Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The history of games and sports is as old as mankind. If we peep through the old civilization as narrated, various sports, games and amusements were organized by various cultural organizations such as Athenians, Spartans and Romans. The culmination came with the organization of the first ancient Olympic Games of 776 B.C. in Greece. From the ancient amphitheater to a small stadium, sports today have penetrated all physical barriers to bring the sportspersons and the sports lovers together, not only to display their talents and skills for the greater glory of sports but more so to unite hearts and minds of the people and to accomplish the universal peace and brotherhood among mankind.

Since the dawn of the civilization, sports have been very dominant factor in every society. Victory in sports in International Competitions is viewed as the sign of superiority of the Nation and the sportsmen are given the status of demigods. Football world cup held in France has confirmed the importance of sports all over the globe. During 33 days of extravaganza millions of people all over the world remained glued to television to watch world cup matches. Newsmakers like Bill Clinton, President of USA, Dr. Helmut Kohl of Germany and Boris Yetslin of Russia were put on the backburner during this period and Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Cafu, Suker, Batistuta, Zidone and host of others occupied centre stage. Though only 32 nations participated in the competition, but the whole world was keenly watching every thing played in France.
Same story repeated during Olympic Games, Wimbledon Championship, Cricket Series and other international competitions. Names of the most powerful Presidents, Prime Ministers and Dictators are forgotten the day they retire, but names of Legendary sportsmen like Pele, Maradona, Jesse Owens, Carl Lewis, Michael Jordan, Steffi Graf, Sunil Gavaskar, Dhyan Chand, Roop Singh, Balbir Singh, Shankar Laxman are always fresh in the memory of the World.

The sporting world has changed. India, mired in a hog of outdated sporting technique and petty politicking by ignorant spcrts administrators, is going down the sports ladder day by day.

In the present scientific era, sports not only help in shaping the lifestyle and personality of a person but also act as determinant of the status of a country at national and international levels. With the passage of time a lot of changes have crept into the field of sports. This has become highly competitive and complex profession. With the help of advanced electron.c, print and mass media sports have been displayed as very inscriptive and prestigious field at national and international levels. Consequently, more importance is given to sports and sportspersons these days. Victory and superiority in sports at the international level or the Olympic competitions add honour to the national prestige by highlighting the concerned country on the world map.

Sports are no more leisure time, pleasure seeking entertainment activities. It is now a highly competitive and complex profession. The importance given to sports can be judged from the billion of dollars being paid to sportsman all over the world. With the exposure through electronic and print media, sports have been glamorized to an extent unimagined thirty years ago. There is no other profession in which the
individuals are paid as much as outstanding sportsmen in almost all games are paid. It is only the sports like Tennis, Cricket, Soccer, Basketball, Rugby and Ice-hockey etc. where sports persons are earning million of dollars every year. The global importance given to sports is also tagged with the national prestige of a nation. Even the small nations like Cuba, Germany, Ethiopia and Kenya compete very well with the mighty nations of the world. It is only through sports that these countries are put on the world map. International competition like Olympic Games and World cup Championships are very prestigious projects for the conduct of which almost all the countries of the world vie with each other.

Today’s world belongs to the best and the fittest. The weak ones have no place. People are ambitious with an urge to get the better of the others, to steal a march over others and to obtain supremacy in all walks of life.

Every nation wants to show its supremacy by showing excellence in sports. The challenges stimulate and inspire every man and woman, young and old, to sweat and strive, to run faster, to jump higher and to throw farther than others. Latest technologies have covered every aspect of assistance to human life including sports.

India is no exception to this International Phenomenon. The Government of India has created separate department of Sports and Youth Affairs in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and a minister of state has been appointed to look after the promotion of sports. Sports Authority of India under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister has floated a number of schemes for the promotion of sports in India.
However in spite of giving better incentives to the sport persons in the form of scholarships, special quota for admission in various educational institutions, coaching camps of two to three years duration, desired results have not been achieved. Large contingents of India return without any single gold medal.

India’s status in the realm of sports is relatively low as compared to most other countries. The standard of sports in other countries is rising day by day but we are almost stagnant and much behind in this respect. It is therefore, very necessary to analyze the causes, with a view to find out why India has not come up with rest of the world in the field of sports.

In spite of enormous population of our country and talent only few suit potentially for specific games. With the technical know-how and the sophisticated modern methodology of training and coaching, we are still unable to make an impact at the international level.

