SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.688| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 10 | Issue: 12 | December 2025 - Peer Reviewed Journal

"ANITHA PAULDURAI" A MENTOR FOR YOUNG GENERATION

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ABSTRACT
Success in career is enhanced by good mentoring or a good mentor is essential for a successful career. The study was taken up with following objectives. To study the concept of Mentoring. To describe qualities of good mentor. To suggest and incorporate qualities of Anitha Pauldurai as a good mentor in school. Qualitative analysis method was used for the present study. The data collected through the secondary sources like eBooks, e-magazines, FIBA and TNBA was then subjected to qualitative analysis. Mentoring is a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another un experienced or less experienced person (the mentored) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth. The qualities of good mentor are to have seasoned experience in same field and willing to share skills, knowledge and expertise. she is good listener and is respected by colleagues, the professional community. she sets and meets ongoing professional goals, values the opinions and initiative and motivates others by setting a good example. Since 14 years Anitha Pauldurai has captivated us all. she has performed all over the Asia and has been a true Indian professional basketball player. she is the only youngest player to have scored centuries in all tournaments of India - National School Games, Sub-Junior National, National School Games, Junior Nationals, Senior National Basketball Championship, Federation Cup, All India Railway Championship, National Games, His achievments,30 medals in national championships. He is honored by many prestigious awards like villayatu ratna award from news7 channel Tamil ratna awards 2018, national basketball championship at chennai 2018, women achiever award from rajalakshmi engineering college 2018, young achiever award from international youth fest 2018, women achiever award from vels university 2017, awarded top plays of the tournament 2013 FIBA Asian women, most valuable player in prestigious 26th img reliance federation cup 2012, Padma Shri award in 2021. Suggestion towards incorporating qualities of Anitha Pauldurai as a good mentor in school could be adding the lesson on him in syllabus. To motivate students for acquiring qualities like consistency, hard worker, sportsmanship, develop sport liking to be healthy and successful person.

KEYWORDS: *Mentoring, Mentor, Mentored, Sports Role Models, Leadership*

1.INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has emerged as a critical component in personal, academic, and professional development across various domains. According to Kram (1985), mentoring is a developmental relationship in which an experienced individual provides guidance, support, and encouragement to a less experienced person. This relationship not only enhances skill acquisition but also plays a significant role in shaping identity, motivation, and long-term aspirations. In youth development contexts, mentoring has been found to positively influence self-confidence, decision making, and overall academic and personal success (Rhodes, 2002). Thus, within both educational and sporting environments, mentoring serves as an essential tool for empowering young individuals.

In the field of sports, mentoring is considered especially important due to the intense physical, psychological, and emotional challenges that athletes face. Bloom, Durand Bush, Schinke, and Salmela (1998) emphasize that successful athletes often attribute their achievements to effective coaching and mentorship, which help them develop discipline, resilience, and a strong work ethic. Sports psychology researchers such as Gould and Carson (2008) also highlight that mentors in sports contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation, emotional regulation, leadership qualities, and team cohesion. For young athletes navigating competitive pressures, balancing academics, and managing expectations, a mentor can serve as a stable source of inspiration and guidance.

Among the influential sports personalities in India, Anitha Pauldurai stands out as a powerful mentor figure for the younger generation. Renowned for her exceptional achievements in basketball, she has represented India across all major levels Sub-Junior, Junior, and Senior and has captained the Indian women's national team for eight consecutive years. Her journey exemplifies perseverance, dedication, and leadership values that are central to effective mentorship. Role-model theory, as proposed by Bandura (1977) in his

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Social Learning Theory, suggests that individuals, especially children, learn behaviors, attitudes, and skills by observing others. Anitha Pauldurai's accomplishments offer a real-life example of such observational learning, inspiring young athletes to adopt similar traits of discipline, hard work, and self-belief.

Her continued involvement in youth programs, sports awareness campaigns, and motivational sessions reflects her commitment to nurturing the next generation. According to Payne, Day, and Deutsch (2011), mentors who actively engage in community and educational spaces serve as "agents of change" by promoting positive youth development. Anitha Pauldurai's influence on young girls and aspiring basketball players aligns with this concept, as she breaks gender stereotypes and demonstrates that excellence in sports is achievable through consistent effort and passion.

