Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
"Soccer is the biggest thing that has happened in creation; Bigger than any ‘ism’ you can name" – Alan Border. Soccer is the most popular international team sport, followed by vast, emotional audiences. As long as the human race is able to be concerned with more than mere survival, soccer will have its place, and millions of soccer fans the world over will continue to vibrate to this simple and feasible game. There seems to be an atavistic urge in the apparently trivial pursuit of kicking a football around a field.

Soccer is not an invented game but one that went through a process of evaluation. The history of soccer is deep and perhaps richer than that of any other sport. There is a wealth of evidence to show that soccer in one form or another was played in various cultures many centuries ago. There is not just one theory as to where soccer came from. The history of soccer is a very interwoven tangle of different threads that come to make what we call soccer today. Scholars might have conflicting views about the origin of the game and the influence that certain cults may have had on its evaluation, but one thing is indisputable; Football has flourished for over a thousand years in diverse and rudimentary forms in the very region which was described as its home - England and the British Isles.
The early history of soccer reveals at least half a dozen different games, varying to different degrees and to which the historical development is related and has actually been traced back. The fact remains that playing a ball with the feet has been going on for thousands of years and there is absolutely no reason to believe that it is an aberration of the more "natural" form of playing a ball with the hands.

FIFA (2006). It was no doubt recognized right at the outset, that the art of controlling the ball with the feet was extremely difficult and, as such, it required special technique and talent. The very earliest form of the game, for which there is scientific evidence, was an exercise of precisely this skilful technique dating back to the second and third centuries B.C. in China. A military manual dating from the period of the Han Dynasty includes among the physical education exercises, the "Tsu'Chu". This consisted of kicking a leather ball filled with feathers and hair through an opening, measuring only 30 - 40 cm in width, into a small net fixed onto long bamboo canes - a feat which obviously demanded great skill and excellent technique. A variation of this exercise also existed, whereby the player was not permitted to aim at his target unimpeded, but had to use his feet, chest, back and shoulders while trying to withstand the attacks of his opponents. Use of the hands was not permitted. The ball artistry of today's top players is, therefore, not quite as new as some people may assume. Another form of the
game, also originating from the Far East, was the Japanese *Kemari*, which dates back to about 500 to 600 years later and is still played today. This is a type of circular football game, far less spectacular, but, for that reason, a 'more dignified and ceremonious experience, requiring certain skills, but not competitive' in the way the Chinese game was, nor is there the slightest sign of struggle for the possession of the ball. The players had to pass the ball to one another, in a relatively small space, trying not to let it touch the ground, seemingly related to the modern day game of hackey-sack which grew in popularity during the 1970's.

The Greek game "*episkyros*", relatively little of which has been handed down, was much livelier, as was the Roman game "*Harpastum*". The latter was played with a smaller ball with two teams contesting on a rectangular field marked by boundary lines and a center-line. The object was to get the ball over the opponents' boundary lines. The ball was passed between players and trickery was the order of the day. Each team member had his own specific tactical assignment and the spectators took a vociferous interest in the proceedings and the score. The role of the feet in this game was so small as scarcely to be of consequence. This game remained popular for 700 or 800 years, but, although the Romans took it to England with them, it is doubtful whether it can be considered a forerunner of contemporary football. The same applies to hurling, a popular game with the Celtic
population, which is played to this very day in Cornwall and Ireland. It is possible that influences were asserted, but it is certain that the decisive development of the game of football with which we are now familiar took place in England and Scotland.

The game that flourished in the British Isles from the 8th to the 19th century had a considerable variety of local and regional versions, which were subsequently smoothed down and smartened up to form the present day sports of association football and rugby football. They were substantially different from all the previously known forms more disorganized, more violent, more spontaneous and usually played by an indefinite number of players. Frequently, the games took the form of a heated contest between whole village communities or townships - through streets, village squares, across fields, hedges, fences and streams. Kicking was allowed, as in fact was almost everything else. However, in some of these games kicking was out of the question due to the size and weight of the ball being used. In such cases, kicking was instead employed to fell the opponents. Incidentally, it was not until nine years after the football rules had been established for the first time in 1863 and the creation of the Football Association, that the size and weight of the ball were finally standardised. The modern game was codified in England following the formation of The Football Association, whose 1863 Laws of the Game created the foundations for the way the sport
is played today. Football is governed internationally by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (International Federation of Association Football), commonly known by the acronym FIFA. The most prestigious international football competition is the FIFA World Cup, held every four years. This event, the most widely viewed in the world, boasts of an audience twice that of the Summer Olympic Games.

