Chapter V

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5.1 Summary

The purpose of the study was to analyze support infrastructure, coping style and self concept among Indian sportspersons. For the purpose of the study, 216 national level sportspersons including 126 male and 90 female sportspersons were selected. The sportspersons belonged to the following sports disciplines, and were active participants at national and international level competitions: (i) Badminton, (ii) Swimming, (iii) Athletics, (iv) Football, (v) Volleyball, and (vi) Basketball. Support infrastructure, coping styles and self concept were assessed using the following tools:

(i) Support Infrastructure was assessed using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) by Zimet, G.D., Dahlem, N.W., Zimet, S.G. & Farley, G.K. (1988).

(ii) Coping style was assessed using the Athletic Coping Style Inventory Questionnaire (ASCI-28) by Smith, Schutz, Smoll and Ptacek (1995).

(iii) Self Concept was assessed using The Physical Self Description Questionnaire (PSDQ) by Marsh et al, 1994.

The research scholar contacted the coaches and players of the selected sports disciplines, and they were oriented regarding the overall purpose and procedure of the study. After the consent from the coaches and players and with their agreement to participate, the researcher set up an appointment to meet with the players during coaching camps or at venue of national level tournaments.
The data were collected during 2010-11 and 2011-12 competitive seasons at the venues of coaching camps or at the venues of national level tournaments. The data of the badminton players were collected from the coaching camp at Regional Sports Center, Kadavanthara, Kochi, during the All India Junior Major Ranking Tournament at Kochi, June 2011; Senior National Tournament at Bangalore, Karnataka, January, 2012,

The data obtained on support infrastructure (MSPSS), coping skills ACSI-28), and self concept (PSDQ) were analyzed for testing the hypotheses by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20).

The descriptive statistics was used to present the profile of the data on the selected variables. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to find the significance of difference among the sportspersons belonging to different sports disciplines on the selected variables. The t-test was used for comparison between male and female sportspersons on the selected variables. The Pearson’s product moment correlation was employed to establish the inter-relationship among the selected variables. The statistical analysis was tested for significance at 0.05 levels.

5.2 Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:
The descriptive profile for the support infrastructure, coping style and self concept of national level sportspersons showed comparative values for the data observed by other researchers.

In case of coping style variables, female sportspersons showed significantly higher values for goal setting and mental preparation as compared to male sportspersons.

In case of physical self concept variables, male sportspersons showed significantly higher scores on sub scale health as compared to female sportspersons.

In case of comparison between sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports, sportspersons belonging to individual sports showed significantly higher values on the family subscale of perceived social support as compared to team sports.

In case of coping skills variables, sportspersons belonging to individual sports showed significantly higher scores on goal setting and mental preparation, concentration, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability as compared to sportspersons belonging to team sports. However, in case of freedom from worry, sportspersons belonging to team sports showed significantly higher values as compared to sportspersons belonging to individual sports.

In case of physical self concept variables, sportspersons belonging to team sports showed significantly higher values than sportspersons belonging to
individual sports in case of strength, endurance/fitness, sports competence, health, flexibility and self esteem.

(vii) In case of comparison for support infrastructure factors among sportspersons belonging to different sports disciplines, significant differences were observed only for the family sub factor, in which sportspersons belonging to badminton and swimming showed significant difference as compared to basketball.

(viii) In case of coping style, significant differences were observed among sportspersons belonging to different sports disciplines for all the sub factors. In the comparisons it was observed that swimming group had significantly higher values in most of the sub factors than other sports disciplines. Swimming group had significantly higher values than volleyball group in coping with adversity; differed significantly than football group in peaking under pressure; had higher values than badminton, basketball and volleyball in goal setting and mental preparation; differed significantly than basketball and volleyball in confidence and achievement motivation; and showed higher values than basketball in coachability.

