



YUMNAM SANATHOI DEVI: ARJUNA AWARDEE AND AN EMINENT SPORTS PERSONALITY – A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the contributions, achievements and history of Smt. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi in the field of Wushu. A case study was designed to find out all the necessary and relevant information related to her career in the sport of Wushu. Primary data for the study was collected from official sources and through direct personal interview while Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (R) was used to assess her personality whereas secondary data was collected from various pictorial records, published materials, personal records and various websites. The collected data was analysed by using statistical technique of tabulation. It was found that Arjuna Awardee Smt. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi was an extrovert and an extraordinary athlete who had a difficult start to her career but with her hardwork and determination reached extraordinary heights of success.

Keywords : Wushu, Sanda, Case Study, Gender Equality Arjuna Award

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Introduction

Sports are a field that brings people from all over the world together, especially women. There are a number of outstanding female athletes who are admired and who have motivated the next generation to pursue their aspirations. When it comes to sports, things are not easy for women, and they must overcome obstacles to compete with males. Despite the fact that men are more celebrated and paid more than women, female athletes use their passion and hard effort to overcome any obstacles. Women have fought their way to the top and are now being recognised for their great achievements across a variety of sporting platforms. They overcome all hurdles and remain unfazed because they are the ultimate gamechangers. Several athletes, including Mirabai Chanu, Lovlina Borgohain, Sania Mirza, Mary Kom, Mithali Raj, PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, Rani Ramphal, and others, have made the country proud by triumphing in various sports. They have broken free from the male-dominated sports world. Female athletes are

becoming increasingly common, and they are equally unequalled and unbeatable, for example, more capable than men in all areas of life.

“Wushu”, widely known as ‘Kung-Fu’, is a collective word for the martial art techniques that originated and developed in China, and Wushu is the source of all Asian martial arts. Wushu has evolved into a variety of styles and systems over time, each with its own set of techniques, strategies, principles, and procedures, as well as the usage of a wide range of traditional weapons. The various fighting styles that have evolved focus on a range of characteristics of combat, but they have also absorbed the popular beliefs and moral standards of the Chinese people over the course of the nation's 5000-year history. As a consequence, Wushu has evolved into more than merely a simple technique of attack and defence; it has developed into a good manner of training the body, mind, and spirit that benefits all who pursue it. Wushu is further divided

into Taolu and Sanda categories which are further divided into various events and weight categories.

With its emphasis on punching, kicking, throwing, wrestling, and defensive manoeuvres, “sanda” is a contemporary unarmed combat sport rooted from traditional wushu skills. Competition bouts take place on a raised platform known as a “leitai,” which is built of a high-density foam frame with a canvas cover and measures 80 cm in height, 8 m in width, and 8 m in length. The platform on the ground is encircled by a protective cushion with a height of 30 cm and a width of 2 metres. Competing athletes also wear mouth guards, jockstraps, gloves, a chest protector, and a head guard. Three rounds, each lasting two minutes with a one-minute break in between, make up the competition fights. Aside from illegal hits and methods, sanda athletes may use punching, kicking, and throwing techniques from any wushu style. It is permitted to strike the head, the legs, the trunk (which includes the chest, belly, waist, and back), and any of these areas. The fast-paced, exciting full-contact fights are scored according to a set of criteria by judges on the sidelines who award points for well executed techniques. A contestant is deemed the victor if they prevail in two out of the three rounds or if their opponent is knocked out. The Sanda competition has 7 weight categories for ladies and 11 weight categories for men.

Smt. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi, a Sanda athlete in Wushu and Arjuna Awardee who hails from the small state of Manipur in the North Eastern region of India, has represented Manipur and India in various international and national sporting events for around 17 years where she won more than 20 gold medals. The Manipur born legend has won various medals at the international stage in Wushu which includes achievements such as 4 silver medals at different World Wushu Championships and a bronze medal in 17th Asian Games which eventually led her to be awarded with the Arjuna Award in 2015 by the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

Smt. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi is the third person to be awarded with the prestigious Arjuna Award from the state of Manipur as well as India in the field of Wushu, which is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in recognition of excellent performance in sports at the international level. The living legend now works as a Sub Inspector in Manipur Police.