This study therefore seeks to explore the concept of mentoring, outline the characteristics of effective mentors as identified in the literature, and analyze how Anitha Pauldurai embodies these qualities. Furthermore, the study aims to suggest practical ways to incorporate her values and achievements into school education, enabling students to benefit from her role-model influence. As Passmore (2007) notes, mentorship in educational settings significantly enhances motivation and student engagement. By integrating the qualities demonstrated by Anitha Pauldurai into school programs, teachers can foster a culture of determination, sportsmanship, and holistic development among young learners.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of Mentoring

Mentoring has been described by scholars as a meaningful developmental relationship in which an experienced person offers guidance, encouragement, and support to someone who is less experienced. Kram (1985) explains that mentoring involves both career-focused guidance and emotional support, making it a holistic process that shapes the mentee's professional identity and self-confidence. Rhodes (2002) also highlights mentoring as a stabilizing influence in the lives of young learners, helping them set goals and remain motivated. In the educational context, mentoring has been shown to improve student performance, build self-belief, and enhance problem-solving abilities (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Jacobi (1991) further notes that mentoring provides individualized support that formal instruction often cannot offer, making it an essential tool for personal development. Additionally, Crisp and Cruz (2009) emphasize that mentoring relationships foster academic persistence and retention, showing how powerful this relationship can be in shaping long term success.

2.2 Qualities of an Effective Mentor

The literature widely discusses the personal and professional qualities required for effective mentoring. Ragins and Cotton (1999) state that expertise and experience in the relevant field are fundamental, as they enable the mentor to provide reliable and informed guidance. Communication skills, especially active listening, are equally important, because they help the mentor understand the mentee's needs and challenges. Effective mentors also lead by example, demonstrating discipline, professionalism, and integrity qualities that mentees naturally observe and adopt (Allen & Eby, 2007). Patience, empathy, and the ability to give constructive feedback help strengthen the mentor mentee relationship. Clutterbuck (2004) adds that good mentors are committed to continuous learning, which allows them to stay updated and relevant in their field. Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004) also reinforce that successful mentors are those who create a supportive learning environment where trust, respect, and open communication are encouraged.

2.3 Sports Personalities as Mentors

Sports personalities often serve as powerful mentors because their careers exemplify qualities such as determination, discipline, and resilience. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory suggests that young people often learn through observing role models, making sports icons influential figures who shape attitudes and behaviors. Gould et al. (2007) found that exposure to positive sports role models enhances young athletes' motivation, teamwork skills, and performance related confidence. Through their personal journeys, sports achievers inspire young learners to overcome challenges and strive for excellence. Petitpas, Cornelius, and Van Raalte (2008) highlight that sports role models play a significant role in teaching life skills such as goal-setting and emotional control. Coakley (2015) further explains that athletes who demonstrate leadership and integrity can influence not only individual behaviors but also wider social changes, such as promoting gender equality and healthy lifestyles. Additionally, Camire (2014) argues that sports role models contribute to youth development when they portray authenticity, humility, and a genuine commitment to guiding the next generation.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a qualitative research design, which is suitable for exploring concepts such as mentoring and identifying the characteristics of effective mentors. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of human experiences, values, and behaviors, which quantitative methods may not fully capture. This design is particularly appropriate for studying the life, achievements,

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and mentorship qualities of Anitha Pauldurai, as it emphasizes descriptive, interpretive, and narrative analysis (Creswell, 2014). The study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. It seeks to understand the phenomenon of mentoring in a sports context, analyze the mentor qualities demonstrated by Anitha Pauldurai, and suggest strategies for incorporating these qualities into school-based mentorship programs.