(ix) The athletics group differed significantly to basketball group in case of goal setting and mental preparation; and differed significantly with volleyball group in concentration. The basketball group differed significantly to football group in case of goal setting and mental preparation; and differed significantly to volleyball group in concentration.
In case of self concept variables also significant differences were observed among sportspersons belonging to different sports disciplines. In case of perceived strength, basketball group differed significantly with swimming; whereas the swimming group differed significantly with football and volleyball. The athletics group differed significantly with football.

In case of perceived body fat, swimming group showed significantly lower values as compared with basketball; and volleyball group showed significantly lower values as compared with basketball.

In case of perceived sports competence, volleyball group showed significantly higher values as compared with swimming group. In case of perceived coordination, athletics group showed significantly lower values as compared with basketball and volleyball.

In case of perceived health, swimming group showed significantly lower values as compared with basketball, football and volleyball; and athletics group showed significantly lower values as compared with football and volleyball.

In case of perceived appearance, volleyball group showed significantly higher values as compared with swimming group. In case of perceived flexibility, volleyball group showed significantly higher values as compared with swimming and athletics.

In case of perceived self esteem, swimming group showed significantly lower values as compared with badminton, athletics, basketball, football.
and volleyball. Volleyball group showed significantly higher values as compared with athletics group.

(xvi) In case of relationship of support infrastructure variables to total score on coping skills inventory for the total sample, all the sub factors of support infrastructure, family, friends and significant others; and the total score on support infrastructure correlated significantly.

(xvii) In case of relationship of self concept variables to total score on coping skills inventory for the total sample (personal coping resources), significant correlations were observed for perceived strength, physical activity, endurance/fitness, co-ordination and general physical self concept.

(xviii) In case of relationship of support infrastructure variables to total score on coping skills inventory for the male sportspersons, the sub factors of support infrastructure, friends and significant others; and the total score on perceived social support correlated significantly; whereas the sub factor family did not correlate significantly.

(xix) In case of relationship of self concept variables to total score on coping skills inventory (personal coping resources), for male sportspersons, significant correlations were observed for co-ordination and general physical self concept.

(xx) In case of relationship of support infrastructure variables to total score on coping skills inventory (personal coping resources) for the female sportspersons, no significant correlation was observed for the sub factors of
social support, family, friends and significant others; and the total score on social support.

(xx) In case of relationship of self concept variables to total score on coping skills inventory (personal coping resources), for female sportspersons, significant correlations were observed for strength, physical activity, endurance/fitness, sports competence, coordination, flexibility and general physical self concept.

(xxii) The regression analysis and predictor for personal coping resources for the total sample, indicated that coordination, support infrastructure sub factor friends, appearance and endurance/fitness as the predictor variables.

(xxiii) The regression analysis and predictor for personal coping resources for the male sportspersons indicated that support infrastructuresub factor friends, coordination and appearance were the predictor variables.

(xxiv) The regression analysis and predictor for personal coping resources for the female sportspersons indicated endurance/fitness, coordination, self esteem and family as the significant predictor variables.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings observed and conclusions drawn leads to the following recommendations:

(i) The study results provides further insight into the interactional (contextual) model of coping in which participants coping style and strategies are functional to both personal and situational factors.
(ii) The results gleaned could be considered in relation to the behavioural intentions of personal and support infrastructure mechanisms which could be elicited prior to competitions.

(iii) The study results warrant the need for developing or refining support infrastructure mechanisms across sports disciplines including national organizations, coaching affiliates, supporting staff, family, friends and significant others for Indian sportspersons.

(iv) Psychologists and supporting staff working with national sportspersons could develop standardized pre-competition protocols in conjunction with the athletes and their respective personal and support mechanisms.

(v) Future studies are recommended to further the understanding of the complexity of coping mechanisms with respect to other personal and situational factors.

(vi) There is scope for further studies with sportspersons of other sports disciplines, and other levels of performance and also to undertake qualitative investigations in the context of the present study to gain better insights into the factors contributing to coping mechanisms.