Chapter - V

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Soccer is perhaps India’s oldest favourite modern sport. It is played widely all over the country and is as popular in India as it is in Europe and Latin America. However, the progress in the sport has not kept pace with that of other countries, even in Asia, not to speak of the world. The story of Indian soccer is quite old and fascinating. The British army introduced organised football in 1880. The sport became popular in Bengal before it spread to other parts of the country.

For just about a decade, 1951 to 1962, India was amongst the best in Asia, winning the Asian Games gold medal twice, in 1951 at Delhi and in 1962 at Jakarta. During this same time span, India finished fourth in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

India’s results in international football over the last two and half decades are not something that would inspire confidence. To no other major sport in this country has progress been as alien as it has been to football in the last 25 years. While almost every other Asian and African nation has moved forward, gaining technical competence and a spot of international recognition here and there, Indian football has gone from bad
to worse. Officials of the All India Football Federation realised that the
time has come to revamp Indian soccer.

To revamp Indian soccer a two member FIFA study group
arrived and scanned India's infrastructure in the year 1995. Its primary aim
was to investigate the availability of infrastructure and to suggest ways and
means to develop the game in the country. The most interesting suggestion
made by the FIFA study group was to start a professionally managed
national league which would pull Indian soccer out of its amateurish rut
and at least put it on the right rails for a proper metamorphosis.

Thus, India succeeded in introducing a semi-professional league
in 1996, which breathed new life into Indian soccer. The Leisure Sports
Management Group, marketing agents of the federation, played a key role
in bringing sponsors not only to the National Football League but also to a
number of other tournaments. This aroused the curiosity of the present
research scholar to make a systematic study of the entire developments that
have taken place in Indian soccer with the introduction of National Football
League. The research scholar, therefore, undertook the present study
entitled, "Indian soccer: Its Transformation Towards Professionalism -
An analytical survey". In order to get a broader concept of Indian soccer
and to suggest means and methods to develop Indian soccer, the research
scholar also investigated the causes of poor quality/standard of Indian
soccer in the country.
For the purpose of the present study the research scholar investigated the selected leading soccer clubs of the country and its selected players and officials. The other subjects involved in the present study were veteran international players, referees, sports journalists, soccer administrators, state soccer association secretaries, sponsors, foreign players and coaches. A total of 310 subjects were investigated overall for the purpose of the present study.

The research scholar used various methods including interview, questionnaire, and study of literature to collect relevant information for the purpose of the study. Questionnaire method was restricted only to the secretaries of the state soccer associations.

For the purpose of the present study the following areas were selected: 1. Indian soccer and professionalism, 2. National Football league, 3. Clubs' status and functioning, 4. Infrastructure status, 5. Foreign players and coaches, 6. State soccer association and their functioning, 7. Performances of Indian soccer team, 8. All India Football Federation and its functioning, 9. Indian players' and their background in soccer, 10. Media and Indian soccer, 11. Sponsorship in Indian soccer, 12. Soccer referees and officiating, and 13. Veteran players and their playing days.

The above selected areas were investigated by different selected methods. The areas listed above were not applicable to all the selected
groups of subjects. For each selected group of subjects a selected area
within the above mentioned areas was selected for the purpose of the
study. The research scholar with the help of supervisor and experts in the
field prepared the statements and questions for the purpose of the
investigation. Most of the questions and statements were objective type
for which the responses were 'Yes' or 'No'. A few questions were of
open-ended type. There were 70, 47, 45, 44, 41, 39, 17, 4, and 3
questions/statements for Indian players, Indian coaches, referees, veteran
players, sports journalists, soccer administrators, Indian clubs, sponsors,
and foreign players and coaches respectively.

The questionnaires were administered through post and a total
of 54 questions/statements were included in the questionnaire. Out of 28
questionnaires sent to different state soccer association secretaries, only 18
were returned by mail. The interviews were conducted by the research
scholar himself and all the interviews were personal. After the collection
of relevant information through interview and questionnaire methods, the
responses were categorised under different heads according to the purpose
of the study, and the results were drawn in terms of percentages of the
responses in each case.

