CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Cricket is a team game, which has originated from England in 14th century and became popular during 17th century. Cricket is a bat and ball game played by two teams of eleven players, on a pitch of 22 yards in length with an unobstructed field of 75 yards from determined number of overs or of pre-determined period of time. The object of the team is to score more runs than the opponent team. The “Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has been recognized as the sole authority for drawing up the code since 1787 and number of revised laws were brought in to the game.

THE NATURE OF THE GAME

Cricket is played in two different categories.

1. The one-day matches consist of one innings per team. In other words, as limited overs tournament. The maximum number of overs bowled is sixty and the minimums in the international matches are fifty overs per team. The highest scoring team is declared as winner.

2. The match is played for 3 to 5 days, approximately 6 hour per day and consists of two innings per team. In the international level it is being played as Test series.
DESCRIPTION OF THE CRICKET FIELD

The playing field should have unobstructed area of 60 to 70 mts. from the wickets. The pitch is normally of grass and in the center of playing field with 20.12 meters length and approximately 3.30 meters width.

Three cylindrical wooden stumps (with bails) are fixed at the center of either ends of the pitch. While fixed on pitch the height of the wickets from the ground to its top should be 71.1 cm (28 inches) and width 22.86 (9 inches). At either end of the pitch, there shall be a rectangular popping crease of 2.64 cm (8 ft 8 inches) width and 1.22 (4 ft) deep. The popping creases shall be considered to be unlimited in length. The inside edge of the return crease shall be at each end of the bowling crease and at right angles to it. The crease shall be minimum of 1.22 (4 ft) behind the wicket.

SKILLS OF CRICKET

Like any other game, the cricket consists of four important basic technical skills i.e. batting, bowling, fielding, and wicket keeping.

- **Batting:** Consist of different strokes and drives to score runs.

- **Bowling:** Two different types of bowling – namely Pace bowling and Spin bowling with variations

- **Fielding:** Stopping, throwing, and catching are the important skills and has different positions in it

- **Wicket-Keeping:** Wicket-keeper is expected to collect the ball after it has been bowled, or thrown by the fielders
In modern days the game has become immensely popular due to its nature of play. It has attained its professional status today through scientific applications of training in different levels. Countries like Australia, South Africa, England and New Zealand have contributed more for its growth and development. These test-playing countries have full-fledged scientific training centers to coach and train the cricketers.

Due to its modernization every cricketer is expected to do well in each and every department of the game. It has created a lot of pressure within the batsman and the bowlers to perform beyond their ability. Learning psychological skills along with technical skills are very important right from the childhood to perform well in any of the matches.

Though there are number of coaching centers provide coaching and training with the expert coaches psychological aspects of the game were not given much importance.

PACE BOWLING

Pace bowling is a skill in cricket. In other words it is called as fast bowling. The important aspects of pace bowling are speed, variations and good line and length. A fast bowler is expected to bowl with a good pace to attack the batsman and the wickets. He should perform consistently, to improve his performance. For better average a fast bowler should have good technical ability, mental fitness and physical fitness.

Pace: Hence pace bowling is concerned with the speed at which a ball is delivered by a bowler and the extent to which affects the speed of the ball when it pitches.
Technical details of pace bowling are presented below:

1. **Line**  
The degree of accuracy, with regard to the direction of flight rather than the distance from the wicket at which the ball pitches, with which a bowler propels the ball.

2. **Length**  
The point at which a ball pitches considered in terms of the distance down the wicket that it travels after leaving the bowlers hand.

3. **Length ball**  
Obsolete – a ball that is pitched well up to the batsman and bounces once before reaches him, a ball of good length

**PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PACE BOWLING**

Winter (1992) describes that psychological battle in cricket is waged on two fronts. The first is the battle that the player has with himself. To win this battle, requires concentration, motivation, self-control and a host of other personal skills. The second battle is with the opponent. To win this battle it requires an understanding of the game, intelligence, tactical knowledge and cunningness.

There are number of psychological factors contributing to pace bowling. Success as a bowler requires motivation and determination. A pace bowler has to bowl each and every delivery with good speed, line and length and also with different variation. Moreover, he should be able to convert the knowledge into skills, which can be used during the match situations.
A pace bowler's best performance as per his bowling average depends on psychological skills that he has learnt, and used at the time of bowling. It is important that a bowler should prepare himself to face the challenges during the game.

According to Winter (1992) the important psychological skills in pace bowling are:

1. Motivation and Goal setting
2. Self-confidence
3. Concentration
4. Emotional control
5. Visualisation
6. Problem solving ability
7. Social aspects such as interpersonal relationship, team spirit etc

**MOTIVATION**

Motivation usually refers to psych up a player to perform in particular match situation. The coaches, friends and parents motivate the cricketers to perform in a better manner through pep talk and counseling sessions. Motivation also refers to an urge or need to achieve the desired goal. Commitment, determination and will to achieve are the few ways the great bowlers use to achieve their best. Rotella (1982) an American psychologist describes how athletes increase their effectiveness through developing a kind of inner motivation or search for personal excellence. A pace bowler can improve his bowling skill through self-motivation (Winter 1992)
Self motivation or Intrinsic motivation includes positive thinking, self talk, regular practice, systematic training, maintaining good physical fitness etc. A pace bowler should set performance goals and practice goals to motivate himself and should review the goals on regular basis. One can make use of the available resources and to take the advantages of external motivation. Motivation is a structured effort over time. With the positive frame of mind a pace bowler can bowl each and every ball with good line and length (Winter 1992).

