

You too can join the club of game to fame!

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Those were the halcyon days. Delhi was delightful to dwell in! When I revisit the days gone by, memories rush in. It was a happening city – a seat of learning for budding intellectuals, ideal for aspiring civil servants and truly a rendezvous for the young lovers. It was a melting pot – a microcosm of India.

I was blessed to be living in a city that was in auto mode of absorbing and assimilating new ideas and new people. It was relatively easy to rub shoulders with many mavericks. I was beside myself with joy when I interacted with personalities like His Holiness Dalai Lama, Dr Karan Singh, Ram Jethmalani and TN Seshan. I got inspired by their lofty ideals and impeccable social impact. However, some meet-

ings and events stand out; you get to discover deeper meaning and purpose in life. One such meeting happened when I came in contact with a young sports person. I found her bundle of energy yet calm and composed. She was often clad in man's attire and was fond of riding bikes. My heart was filled with awe and appreciation. She had charm, difficult to describe. She was on a mission to achieve glory, not for herself but for the country.

I was curious to know more about her family and got surprised to find her mother working just as a clerk. Her family was very humble but her resolve to contribute at National level Games was rather resolute. It was motivating to see her diligence and determination to succeed, despite many hardships coming her way. I still remember an incident – it was time for her to go for practice session but her father was in a critical

condition. With tears in her eyes, she decided to go for her practice. Everyone was touched by her commitment. Was she really crazy? Yes, she was but for a purpose, so pious and profound! She was single and yet she was not.

She was in deep love with games and sports. She was wedded to her game and it was through games that she wanted to create legacy. Many a time, she was hard put to maintain her diet and attend some training camps as her parents could not always afford that. But she remained upbeat all the time. I often wondered how a 21 years old girl could have such clarity of goal, conviction and vision – so broad and inspiring. She played many games Kho Kho in school, Athletics at state level and cricket at the national level. But she had her heart in the game called judo. She made India proud on umpteen occasions. In fact, she

represented India 35 times in International fora, including Asian Games and World Women Judo Championship, winning as many as 20 precious Medals for the country.

This is a tale of courage, relentless struggle and success of a self-motivated girl named Poonam Chopra, who created history by becoming the first Indian woman ever to receive the most coveted Arjuna Award in judo in recognition of her extraordinary contribution as a sports person. This story could be an authentic case study of an ordinary youth becoming a Youth Icon in the country! Is this not your turn now? What is your game? How passionate you are about playing your game well will truly decide your fame. You too can create history and join the club of 'game to fame'. Just heed the advice of Robert Frost: "It is no good trying to shine if you don't take time to fill your lamp."