Deepthi (2003). In many parts of the world football evokes great passions and plays an important role in the life of individual fans, local communities, and even nations; it is therefore often claimed to be the most popular sport in the world. ESPN has spread the claim that the Côte d'Ivoire national football team helped secure a truce to the nation's civil war in 2005. By contrast, football is widely considered to be the final proximate cause in the Football War in June 1969 between El Salvador and Honduras. The sport also exacerbated tensions at the beginning of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, when a match between Dinamo Zagreb and Red Star Belgrade devolved into rioting in March 1990.

Today, football is played at a professional level all over the world. Millions of people regularly go to football stadiums to follow their favourite teams, while billions more watch the game on television. A very large number of people also play football at an amateur level. According to a survey conducted by FIFA published in 2001, over 240 million people from
more than 200 countries regularly play football. Its simple rules and minimal equipment requirements have no doubt aided its spread and growth in popularity.

Two hundred and 65 million male and female players, in addition to five million referees and officials, make a grand total of 270 million people - or four per cent of the world's population - who are actively involved in the game of football. These are the impressive findings of the 2006 Big Count, a FIFA survey of its 207 member associations, which, after being conducted for the first time in 2000, was repeated last year under the same conditions and offers an interesting insight into the development of football worldwide.

High level performance in any game depends upon the mastery of the fundamental skills. Soccer is a game which revolves around the effective utilization of fundamental skills. The fundamental skills in soccer are quite different from those of most sports because the entire body can be used to play the ball. Soccer is a game that involves a lot of skills which are performed from head to toe of the body. The perfection of these skills by players is determined in the performance of the team. An outstanding player is one who has mastered all the necessary skills required in soccer play. To perform well at any level in soccer a player has to learn and use a wide range of skills. However, the degree of perfection of these skills obviously varies significantly with the level and sex of the players.
Soccer skills can be developed through repetition, observation or visualization. With regular training and practice of a specific movement or technique, the player builds confidence and the target motion becomes natural to him. The important ball skills in soccer are

1. Passing
2. Dribbling
3. Shooting
4. Heading
5. Trapping
6. Chipping
7. Throw-in

**Passing**

In soccer the most valuable possession is the ball. To score and win a game is possible only when a team keeps possession of the ball. Therefore, the main foundation for the game of soccer is the skill of passing. Passing is simply moving the ball from one player to the next, maintaining possession and trying to work your team into scoring opportunity. The ability to pass the ball between nearby players accurately and in a timely manner, as well as to direct it to players farther away is essential in order to keep the possession of the ball. Passing is also important as many goals are scored as a result of it.
Teams that aim to retain control of the ball over longer periods of time, in the process making a large percentage of passes that gives low risk of losing the ball, are said to play possession soccer. If successful, it will tire the opponents because they have to run and tackle more. Therefore, the skill of passing ought to be of utmost importance to a player.

**Dribbling**

In soccer dribbling refers to the manoeuvring of a ball around a defender through short skilful taps or kicks with either of the feet. The purpose of such an action is to bring the ball past a defender legally and to create opportunities to score. Dribbling is one of the most difficult ball skills to master and one of the most useful attacking moves. In typical game play, players attempt to propel the ball toward their opponents' goal through individual control of the ball, such as by dribbling (running with the ball close to their feet). The ability to dribble is often invaluable especially in the third part of a pitch or at the wings, where most attacks take place. Dribbling creates space in tight situations where the dribbler is marked closely by a defender, and the dribbler can either score or create scoring chances after a successful dribble. However, dribbling, if poorly mastered and used, may result in the loss of possession either when the ball is intercepted
or tackled by a defender. When used appropriately, a good dribbler is often hard to dispossess; unsuccessful tackles may result in a useful free kick situation, a yellow card for the offender, or both. A good dribbler is a great attraction to the spectators and a great asset to the team.

