



TAYABUN NISHA

On Her Uneven Road to Success

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Tayabun Nisha, the golden star in the sports scene of Assam in the seventies and eighties was born in the humble environs of Dhaiali village in Sibsagar in 1953 on the first of March. Her father Rafikuddin Ahmed was mainly into farming though he worked as an ONGC employee later. Her mother Habibun Nisha was a housewife who never approved of the sporting ambitions of her daughter. The Ahmed household was a large one with eight children, six sisters and two brothers. Their enlarged family included the children of their stepmother, whom their father married after their mother's death.

Tayabun Nisha's schooling was done in the Dhaiali Girls' High School. From childhood, Tayabun enjoyed joining in all of the sporting events organized in their locality, most of which she won. The striking feature in Tayabun Nisha's early life was the hardships she had to undergo. She helped her father in farming and yet carried on all other activities. Fate struck a blow when her father died when she was in class eight.

In 1969, she joined the first Inter District Athletics Meet in Dibrugarh and got the third prize in 100 metres. In 1970, she found her mentor and coach in Surendra Kr Singh, whom she met through Ranjit Gogoi, Secretary, Athletics. In 1971, she joined the 9th Inter State Athletics Meet in Ahmedabad and won bronze.

She joined B. Borooah College (night shift) in 1974. However, she could not continue as she got a job in the Railways in the same year. This was followed by marriage to Mohammed Sahid Ullah, also from the railways. She has two sons. She represented India in 1982 Asian Games at New Delhi. She was the National Champion for Discus Throw for five consecutive times. Her list of prizes and medals is impressive, which includes positions in National Games (1979), All India women Sports Meet (1980), World Veteran Athletic Championship ('93, '95, '97) and many more.

Tayabun Nisha realized early in life the importance of diet and nutrition in a player's life. She herself had to sustain on a frugal diet of "dhekia saag and bhaat" when young, but never did it dampen her will to pursue her sporting career. Her advice to all youngsters especially in the rural areas is to never give up and work hard. Keeping fit is important and her efforts in this line were to start her own gym in 1995, from which thousands of people have been receiving training till now. She considers education to be equally important in addition to keeping physically fit. □□