However the present day image of India in the international competition is very low. The only sport for which India was known as world champion was hockey. India for the first time sent its entry to participate in the Olympic hockey tournament of 1928 Amsterdam (Holland) Olympic Games, where from the 1928 to 1956 Olympic Games, India remained undisputed champions of the world. There are number of players who made India proud but one of the most distinct personality is Padamshree Shankar Laxman, who with his superb skill became a world figure.

In the field of hockey he played consecutively in three Olympic Games from 1956 to 1964 and was the major contributor for the defending goals. With his exit from the scene of hockey in the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games, we lost not only the title, but the prestige too. Our traditional rival, Pakistan, relegated us to the third position.
Though we won the 1980 Moscow Olympics where almost all-strong hockey playing nations did not participate due to American boycott of the Moscow Olympics.

Hockey was the only sport in which India achieved dizzy heights of winning eight gold medals at the Olympics. During those golden days names like Major Dhyan Chand, Roop Singh, Balbir Singh (senior), Udham Singh, R. S. Gentle, L. W. Claudius and Bhola became household names. One name amongst these, which stood out and still continues to raise nostalgic memories, is Padamshree Shankar Laxman. Such was the impact of this outstanding sportsman that a spate of Padamshree Shankar Laxman’s followed his footsteps in the field of hockey. We had Padamshree Shankar Laxman known for his Services and God knows how many more that came for short spells, performed and left, but amongst this no one could replace the Legend Padamshree Shankar Laxman whose stature and position remains unchanged even decades after he retired from active playing.

The Golden Era of hockey in India was the period from 1928 – 1964, it was raining Gold for India at the Olympics, as it won the gold medal consecutively, 6 times. During the Golden Era, India played 24 Olympic matches, won all 24, scored 178 goals (at an average of 7.43 goals per match) and conceded only 7 goals. The two other gold medals for India came in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1980 Moscow Olympics. Sadly, it’s been 26 years since we won Olympic Gold.

Padamshree Shankar Laxman was the first Goalkeeper Captain in the world. He was born on July 1, 1933 at Mhow (Madhya Pradesh) and played a major role in Indian hockey during this period. He played for India for the first time in the 1955 International Hockey Festival Match (Poland) where India performed well. He
played hockey at a time when the Goalkeeper had only the pads as a protective gear. He was a member of the Olympic Gold medal winning hockey team in the 1956 Melbourne (Australia) Olympics. The other medals he won include the 1958 Asian Games Gold medal Tokyo (Japan), 1960 Olympics Silver medal (Rome), 1962 Asian games Silver medal (Jakarta), 1964 Olympics Gold medal Tokyo (Japan). Padamshree Shankar Laxman captained the Indian hockey team squad in 1966 Asian Games Bangkok and won the Gold medal for the Country. He was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1965 and the Padamshree Award in 1967. He was dropped from the Indian hockey team to the Mexico Olympics of 1968 and the decline of Indian hockey also began with that tournament.

After 1966, Padamshree Shankar Laxman was not in the active side of Indian hockey. Thus after the decline of the Indian hockey commenced in 1968 and 1972, India's position came down to Bronze.

It is very humiliating that a sport like hockey in which India remained on top for 28 years is now trying to struggle to qualify for participation in the Olympic games.

Our performance in the Asian games, likewise, has also been oscillating between first and second positions since the introduction of hockey tournament in Asian games in 1958. Similarly in the World Cup, which was started in 1971, we secured first position in 1975 in Kuala-Lumpur. The above mentioned brief resume of the achievements of Indian hockey teams in the field of International hockey lucidly indicates that to regain our prestige in this game and refurbish our image, we must work hard so that we may be able to restructure our fractured reputation in the area of international hockey.
Every time our team return almost empty handed from International Competitions like Olympic Games, Asian Games, World Championship etc., there is a lot of hue and cry all over the country. Hon’ble members of Parliament, expressing their views about disgraceful performances, rock even our Parliament Session with very emotional speeches. All concerned for the promotion of sports feel happy, imagining that many heads will roll, incompetent and corrupt officials will be thrown out and competent and dedicated professionals will be given the responsibility to look after sports. Same set of unqualified and incompetent people continue and the civics circle is repeated.

After 1982 Asian games, Budget for sports was enhanced more than twenty times. Thousands of Crores were dumped in the Sports Authority of India Schemes; the Central Government as well as State Governments employed large numbers of Coaches.

To achieve desired results in the field of Hockey, nation needs competent and dedicated professional people like Padamshree Shankar Laxman. The purpose of taking this research project is to highlight the qualities of Padamshree Shankar Laxman, which will serve as a lighthouse to the people connected with the promotion of Hockey and sports. He was a role model whose example can inspire and motivate people to work hard.