After the analysis of Indian soccer it can be concluded that no
major change has taken place in Indian soccer after the initiation of
professionalism i.e. introduction of the National Football League. The only
major visible change found was increase in money and emergence of professional clubs. These two factors have led to increase in the market value of a few players and entry of foreign players more than ever before in Indian soccer.

As far as causes of poor standard of Indian soccer is concerned, it was due to lack of grass-root training programme, non-existence of desired policy from governing bodies and clubs, poor infrastructure facilities, lack of mass participation, poor results in international competitions, and lack of participation among youth and children.

**Conclusions**

Within the limitations of the present study, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. After the introduction of the National Football League in the country, most of the players' financial and social status has improved and most of the players are satisfied with their salaries and they can support their families with the income from soccer.

2. The clubs are putting more efforts in building and maintaining their main team after the introduction of professional soccer in the country.
3. Since the introduction of National Football League, entry of foreign players to Indian soccer has increased many fold.

4. The players are working hard to maintain their position in the team because competition among players has increased after the introduction of National Football League in the country.

5. Players' kit, equipment and facilities have improved after the introduction of professionalism in Indian soccer.

6. After the advent of the National Football League players are reluctant to play for their respective state teams.

7. Due to the introduction of National Football League in the country, other soccer tournaments are losing their charm.

8. The standard of soccer in the country has not improved after the introduction of the National Football League.

9. People involved with soccer are in favour of professional soccer and they are quite confident that it is professional soccer that is going to improve the standard of soccer in the country.

10. Clubs infrastructure facilities are inadequate at this juncture, to start full professionalism in Indian soccer.

11. Professional clubs of India do not have the basic minimum facilities and technical manpower to turn Indian soccer into full professionalism.
12. Indian clubs do not run any long-term coaching programme for the development of soccer in the country.

13. Professional clubs of India are not run in the same manner as in Europe or other leading Asian countries.

14. Infrastructure facilities are poor both in clubs and state soccer associations for the development of soccer in the country.

15. Indian clubs are only concentrating on their main team (senior).

16. Foreign players playing in the country are not of high standard.

17. The progression of subsequent National Football Leagues II & III was not satisfactory.

18. The existing players’ transfer system is not favourable for the development of soccer in the country.

19. No other regions are developing in soccer in the country, except established regions like Bengal, Kerala, Goa, and Punjab.

20. There is a great demand of foreign coaches by Indian players. Most of the respondents are in favour of foreign coaches to train their team.

21. There is no grass-root training programme in the country for soccer.

22. No long term coaching programme is carried out by the state soccer associations.

23. State soccer associations do not have similar league structure.
24. Except for a few the state soccer associations do not conduct any programme for the development of soccer in their region.

25. Lack of a uniform coaching programme; less exposure to international competitions; and poor preparation before international matches are the major causes responsible for poor performances of the Indian team at international competitions.

26. The functioning of All India Football Federation is not along desired lines.

27. Lack of grass-root training programme; non-existence of desired policy and programmes by the federation, clubs and state soccer associations; less participation among children and youth; and lack of popularity of soccer in all parts of the country are the major causes responsible for the poor standard/quality of Indian soccer.

28. Only a few Indian players join professional soccer with formal training in soccer.

29. Indian players start their soccer training at a very late age.

30. Indian players are not popular among the public.

31. Indian soccer players are not in much demand in other parts of the world.

32. After the introduction of the National Football League the print media coverage has improved in the country.

33. Television coverage of Indian soccer is very poor.
34. Facilities provided to the media persons are not adequate.

35. Available infrastructure facilities are poorly maintained.

36. Sponsors are not getting their due mileage through Indian soccer.

37. Officials' standards of Indian referees are very poor.

38. Indian referees are not provided adequate facilities and incentives as compared to their counterparts in other countries.

39. The game has become faster and players are earning more, but lack dedication and sincerity towards soccer, according to veteran Indian players.