**Shooting**

The most important skill in soccer is shooting. A good striker is one who is hungry to score. Attitude and the hunger to see the ball ripple the back of the net are the driving force. A great striker is one who might miss five chances but is never afraid to take the next one should it come his way. The beauty of football is that every one can score and football is played for scoring goals. In a game of ninety minutes, very few chances would come to a player to try the post and if a player is ill equipped to take a shot at the goal, the entire effort by the team goes waste which has toiled to create a scoring opportunity. In every situation when a shooting chance is on, there must be a determination, hunger, and an urgency to get the ball into the back of the net. The best places to aim are the corners, and wherever the goalkeeper "isn't" standing. Kicking with power is just as important as with accuracy. Even if you kick accurately, a ball with no power is easy for the goalkeeper to stop. You have to shoot to score goals, and you need to
score goals to win. It is important to shoot accurately to improve your chances of scoring. So it is highly necessary that all the players in the team need to have mastery over the skill of shooting at the goal. A player needs to strike a balance between being too eager and too reluctant to shoot. Shots should ideally be both accurate and powerful, although it is easier to achieve one of these at a time. Whether one should choose one or the other depends on the situation.

The choice of the part of goal to aim at is a contentious issue and depends on how many players are covering the goal. When only facing a goalkeeper, shots should be placed close to one of the posts. Ideally, a shot should also be placed just under the crossbar, but it is less difficult and also effective to shoot along the floor, towards the lower corners.

**Heading**

Soccer is played with head to toe and that is why they say it is a beautiful game. Football is one of the few games in the world where you are asked to get your head into the path of a moving object. Every other game reflexes take your head out of the way. But in soccer heading is a skill that is useful from passing to scoring a goal. The most difficult balls to handle in soccer are the high balls and if a
player is good at heading he can effortlessly face and use the high balls for passing, scoring, clearing and at times even for trapping. A good jump coupled with a perfect timing at the goal mouth can beat any number of defence and the goal keeper to score a goal. So it is very essential that soccer players should learn the correct heading techniques.

**Trapping**

Players should be able to bring any ball that comes to him into his control. Simply stopping the ball is usually the easiest way and in these cases the ball should be put in the ideal position for the next touch. Advanced players may use the first touch to make the ball move in the direction they themselves plan to move. Also, the ball may be passed at one touch. Abruptly avoiding the ball instead of receiving it may trick opposing defenders, and thus be an offensive weapon in some situations. Trapping is one of the most important parts of playing soccer. Once you have it down, you can take hard passes, block shots, dribble better and score more. It is usually not a good idea to compare today's soccer with what was going on around the game in its early days, but when it comes to soccer receiving you simply cannot avoid a comparison. Today's game emphasizes a lot more on correct and dynamic soccer ball receiving than ever before,
since spaces are tighter and the pace is higher, meaning that a player will have to develop this skill thoroughly if he or she is ever going to stand a chance on the pitch. In the 1930s for example, trapping the soccer ball with perfection was mainly important for attackers, in order to throw the other team's defence off balance, but today everyone from the goalkeeper to the winger is practically forced to have great receiving skills, since pressing is a constant factor for the other team in most cases. It is rather difficult to judge soccer receiving skills the same way other fundamentals skills of soccer are judged. For example, when trying to improve the passing ability, emphasis should be given to passing precision, power and timing. However, trapping a soccer ball requires a lot of smaller factors, which are all equally important.

**Chipping**

Chipping a ball is using your foot as a wedge to strike the ball low with the toe of the striking foot contacting the ball low imparting arc and backspin. The knee is locked at impact. A 'chip' is when the football travels in a high arc. Usually a quick kick is used to send the ball up and over a short distance, rather than in a long, soaring flight. In soccer it is always difficult to pass the ball behind the defence players. To achieve this, the players need to constantly switch
positions to create space between the defence players to receive the ball. It takes a lot of effort and time to make such passes behind the defence players. Chipping is an ideal skill to put the ball behind the defence players. A correctly executed chip gives time for the receiver to control the ball. Moreover, balls from chip are easy to control.

In set plays also chipping is highly useful. Statistically for example, if the goal average of a match was 4-5 in the 1960s, as of the 1980s the average dropped to 2-3 goals per match. Therefore, facing a tighter defence with each opponent, coaches and players struggle to find an alternative for scoring from direct play. This is how set pieces gained the important status they hold today. A chip with a descending curve that should fall somewhere between the penalty spot and the six yard keeper protection box is the most dangerous place a free kick can land, since it is out of reach from the goalkeeper and close enough to the goal that a slight deflection with the head would push the ball into the net.