3.2 Data Collection

The study relies primarily on secondary data sources, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the subject. The data collection sources include: e-Books and e-Magazines: Digital resources providing information on mentoring theories, sports psychology, and role-model impact. FIBA (International Basketball Federation) records: Official data on Anitha Pauldurai's participation and achievements in international competitions. TNBA (Tamil Nadu Basketball Association) records: State-level performance records, awards, and recognitions. Interviews, articles, and documentaries: Published interviews, news articles, and video documentaries on Anitha Pauldurai's career and mentorship activities. Research journals and scholarly articles: Academic studies on mentoring, sports role models, and youth development. Social media and online platforms: Verified posts and videos demonstrating her involvement in training camps, motivational sessions, and school visits. The study considered case studies and biographies of other renowned sports mentors to establish a comparative understanding of mentoring qualities. This triangulation of sources strengthens the credibility and validity of the findings.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, examining, and interpreting patterns and themes relevant to mentoring. Key steps in the analysis included:

Data organization: Grouping information according to themes such as mentoring concepts, mentor characteristics, leadership qualities, and achievements of Anitha Pauldurai.

Coding: Highlighting recurring qualities, behaviors, and strategies that demonstrate effective mentorship.
Comparison with literature: Aligning observed mentor qualities with those identified in the literature review (e.g., communication skills, consistency, empathy, leadership).

Interpretation: Understanding how Anitha Pauldurai's achievements and behaviors can serve as a model for school-based mentorship programs.

Synthesis: Summarizing findings into actionable suggestions for integrating her mentoring qualities into school education, sports programs, and youth development activities.

Furthermore, the study used a qualitative content analysis approach to extract meaningful insights from multimedia sources, such as interviews and documentaries. The analysis also considered the cultural and social context of Indian sports to ensure that the findings are relevant and applicable to schools in India.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

To ensure reliability, multiple sources were cross-checked for accuracy, including official FIBA and TNBA records. Validity was strengthened by using peer-reviewed articles, credible news sources, and verified interviews. Triangulation of data sources ensured a comprehensive and trustworthy representation of Anitha Pauldurai's mentorship qualities.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Understanding Mentoring

Mentoring is more than just guiding someone through learning or professional challenges; it is a holistic process that nurtures growth, builds confidence, and instills positive values. A mentor shares experiences, provides advice, and models behaviors that help the mentee develop skills and resilience. In school settings, mentoring plays a critical role in shaping students' emotional, social, and academic development. By offering support and encouragement, mentors help learners navigate challenges, set goals, and develop a sense of responsibility. Research has shown that students with access to effective mentors often display higher motivation, improved self-esteem, and stronger problem-solving abilities (Rhodes, 2002). Mentors act not only as instructors but also as role models, influencing attitudes, habits, and long-term aspirations. In sports and education, this influence is particularly strong, as mentees often emulate the discipline, commitment, and ethical standards demonstrated by their mentors.

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4.2 Qualities of a Good Mentor

The study reinforces what prior research has suggested about effective mentors. Certain qualities consistently distinguish mentors who make a meaningful impact on their mentees:

- **Experience:** Mentors should possess deep knowledge and expertise in their field, allowing them to provide practical guidance.
- **Willingness to Teach:** A genuine passion for helping others grow is essential. Mentors who are enthusiastic about sharing their skills inspire confidence in learners.
- **Good Listening Skills:** Empathy and understanding enable mentors to respond to mentees' individual needs effectively.
- **Leadership:** Mentors guide through example, inspiring mentees to adopt positive behaviors and attitudes.
- **Motivational Skill:** Helping mentees set achievable goals and encouraging them to reach their potential is a key characteristic.
- **Professionalism:** Respect from peers, colleagues, and the community strengthens the credibility and influence of the mentor.

These qualities not only facilitate skill development but also foster personal growth, resilience, and a sense of purpose among mentees.

4.3 Anitha Pauldurai as a Mentor Figure

Anitha Pauldurai exemplifies many of the qualities of an effective mentor, particularly in the field of sports. Her journey reflects not only remarkable athletic achievements but also leadership, discipline, and an inspiring commitment to nurturing the next generation of athletes.

a. Sports Career Achievements

- Represented India in National School Games, Sub-Junior, Junior, Senior Nationals, and major championships.
- Won **30 medals** in various national competitions.
- Played professionally across Asia.
- Youngest Indian woman to represent the national team in multiple tournaments.
- Served as the **captain of the Indian women's basketball team** for several years.