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is an important technique. It helps the player to achieve his goals in a systematic way. The important skills of goal setting are physical fitness, technical, psychological, behavioral and environmental.

The physical fitness goal improves the components of fitness, like speed, endurance, strength, flexibility, rest and sleep etc.

Technical goals are performance related goals i.e. Regular practice in different techniques of pace bowling like in-swing, out-swing, yorker etc.

Tactical goals involve match plan, pre plan, and working out strategies against the opposition. Psychological goals involves practicing mental skills and mental coping skills for dealing with difficult situations.

Behavioral goals includes the social aspects of understanding, interpersonal relationship, body language, team spirit, competitiveness and degrees of co-operation amongst teammates (Sandy 1990).
CONCENTRATION

Concentration is the ability to focus your attention to appropriate cues in the present task by excluding or controlling the irrelevant cues. Snow (1976) points out various skills of cricket require different forms of concentration and mental approach necessitating a finely developed sense of attentional control. Gorden (1989) claims that all cricketers can improve their ability to concentrate and cope with stressful situations.

The most significant factor in cricket is concentration. A player needs to know the necessity for switching on and off. Tumer (1975) reinforces the importance of attentional focus at key times and he quotes that although a bowler look to his concentration, it is helpful to relax in between deliveries. Concentration can be improved by the use of concentration cues, (verbal, visual and physical). The other techniques include to improve concentration through developing concentration routines, controlling distractions and errors, and through meditation technique. A pace bowler should concentrate on his line and length of each and every ball in an over.

CONFIDENCE

Confidence may be defined as a trust or belief, a faith or assuredness especially in the outcome of something (Chambers dictionary). Confidence in oneself can be defined as the belief or degree of certainty that individuals possess about their ability to be successful in a particular situation or task. Butler (1997) describes some important components of confidence as self-image, self-esteem, self-concept, self-vulnerability and self-belief. Good performance usually builds up the confidence of the bowler.
According to Winter (1992) refers, the level of confidence can vary rapidly, even altering from one ball to the next as circumstances change. Only through hard work and training a pace bowler will get the required level of confidence to bowl against good batsman. Confident bowlers have more self-belief, positive thinking, and emotional control during matches. Confidence can be improved through self-talk, positive attitude, right approach, focusing on performance, and by setting possible goals.

EMOTIONAL CONTROL

The players who are able to control their emotions perform with more confidence even in the toughest situations. Emotional refers to Anxiety, stress, fear and other related psychological aspects. Emotional control is very much necessary for a pace bowler to concentrate on his line and length. The fast bowlers faces different problems when they fail to take wickets, being hit for six or four, bowling to a certain batsman and in tough situation. The psychological changes felt by the bowlers were, getting easily irritated, difficulty in thinking clearly or with poor judgement. The arousal level has a direct relationship to performance in cricket.

A bowler needs to learn to recognize the psych up level. He should know the causes for stress, pressure and the techniques to manage the pressure situation. Almost all players experience emotions like nervousness or frustration. Good players have the ability to control the feelings and there-by-there arousal level. To improve emotional control a bowler need to understand his abilities, and training techniques like meditation, relaxations and thought stopping.
VISUALISATION

Visualisation is referred to mental imagery or mental rehearsal. Cricketers can gain considerable benefits from systematically using the mental practice skills. Mental imagery technique can be used at any time and any place for wide variety of reasons. It is used as a tool to prepare for competition. Visualisation is a very useful technique when learning new skills, performance enhancement programmes, to improve the level of confidence, rehabilitation, mental warm up, preview, review and for problem solving. In pace bowling a bowler use the technique of visualization to perform well during matches. He can motivate himself by recalling his best performance (Corbin 1972).

PROBLEM SOLVING

The cricketers have to face different challenging situations. Normally a test bowler faces problems in pitches, bowling to a certain batsman, who are in good form, not able to take wickets, not able to control the run rate etc. He should learn the techniques to identify the problems and to solving it within the short time will be very helpful for a bowler. Problem solving ability increases the confidence level and to perform well to achieve the desired goal.

SOCIAL ASPECTS

Social aspects include individual behavior, interaction with the team members, team spirit, team cohesion and other related social needs of a cricketer. Cricket is a team
game, every player in expected to contribute his share through commitment, motivation and performance for the team’s success.

Social cohesion refers to the extent to which a player gets on with each other on a social basis. Task cohesion refers to the extent to which team member agree on the goals of the team and the strategies, which are employed to achieve those goals. Carron (1988) in discussing group dynamics in sport outlines the importance of role behaviour in the effectiveness of a sport team.

Scope of the present study

The present study was planned to investigate the efficacy of game oriented psychological training on technical and psychological aspects of pace bowling besides ascertaining the factors, which would contribute to performance of pace bowlers.

A multivariate and ex-post-facto approach would be used to investigate the predictors of performance of pace bowlers while experimental approach with pre-post test design would be followed for determining the efficacy of game oriented psychological training on technical and psychological aspects of pace bowling.

Keeping this in view, studies carried out in the past on various psychological aspects of sports in general and cricket in particular are reviewed in the next chapter.