

Football Scenario in Bengaluru and Its Major Flaws

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to look at the current scenario of football in Bengaluru, it gives an overall review about how the football structure in Bengaluru is currently and later it looks at the Major flaws associated with it and the importance of domestic football and youth development mainly focusing on current status of it in Bengaluru

INTRODUCTION

Football is a global sport, it's the most watched sport currently and for a very long period of time although it has his roots in Europe almost 70% of countries follow football, to give an instance the FIFA 2018 world cup was approximately watched by 1 billion people making it the most watched game of all time, this just shows the amount of significance the game has currently, football is a sport which is strong in financially, culturally and almost in all the dimensions possible and India currently sits at 106th in the FIFA Ranking even with a massive population and we are not able to compete at the highest level of football possible, there are a lot of flaws in our football structure, we will address them with the help of taking example of football in Bengaluru as case study and look at the present condition and the Major flaws associated with it.

THE EVOLUTION OF FOOTBALL IN BENGALURU-

football was a sport initially created by Britain later it was spread to the neighbouring countries and then to their colonies, so that is the main reason why we can see football being played in the regions of South America, Africa and other Asian countries back during when colonialism still existed, in India Calcutta was the first City to have the experience of playing football later it was gradually spread through other states and cities, if we particularly look at Bengaluru, original nobody played or had the idea of football it was just cricket but the people neighbouring cities who whose people migrated to Bengaluru introduced the sport to native Bengalurians, but still there has been a Major dominance of people from other cities like, Chennai, Kerala here in Bengaluru, to give a context almost half of the players playing in leagues and for the State Karnataka football team have roots from different cities mainly Chennai and parts of Kerala.

The STRUCTURE OF FOOTBALL IN BENGALURU -

The structure of football means the tiers existing in the current football scenario, tiers mainly category or segregate clubs and players based on the skill level of players and strength of the club, it very important to understand these tiers, because each tiers show the Major flaws associated with the current football status of Bengaluru, without understanding this we can't analyse the problems of Bengaluru football, there

are mainly 4 Major leagues existing currently governed by KSFA(karnataka state football association) and they are c- division, B-divison, A-divison and super division, now let's see in depth of these tiers exist currently

C-DIVISION- The C-DIVISION is the lowest tier of football, the club is made up of amateur footballers and football clubs, they don't have a proper structure, infrastructure or any of the basic football elements needed , to give an instance these clubs don't have their own ground they usually tend to use public spaces like public grounds, they don't have systematic way of training, they don't have designated football coach so usually the players train themselves, these clubs are born out of neighborhoods or group of friends coming together, these clubs don't have high end players, their league is not point based league it's based on knockout system because of the huge amount of teams that exist in this league, there is no proper football structure in these clubs or a proper infrastructure the few positive highlights that this league has is that it's more flexible because a lot of footballers can play in this league and they tend to get feel competitiveness apart from this league doesn't offer much and needs a lot of attention is need to be given by the KSFA and they are currently working on it.

B-DIVISON- The B-divison is a tier slightly above the c-division , the footballers here are semi-skilled , they usually follow a schedule for training although they don't own their own trianing ground they usually rent out football parks or football turfs, so these clubs that play in the B-divison don't usually Play in the football muds , they play in turfs or commonly called grass grounds, so these clubs are much closer to playing football in much more proper manner, the players and clubs here are mixture of good players and amateur players, but due to mainy reasons such as financial, the club's here try to do whatever possible within the financial limit, this might be considered as the positive aspect of this tier, to aid the club and it's players for growth sometimes these clubs convert themselves as footballing training centres, but if we look it overall, the structure of the football established here is not stable and very much weak , but the B-divison nurtures many players for the leagues above it , but with the changes required when met the B-divison might be an important bridge to the tiers above such as A-divison and the Super divisions of Bengaluru football.

A-DIVISON- A-divison might be considered a top league if super division didn't exist and before Super divison came into existence this was the peak of Bengaluru football, the football clubs and footballers here can be termed as professional players, because a lot of aspects come into play, A-divison is a club that offers a stable contract to its players, so this gives a professional approach to the players so this makes more and more players to work hard and make it to the top , so this sparks the competitiveness and the hunger which is an very important aspect needed , this club is not only about providing contracts, the club's here have their own trianing grounds, have en Elite unit of football coaches and some A-divison clubs also offer gym facility to its players, A-divison not only focuses on increasing the football level of the players, it also works on the physical development too which is very much absent in the lower stages of football, but if we have to point out a loophole of this teir is that of the number of clubs being limited, A-divison earlier was the top most football tier in Bengaluru so it made sense keeping clubs limited so that they can create intense competitiveness which is very much needed but once a new league was announced by the KSFA , the amount of clubs in A- divison is till limited so a lot of footballers don't get the exposure they deserve due to this issue, but currently the KSFA is working on this issue as it snatches

a chance for a lot of football player but once this issue is resolved by the KSFA the quality of players produced here will increase in a much more better and stable way .

