status of the families that indirectly blockade the sportspersons from sports excellence, at least in the earlier stages of their career.

5. The relationship among the family members is encouraging to good performance or in the very least does not come in the way of the sportsperson’s participation in
sports. An amicable relationship among the family members is a factor where performance factors are concerned; it is hardly noticeable to the outsiders and works in the background in either constructing or destroying a career. In this study this factor is found to be positively motivating the sports career of a sportsperson.

6. Community can to a great extent alleviate the sports tensions of the sportspersons by systematically promoting, or sponsoring sportspersons.

7. Friends can help in managing stress of the sportspersons to a significant level.

8. Clubs/Associations also help in promoting sports and to some extent act as stress busters for the sportspersons. It is the clubs/associations, which have direct access to participation at the state and national levels. The students are satisfied with the approach of the clubs/associations in encouraging sports participation.

9. The lack of coaches and long term coaching facility are major stress-causing factors for upcoming sportspersons. Educational institutions and universities try to support the sportspersons within their limits. The sportspersons are facing stress as a result of lack of ancillary support such as boarding facilities or direct support such as provision of coaches. Though it is not clear if the facilities are up to the standards, it is found that the number of coaches appointed is not at all sufficient.

10. Facilities like Traveling and Dearness Allowance, lodging during competitions, sports kits are not provided in most of the colleges and the sportspersons have to look
after themselves. There are stress factors associated with lodging facilities provided to sportspersons during competitions.

11. The incentives like sports scholarship, attendance for participation, grace marks are not given to the extent which justifies sports promotion which is indeed a inhibitory factor for sports participation.

12. Performance factors like travelling, practicing hours, years of participation and practice leaves a lot to be desired. This could be the result of the stress causing factors already analysed or in itself be a cause for stress creation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study is a pioneer in finding out the relative stressful situations, which an athlete of reasonable stature, in this case an inter-university participant, is subjected to. Institutions are the foundation stones for the future of any nation and the health of its youth is a sound indicator of the development of that nation. Thus the role of university sportspersons in furthering the sports ambitions of the State and Nation is all the more important. In this context the identification of stress causing factors, which could prove to be an obstacle in the sporting ambitions of the athletes, is necessary, so that steps could be taken to make the way smoother and improve the performance of the sportspersons. Therefore the following recommendations are made:
1. The family conditions such as economic standards, size of the family, caste, customs and traditions, educational qualifications are factors, which the sportspersons are endowed with. Nothing much can be done to change it and within those limitations the sportsperson tries to manage stress. The other method, which could be followed to manage stress arising out of these conditions, is accessing support from government and private agencies, sponsorships etc. So it is recommended that the sportspersons hailing from a poor and conservative background should tap the governmental resources and approach the sponsoring agencies and philanthropists to fund their sports career.

2. The community's roles can be looked into and due comparison could be made between the sports promotion role of different communities. This could be a lesson for many other communities who have not given a thought to promoting sportspersons in their communities, to come forward and do the same. It may prove to be a motivating factor to athletes' parents with rural background to give greater encouragement to their children to participate in sports activities.

3. The institutions such as colleges and universities usually have enough financial resources to promote sports by way of appointing adequate coaches and building infrastructure. It is the mindset that comes in the way of doing this, as sports is not looked upon as a source of revenue and a career avenue. But still there have been many sportspersons who have funded their livelihood by getting appointments through sports. Thus it is recommended that the institutions should be made to
realize the importance of sports participation, and must be insisted upon to provide the minimum facilities for such sport participation.

4. Certain general and specific stress causing situations related to practice, competitions such as loneliness in practice, tension of competitions and personality characteristics such as introversion etc., unduly add to the stress of the sportspersons. It is recommended that the possibilities of psychological preparation be explored into in order to reduce the psychological stress of competitions.

5. All the parents need to realize that, achievements at the university will form the basis on which their children’s future sports achievements can be built. The result of the level of education, their economic condition and their sports background on their sports outlook can be established through an in-depth study.

6. This study can be taken as the guideline for the Physical Education Directors of the colleges and university coaches to assess the sportsperson’s family background and on the basis of which they can implement their training programmes. This can contribute indirectly to the improvement in individual performance of university sportspersons, which in turn will ensure success in the field of sport.

7. Noting that sport and physical education in many countries face increasing marginalization within education systems even though they are a major tool not
only for health and physical development but also for acquiring values necessary for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, studies could be done on the different roles that sport plays and the influence it bears on the educational system.

8. Studies could be done to assess the role of sport and availability of infrastructure for all when furthering their development programmes and policies, to advance health awareness, the spirit of achievement and to entrench collective values of sport and technical education.

9. This study could contribute towards strengthening cooperation and partnership between all members including family, institutions, universities, sport clubs/associations, local communities and decision makers as well as the public and private sectors, in order to ensure complementarities and to make sport and its infrastructure available to everyone.