Awards

- Arjuna Award – 2015
- Heroes Award – 2015/16
- NEC Chairman’s Sports Awards - 2014
- Best Female Sanda Athlete at various National Wushu Championships

Associated With

- National Anti-Doping Agency member
- Sports Authority of India Governing body member

Review of Related Literature

Sharma (2021) conducted a case study on Dronacharya Awardee Shri Kuldeep Handoo. The main purpose of this study was to highlight the achievements and contribution of Shri Kuldeep Handoo towards the promotion of Wushu sport in India. A case study was designed gather detailed information about his achievements in Wushu Sport. Dronacharya Kuldeep Handoo’s personal performance as well as performance and achievements of his trainees were highlighted. The required secondary data was collected through personal records (degree, honours, books and articles), published material (books, pamphlets, articles, newspapers and reports on Kuldeep Handoo), pictorial records and official record. It was concluded that Dronacharya Kuldeep Handoo had a very rare combination of being an outstanding sportsman as well as an excellent administrator and coach.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to find out the history, achievements, and contributions of Smt. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi in the field of Wushu sport. Assessment of her personality was also another objective of this study.

Research Methodology

The integrated approach was used to gather valid and reliable information for the study. The investigator extensively used the literacy sources and thoroughly investigated the related literatures

Results

and also adopted the questionnaire methods and interview technique as tools of gathering data. However to investigate the contributions and achievements of Y Sanathoi Devi towards the promotion of wushu sport in the country and also to study her philosophy with regard to sports as a

profession in India, her quality as a player, and her contribution to the game of Wushu at national and international level, a case study was designed in which historical, biographical, analytical and interpretive methods were utilized.

The data for this study was collected from various primary and secondary sources. The original data was collected by visiting the house of Mrs. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi in Yairipok, Yangdong and Imphal by use of direct personal interview and verification of

various official records. Pictorial records, published materials and personal records were also investigated and the information was retained. For the assessment of the personality, Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire – Revised version was used.

Statistical Techniques

Collected data was analysed, interpreted and evaluated with required statistical tools like tabulation.

Table 1 International Level Achievements

Name of the Competition	Year	Position
15th World Wushu Championship	2019	Silver
13th South Asian Games	2019	Gold
18th Asian Games	2018	Participation
1st Wushu Sanda Asia Cup	2017	Bronze
14th World Wushu Championship	2017	Participation
8th Wushu Sanda World Cup	2016	Silver
9th Asian Wushu Championship	2016	Bronze
12th South Asian Games	2016	Gold
13th World Wushu Championship	2015	Silver
7th Sanda World Cup	2014	Bronze
17th Asian Games	2014	Bronze
12th World Wushu Championship	2013	Silver
8th Asian Wushu Championship	2012	Bronze
11th World Wushu Championship	2011	Silver
11th South Asian Games	2010	Gold
16th Asian Games	2010	Participation
1st Asian Martial Art Games	2009	Silver
3rd South Asian Wushu Championship	2008	Gold
7th Asian Wushu Championship	2008	Silver
9th World Wushu Championship	2007	Participation
1st Junior World Wushu Championship	2006	Participation
3rd Asian Junior Wushu Championship	2005	Silver

Table 2 National Level Achievements

Name of the Competition	Year	Position
27th Senior National Wushu Championship	2018	Gold
26th Senior National Wushu Championship	2017	Gold
24 th Senior National Wushu Championship	2015	Gold
35th National Games	2015	Gold
23rd Senior National Wushu Championship	2014	Gold
21st Senior National Wushu Championship	2013	Gold
20th Senior National Wushu Championship	2012	Gold
19th Senior National Wushu Championship	2011	Gold
34th National Games	2011	Gold
17th Senior National Wushu Championship	2009	Gold
16th Senior National Wushu Championship	2008	Gold
33rd National Games	2007	Gold
6th Junior National Wushu Championship	2006	Gold

5th Junior National Wushu Championship	2005	Gold
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Table 3 All India Police Games Achievements

Name of the Competition	Year	Position
3rd All India Police Games Judo Cluster	2018	Gold
2nd All India Police Games Judo Cluster	2018	Gold
1st All India Police Games Judo Cluster	2017	Gold
64th All India Police Wrestling Cluster	2015	Gold

According to the aforementioned analytical tables, Mrs. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi won her maiden national gold medal in the 5th Junior National Wushu Championship in 2005 and her first national gold medal as a senior at the 33rd National Games in 2007 and has never looked back since. She began her career in Wushu in 2003 after being motivated by several Manipur state icons, including Padma Shri, Padma Bhusan, and Padma Vibhushan Smt. M.C. Mary Kom, Padma Shri, (Late) Ng Dingko Singh, and others.