With the view, that the study, the scholar has undertaken, will be of importance for the present and future sportsmen of this country with particular emphasis on Hockey who will emulate Padamshree Shankar Laxman. This will be a valuable document for the sportsmen, sports organizers, sports lovers and physical educationists of our country.
**Statement of the Problem**

The main purpose of this study was to highlight the contributions and achievement of Padamshree Shankar Laxman towards Indian hockey, Secondly, to enlist professional leadership qualities of Padamshree Shankar Laxman and Finally, to study his philosophy with regards to Indian Hockey. The problem is stated as “A CASE STUDY OF LIFE, PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN HOCKEY OF PADAMSHREE SHANKAR LAXMAN”.

**Delimitations**

The study was confined to:

1. The contributions and achievements of Padamshree Shankar Laxman to Indian hockey.
2. Padamshree Shankar Laxman's professional carrier was studied with regard to his philosophy, leadership qualities and his personality.
3. The study covered the outstanding or distinguished features with regard to the study of Padamshree Shankar Laxman's life.
4. The study covered the period from July 1, 1933 to till April 29, 2006.

**Limitation**

The research scholar dependent mainly on the interview of Padamshree Shankar Laxman, his family members, selected contemporaries and his colleagues and also on the questionnaire, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, articles and electronic media etc., thus all these can be the limitations of this study.
Definition and Explanation of the Terms

Sports

Sport is an activity that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often engaged in competitively. Used by itself, sports commonly refer to activities where the physical capabilities of the competitor are the sole or primary determiner of the outcome (winning or losing), but the term is also used to include activities such as mind sports and motor sports where mental acuity or equipment quality are major factors. Sports are used as entertainment for the player and the viewer. It has also been proven by experiments that daily exercise increases mental strength and power to study.¹

Personality

Britannica Micropedia² “A characteristics, in which a particular individual thinks, feels and behaves. Personality embraces a person’s mood, attitude and opinion and is mostly expressed in interaction with other people.”

Career

“Course of progress through life or history: way of making a livelihood and advancing one self.”³

Career, in the contexts of this study, refers to Padamshree Shankar Laxman's educational career from childhood, his career in the field of sports in relation to hockey from the beginning of service till his retirement from active profession.

³The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Volume 3, p. 79.
Pioneer

Encyclopedia Britannica "One who show the way to others"\(^4\)

First student of new branch of study, a person who takes lead in developing or works for the development of certain area with philosophy of his own.

Profile

A profile is brief biography, as given in an article, in a periodical or a book.

Contribution

"The Act of Contribution"\(^5\)

A contribution in this study refers to Padamshree Shankar Laxman's achievements and services rendered in the field of sports in hockey at different levels.

Case Study

The essential procedure of the case study method is to take account of all the pertinent aspects of one thing or situation, employing as the unit for study an individual, an institution, a community, or any group considered as a unit. The case consists of the data relating to some phases of the life history of the unit or relating the entire life process, weather the unit is an individual, is a family, a social group, an institution or a community. The complex situation and combination of factors involved in the given behavior are examined to determine the existing status and to identify the casual factors operating.\(^6\)

\(^4\)Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 8, p. 156.
\(^6\)V. Carter Good and E. Doughles Scates, Methods of Research (Appleton – Century Crafts, INC., 1954).
Opinion Questionnaire

"The information form that attempts to measure the attitude or belief of an individual is known as opinion questionnaire or attitude scale."

Through the use of questions or by getting an individual's expressed reaction to statements, a sample of his opinion is obtained. From this statement of opinion, may be inferred or estimated his attitudes what he really believes.

Coach

A Coach is the person who imparts his / her knowledge to those who wish to learn and benefit from his / her expertise. "Coach enables the athlete / trainee to achieve higher levels of performance to a degree that may not have been possible if left to his/her own endeavors".

Interview

Interview is "a formal meeting" between the interviewer and the interviewee-one being the seeker and the giver. It is a sort of oral questionnaire meticulously prepared and administered in a structured situation.

Significance of the Study

The study under taken may thus highlight some of the essential qualities of a successful player and of a successful personality too.

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Further this study might be significant in the following ways:

1. To know the contributions made by Padamshree Shankar Laxman towards Hockey in India.

2. The findings of this study may be a great source of inspiration to the present and future Hockey players.

3. This study may add to the professional literature in the field hockey in India.

4. This may be a valid document of the past and may reveal historical prospectives to the future generation in the field of Hockey.