40. Today players are more secure in soccer as compared to the old playing days.

41. Adequate incentives are not provided to the players representing the national team for international competitions.

42. State soccer associations do not provide any incentive to players for their development in soccer.

**Recommendations**

In the light of the conclusions drawn the following recommendations are made:

1. The All India Football Federation and the professional clubs at the earliest should set-up a full professional structure of soccer to run the professional soccer in the country.
2. The full calendar of Indian soccer should be prepared in advance before the beginning of the season and there should not be any change during the season.

3. The format of the National Football League should be fixed, for the convenience and success of clubs and soccer in the country.

4. Media coverage of the Indian soccer should be improved to popularise the game.

5. The interests of the sponsors should be met at all costs to attract more sponsors.

6. The All India Football Federation should formulate a policy on grass-root training programme in the country.

7. The national, junior and sub-junior teams should be given adequate international exposure.

8. Infrastructure facilities should be improved in the country with the help of the government.

9. The All India Football Federation should start a National Football League for the age group of under-19 boys and if possible for under-16 boys too.

10. The state association should follow the same format as the National Football League in organising state leagues.

11. Referees should be given good training, incentives and exposure to improve their standard.
12. Indian coaches should be sent abroad for better training.

13. Indian players should be given a good financial package for representing the country.

14. All India Football Federation and clubs should employ professionals for running the administration.

15. Publicity about National Football league should be improved by both clubs and All India Football Federation.

16. In order to nullify the effect of diversity of the country and its effects in performance, the young players should be selected from all over the country and they should be kept in one place for training, but it should start at a very young age.

17. The clubs should have grass-root training programmes locally as European soccer clubs do.

18. All India Football Federation and club officials should visit European countries to study the structure and functioning of professional soccer and clubs.

19. There should be a uniform coaching programme throughout the country for all age groups under a head coach or chief coach or satellite coaching programme.

20. The government should bring sports into the academic curriculum as a compulsory subject in order to popularise sports among children.
21. All India Football Federation should have some welfare programmes for veteran international players.

22. The players' transfer system should be changed as per the European system with some modification to suit the Indian condition.

23. All India Football Federation should frame programmes and policies to popularise soccer in all corners of the country with the help of state soccer associations and clubs.

24. The rights of television coverage of Indian soccer should be given to a competent broadcaster.

25. Foreign players imported to the country should be brought with the help of FIFA's recognized players' agents.

26. Proper practice grounds should be provided to the teams for National Football League matches at all the venues.

27. All India Football Federation should start a central office to streamline its organisation and management.

28. All India Football Federation should start preparing coaches with the help of competent organisations, and licenses should be issued to coaches for coaching at different levels.

29. The second division National Football League should be organised in the same format as the 1-division.

30. The transportation and accommodation facilities for the teams participating in the National Football League should be improved.
31. State soccer associations should start junior and sub-junior leagues in their respective states.

32. State soccer association should organise long-term coaching programmes in soccer for the development of youth in their respective regions.

33. Clubs participating in the National Football League should have under-10, under-12, under-14, under-16 and under-19 coaching programmes and that should be made compulsory by the All India Football Federation; otherwise, clubs should not be allowed to participate in the league.

34. Proper preparation should be done before participating in the international competitions.

35. State soccer associations should provide adequate incentives to players and officials for the better future of soccer in the country.

36. Developed infrastructure should be maintained well, and specifically, ground conditions should be taken special care.

37. Medical facilities for players' should be improved in India because players often end their career due to lack of specialized treatment, incomplete recovery and improper rehabilitation from injuries.

38. Sports Authority of India, as a premier government agency which promotes sports in the country, should come forward more actively
with advanced scientific programmes in soccer to take Indian soccer up to the world standard.

39. Similar study may be conducted on small clubs throughout the country so as to find their state of affairs.

40. Similar study may be conducted on regions other than the regions investigated in this study.

41. Similar study may be conducted on training programmes of professional clubs and national teams, in order to get more facts on Indian soccer.