Mrs. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi has won 4 silver medals at the World Wushu Championships in the years 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2019 and a bronze medal at the 17th Asian Games. She also participated in the 16th and 18th Asian Games but unfortunately felt just a little bit short from a medal at both Games. Overall, she has a grand total of 17 medals in various international competitions. She has won 3 gold medals at the 33rd, 34th and 35th National Games and was the National Champion in her weight categories below 48 kg and below 52 kg female sanda competition since 2005 till 2018 and is still undefeated till now in India. In her most recent tournament, the 13th South Asian Games, she won yet another gold medal in Wushu – Sanda Women's 52kg event before eventually deciding to stop for a moment and get married.

Currently married to Mr. Maibam Premkumar Singh, the head wushu coach at Sports Authority of India, NCOE, Imphal, Mrs. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi goes by the name Mrs. Maibam (O) Sanathoi Devi. Mrs. Sanathoi, currently 34 years old, still aspires to win the title of world and Asian champion and hopes to compete again shortly before continuing as a sanda coach.

The bronze medal she won at the 17th Asian Games, along with the four silver medals she won at the four world championships, are without a doubt her greatest accomplishments because they represent the highest level of competition in which a Wushu athlete can compete since Wushu is not yet an Olympic sport. However, in terms of her finest achievement, she recognised the 3rd Asian Junior Wushu Championship, held in Singapore in 2005, because she managed to perform her best in that competition, according to the subject. Despite the added psychological burden of being accused of being a male athlete, she managed to take the final match against her Chinese opponent till the very end of the third round before eventually losing. For everything she has accomplished in her career, she is incredibly appreciative of her initial coach and mentor, Shri Moirangthem Ibomcha Singh, who has always treated her as one of his own family member, her coach during the India camps, Shri Md. Islamuddin, and Dronacharya Awardee Shri Kuldeep Handoo. She holds the record for the most medals won by an Indian athlete in international Wushu tournaments throughout her 17- year career. The President of India, Shri. Pranab Mukherjee, presented her with the coveted Arjuna Award in 2015, making her the third recipient after Mr. Mayanglambam Bimoljit Singh and Mrs. W. Sandhyarani Devi.

According to the Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire – Revised (EPQ-R) findings, Mrs. Yumnam Sanathoi Devi has an extrovert personality. Extroversion's Sten Score was 8, which indicates that the factor is very strong, according to

Psychoticism and Neuroticism were 5 and 2, respectively, denoting average and very low strength of those characteristics, while the sten score for the Lie Scale, obtained by converting the raw Lie Scale score into a sten score, was 4.

Table 4 Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire Score

Page No.	P	E	N	L
1.	1	5	1	2
2.	1	9	0	1
3.	0	4	1	1
4.	0	1	2	1
Total	2	19	4	5

the results of the study. The sten scores for

Currently, Mrs. Maibam Sanathoi Devi works as a sub inspector in Manipur Police posted at 9th IRB, Mahila Battalion, Imphal.

Summary and Discussion

Mrs. Maibam (O) Sanathoi Devi is unquestionably one of India's greatest wushu players. She began playing Wushu in the year 2003, and after winning her first national gold medal in 2005, she continued to play the sport, breaking numerous records along the way. As of today, she is the Indian athlete with the most medals won in international Wushu competitions, including both male and female competitors. At the 11th World Wushu Championship in Ankara, Turkey in 2011, the 12th World Wushu Championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2013, the 13th World Wushu Championship in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the 15th World Wushu Championship in Shanghai, China in 2019, she took home four silver medals. She has won 14 gold medals at national competitions, including 3 at the 33rd, 34th, and 35th National Games. She has also won 4 gold medals at the All India Police Games, bringing her total to 18 gold medals overall.

She is a very outgoing, self-assured person who never feels frightened or nervous, not even before or during stressful moments in her life or during sporting events. Mrs. Sanathoi is extremely punctual, democratic, ruthless, disciplined, and responsible in addition to having a great passion for wushu. Her devotion and diligent personality were the sole reasons for her success, which ultimately helped her

achieve so much in the sport of Wushu because, as the phrase goes, hard work trumps talent when talent does not work hard. She is an inspiration to younger generations as she overcame all odds to successfully transform the mind-set of everyone around her by winning and setting many records, despite coming from a poor family and living in a time when there were severe restrictions on women. She is someone who is incredibly dedicated to her sport, works very hard, and is willing to give up everything to pursue her passion and ultimate objective.

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