**Throw-in**

Statistically, a team will have an average of 26 soccer throw-in opportunities during a match, so it is pretty important to know how to make good use of them, either to gain possession in play, or to create
scoring chances initiating at the throw-in. Like most other set pieces, the success of an offensive throw-in relies more on the off-ball movement of the teammates than on the way a player actually executes the throw-in. The basic soccer throw-in technique is the crossover: it involves two players close to the throw-in spot switching places, in order to confuse the defenders and give your team a chance to gain possession in play. A player taking a throw-in is free to pass the ball to a player unopposed by the opponent. Moreover, if throw-in is secured near the opponent’s penalty area, the player can throw the ball deep into the box thus facilitating a scoring chance.

Apart from goal keeper, throw-in is a privilege given to the other players to play the ball using their hands. After taking care to abide by the rules of throw-ins, usually it is only necessary to be able to handle the ball without its slipping through one's fingers. One cannot be offside from a throw-in. Some players are capable of achieving great distances with their throws, turning the humble throw-in into an effective attack. So every player should use this privilege and learn the techniques to make long throws which would help the team considerably.

Historically sports skill testing has received significant attention from physical educators and coaches. Sports skills are administered to motivate, to
grade, to diagnose and to research. Information through testing may be used for prediction, placement and public relation. Properly administered skill tests can provide players with very positive experiences. They also provide them both with self competition and a way to gauge their progress. Moreover, players must also learn to set realistic, attainable goals that are specific to their individual situations. Once goals are set, skill testing can assist them as they evaluate their progress, establish new goals, develop competitiveness within and ultimately lead to physical and technical improvement and self actualization.

The initial use of skill test was Athletic Badge test in 1913. However, with emphasis on sports and games of the athletic type in 1920s and early 1930s it was only natural that measurement should be slanted largely in this direction. The early form of skill testing was more of the general or fundamental type, but as the new design in test construction through statistical procedures became more prevalent, skill test development became more common. Brace presented one of the earliest skill tests on basketball. Skill test for achievement in specific sports was devised on great numbers in 1930s. The general procedure was to determine statistically a few simple test items to measure the total activity of the sports. Tests were developed for more sports, both team and individual and in some cases were established for age and sex groups.
In the history of test and measurements several stages from anthropometric to fitness have been experienced. Perhaps at the present time there is a renewed emphasis on evolution of specific sports skills. If Franklin Hendry and colleagues are correct in their contention that skills are highly specific to the task, more and better skill tests are needed in this area.

James. R. Morrow (1995). Skill tests can be subjective or objective. There are four primary classifications for objective skill tests.

- Accuracy based skill tests
- Repetitive – performance tests
- Total body movement tests
- Distance or power performance tests

Accuracy-Based Skill Tests

Accuracy-based skill tests usually involve the serving of an object such as volleyball, tennis ball, or badminton shuttlecock. They may also involve some other test of accuracy; throwing in football or baseball; free throws or other shots in basketball; or kicking goals in soccer. The primary measurement issue associated with accuracy test is the development of a scoring system that will provide reliable yet valid results.
Repetitive-Performance Tests

Repetitive-performance tests are commonly called wall volleys or self-volleys. They can be used to measure the strokes of racquet sports, such as the forehand or backhand stroke, and volleying and passing in volleyball. Repetitive performance tests usually possess a high degree of reliability, but unless they are constructed carefully they may not approximate the same type of strokes that are used in the game in which case validity is reduced. Furthermore, because they are not gamelike, they may not translate into actual game performance as well as some other court tests. Therefore, it is extremely important when repetitive-performance tests are used that the testers make sure that the students use the correct form.

Total Body Movement Tests

Total body movement tests are often called speed tests. A dribbling test in basketball or soccer measures this skill. Base running tests in baseball and softball are also tests of this type. These tests usually possess a very high degree of reliability because there is a large amount of variability associated with timed performance. They can be administered fairly quickly, but they have two inherent problems. First the test must approximate the game performance, and in many cases flat-out speed of movement is always required in the game.
Distance or Power Test

The final classification for objective skill test is distance or power performance tests. The badminton drive test for distance and the racquetball power serve test are examples of this type (Strand & Wilson, 1992), as are also distance throws in softball and baseball and punt, pass, and kick competitions. One problem with these test is ensuring that they are performed in a gamelike manner. Another question with tests of distance is whether the importance of accuracy should be included. For example, in punt, pass, and kick contest, the distance off the line of projection is subtracted from the distance of projection. Because of this a performer might hold back from using maximum force, for fear of loosing accuracy. In contrast, the track events such as the discus and shot put, these corrections are not made as long as the object is projected within a given area. Consequently, it is important that the inclusion of any correction for accuracy be considered before a test is actually used.