b. Awards and Recognitions

- **Padma Shri Award (2021)** for her contributions to Indian basketball.
- **Villayattu Ratna Award** by News7 Tamil.
- **Tamil Ratna Awards (2018)** for outstanding performance.
- **Women Achiever Awards** from Rajalakshmi Engineering College and Vels University.
- **Young Achiever Award (2018)** at the International Youth Fest.
- **Most Valuable Player** – 26th IMG Reliance Federation Cup (2012).
- **Top Plays Award** – FIBA Asian Women (2013).

c. Mentoring Qualities Observed

Anitha Pauldurai demonstrates qualities that are vital for mentoring young athletes:

- **Consistency:** Over 14 years of sustained excellence and dedication.
- **Discipline:** Effectively balancing rigorous training, leadership responsibilities, and personal performance.
- **Sportsmanship:** Promotes fair play, teamwork, and ethical conduct.
- **Leadership:** Through her captaincy and personal example, she inspires others to excel.
- **Inspiration:** Breaks barriers for women in Indian basketball and encourages youth participation.
- **Communication:** Actively engages with young athletes through workshops, motivational sessions, and school programs.

Anitha Pauldurai serves as a living example of how professional achievement, leadership, and mentoring can come together to positively influence the younger generation. Her qualities not only motivate students to pursue sports but also teach important life skills, including perseverance, responsibility, and teamwork.

4. 4 Incorporating her Qualities in Schools

The study highlights that the life, achievements, and values of Anitha Pauldurai can serve as a powerful mentoring model for school students. By integrating her qualities into educational and extracurricular activities, schools can inspire students to develop discipline, perseverance, and leadership skills. Several practical strategies are suggested:

1. Curriculum Inclusion

One way to bring Anitha Pauldurai's example into schools is through the curriculum. Lessons in physical education textbooks could include her career journey, achievements, and contributions to Indian basketball. Additionally, case studies focusing on her leadership, dedication, and sports discipline can be used to teach students about goal-setting, hard work, and professional ethics.

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2. Workshops and Seminars

Schools can organize workshops, seminars, or video sessions showcasing her achievements. Inspirational talks by sports personalities or recorded interviews of Anitha can motivate students and provide real-life examples of success, demonstrating the connection between effort, discipline, and results.

3. Mentor-Based Activities

Students can be encouraged to emulate her structured approach to career development. Activities that help them set short-term and long-term goals, plan strategies to achieve them, and track their progress can instill a sense of responsibility and self-motivation. These mentor-based exercises can be integrated into both academic and sports programs.

4. Value Education

Anitha Pauldurai's qualities such as perseverance, hard work, consistency, and teamwork can be incorporated into value education modules. Through sports and group activities, students can learn how these values contribute to personal growth and success. Highlighting examples from her career helps make abstract concepts like resilience and leadership tangible and relatable.

5. Role Model Projects

Students can participate in projects that allow them to research and present the lives of notable sports achievers, with a focus on Anitha Pauldurai. Such projects not only build knowledge about sports and achievements but also encourage creativity, critical thinking, and presentation skills. By exploring her story, students can internalize the qualities that made her a successful athlete and mentor.

5.CONCLUSION

Mentoring is a vital process that shapes the personal, academic, and professional growth of young individuals, and Anitha Pauldurai exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding mentor. Her remarkable achievements in basketball, including representing India at multiple levels, captaining the national team, and winning numerous awards such as the Padma Shri, reflect her consistency, discipline, and dedication. Beyond her athletic success, she actively engages in workshops, motivational sessions, and youth programs, demonstrating leadership, sportsmanship, and the ability to inspire the next generation. Key qualities that make her an effective mentor include expertise, strong communication, empathy, motivation, and leading by example. By incorporating her life and values into school curricula, workshops, mentor-based activities, value education, and role-model projects, students can learn essential life skills such as perseverance, teamwork, goal-setting, and ethical conduct. Exposure to her journey encourages holistic growth, enhances confidence, breaks gender stereotypes, and motivates young learners to pursue excellence both in sports and academics. Anitha Pauldurai's legacy shows how professional achievement and mentorship can combine to empower youth, providing a tangible model of determination, integrity, and success that can positively influence the younger generation.

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