According to AAHPER (1968) skill tests have been developed to measure the basic skills used in the playing of the specific sport. Because of the wide range of skills in most sports, a selection of the most important skills is invariably necessary. The test items are collectively called test battery. The skill test helps the individuals to evaluate their performance in
the fundamental skills of the game and to provide an incentive for improvement.

**NEED FOR THE STUDY**

There is an increasing awareness among football practitioners that information from scientific endeavours can contribute both to the understanding and solution of problems that confront them. This kind of knowledge can be helpful to football Managers, Coaches and Trainers. At a time when India is frantically attempting to revamp the system to recapture its lost glory in world soccer, the investigator felt the need for developing and evaluating a battery of soccer skill tests which has not been done for Indian standard for the age group 17-19 years. Since the investigator was convinced that the skills which were discussed earlier in this chapter are the most important ball skills in soccer, an attempt is made to construct a battery of soccer skill tests involving those skills.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of this study is the Development and Evaluation of a Battery of Soccer Skill Tests

**DELIMITATIONS**

1. The study was delimited to 250 soccer players studying in colleges in Tamilnadu.
2. The study was delimited to men soccer players with age ranging from 17 to 19 years.

3. Further, the study was delimited to selected test items of the following fundamental skills of soccer:
   
   (i) Passing
   (ii) Dribbling
   (iii) Shooting
   (iv) Heading
   (v) Trapping
   (vi) Chipping
   (vii) Throw-in

**LIMITATIONS**

1. Variations in performance due to climatic conditions, ground conditions, and other environmental factors that might affect the study, were not taken into consideration.

2. The impact of training schedules, motivational factors, and various physical activities on the subject’s playing ability were not taken into account.
3. Inaccurate in supplying the ball, error in measurement and timing which were recorded due to human performance and perception which might affect the study were also considered as limitations of the study.

4. The fatigue factors of the players and the carry-over knowledge of the skills which might affect the performance in the tests were considered as limitations of the study.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS

Chipping

A chip is when a ball travels in a tall arc.

Dribbling

It is the technique of moving the ball along the ground using the feet and keeping the ball under control.

Evaluation

Evaluation transcends mere measurement in that basically subjective judgements which are based upon the data collected in the measurement process (Johnson and Nelson 1998).

Factor Analysis

A statistical procedure that is used to reduce a large number of variables to a much smaller representative set of variables called
‘factors’. The object of factor analysis is to achieve parsimony, and often to discover the essential variables that underline and summarize the information in a large set of variables (Jaeger).

Measurement

Measurement is an aid to the evaluation process in which various tools and techniques are used in collection of data (Johnson and Nelson 1988).

Norms

Norms are values considered to be representative of a specified population. A test that has accompanying norms is definitely preferred to one that does not. Norms are usually based on age, grade, height, weight, sex or various combinations of these characteristics (Johnson and Nelson 1988).

Objectivity

Objectivity is similar in nature to reliability, except that it applies to the consistency of agreement among scores with respect to the quality correctness of a performance (Bosco and Gustafson 1983).

Passing

The controlled movement of the ball from one player to another on the same team.
Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which a test consistently measures a given factor (Bosco and Gustafson 1983).

Soccer

‘Soccer’ and ‘Association Football’ are synonyms. Now in general use the word Association has been dropped and ‘Football’ retained. With ‘Soccer’ and ‘Football’ being synonyms, ‘Soccer’ is used in formal writings and ‘Football’ in general context.

Skill

Skill refers to the level of proficiency in a specific task or limited group of tasks (Fleishman 1964).

Test

A test is a tool or instrument of measurement that is used to obtain data about a specific trait or characteristics of an individual or a group (Allen and Honark 1979).

Trapping

‘Trapping’ and ‘Receiving’ are synonyms with ‘trapping’ being formal and ‘Receiving’ in common use.
Validity

Validity is an estimate of the degree to which a test measures the factor for which it was designed (Bosco and Gustafson 1983).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. This study would yield norms to be used for the evaluation, classification and selection of soccer players for different levels of competition.

2. The study will provide coaches with realistic and objective information about the standard of the players in order to improve the specificity of training to prepare individuals for optimal performance.

3. The study will serve as a motivational force to the soccer players to improve upon their skills.

4. The study will help the players and coaches to set their own target of achievement and work towards it.

5. A Comparative study of constructed tests on the Indian players with other Countries will help in finding out the differences in the performance level.

6. The present study may motivate other investigators to take up similar study on other skills of the game.