SUPER DIVISION – The super division is the peak of Bengaluru football, any footballer living in Bengaluru aims to play in the Bengaluru super division and rightly so, the super division is the successor of the A-division, too players of the city play here accompanied with the an elite footballing coached who previously played the game by themselves so they have outlook over how the football game is played and as players themselves they know what and what not to do, the clubs in super division do not have just an elite footballing coach, they also have football physiotherapist because of the league being competitive and rough a lot of footballers tend get hurt somewhere in between the season and if the injuries are not dealt with in a proper manner the future of that player is at stake so that is when these physiotherapist comes to manage and control the number of injuries a clubs experiences throughout the season, and physiotherapist Is not only the one counter measure for injuries, some super division clubs also gets insurance done so that they can give the secured feel to the football they've recruited. The contract given to the footballers here is very good and it attracts a lot of players and sparks the hunger to get into the super division, the level of football played is very high and the amount of competitiveness is much higher compared to tiers below it. These clubs have their own training ground and some clubs also have the system of resident training so that they can train the players since the beginning and instill their training Philosophy which is a unique trait of this division. The gym facility and the training techniques used here is very much advanced and the football tactics used here is sometimes similar to that of Lower tiers of European football which is actually good sign keeping in the level of European football. Overall the Bengaluru super division has a very good structure and a systematic functioning of the club, the clubs are here more professional too, we need to ensure that we create more of such leagues in smaller scale so that we give more such spaces to young footballers to aid their Growth and development and the super division also acts as bridge to making it nationals so we need to ensure that we provide players with almost quality and currently super division is doing it at a good level.

THE SCOUTING SYSTEM AND IT'S IMPORTANCE IN BENGALURU – Scouting system basically is a way to recruit players, but how does this , usually scouting system are agencies who work under sport clubs, this system is not only fixed to football, other sport such as basketball, baseball also use it. These Scouting agencies of football mainly consist of people who are good at picking up players with good football skill level, sometimes they also pinpoint the skills asked by the club and find players according to the club. The scouts in order to achieve this travel around a lot places to get those desired talents required by the club , what scouting system does is that a lot of talented players don't come into the limelight due to certain restrictions they are facing, but when a scout makes contact with them and the club so they basically act a bridge and also sometimes negotiate the needs of players and the club's. To give an instance about the efficiency of the scouting system, it was because of this scouting system Lionel Messi was able to sign to fc barcelona, a scout from this club was from south america and thanks to his keen eye fc barcelona was able to arguably one of the best players in the history of the game , now that we have understood how what and how Scouting system works now let's see why its important in the current scenario of Bengaluru football below

THE IMPORTANCE- There are a few clubs that do have this system in place such as Bengaluru FC, and to give an instance Sivaskathi naryanan currently playing for Bengaluru fc was originally from a local club in Chennai, thanks to the Bengaluru fc scouts he was recruited and joined the Bengaluru fc academy and is currently playing for the first team of the club. The Scouting system not only gives a club a good player but it also provides a player with great amount of a talent a chance he deserves. These are the following reasons why scouting system should be used in Bengaluru football, one the Scouting system breaks the barriers set by the society and gives a chance to the player irrespective of the variables associated with him based on only his football talent, the next thing is that there are a lot of footballers in Bengaluru and all of them can't be selected through the generic method of Football trials, a lot of people can't make it to the trials due to their own issues, but with the help of scouting system there's a new method added to recruiting players and it increases the chance of players getting selected which is very much important looking at the current situation of Bengaluru football. The Scouting system increases the range of players getting selected unlike football trials and other football recruiting methods which can only be done in a specific region the scouting system doesn't have these constraints restricting it, so this increases the probability of the footballers in Bengaluru to getting selected by a club and this is only possible when more and more clubs follow this trend, the Scouting system can also bring in people from other cities or States so this increases the cultural and tactical diversity of the football being played here, and when the Scouting system is used by more clubs throughout the country, it increases the amount of footballers getting recruited as a whole which is a very good sign and a very important aspect that is currently required for both Bengaluru and India as a nation.

THE IMPORTANCE AND THE IMPACT OF BENGALURU FC- Bengaluru fc is by far the best club in the city for a very long period of time, since it was formed back in 2013 Bengaluru fc has made the city proud by stamping its authority in all the tournaments that they've played, to give an gist of the massive achievements of this club, Bengaluru fc began its journey in the I-league, one of the top leagues of the country and it managed to win the league 2 times despite being a new club and lacking experience the old clubs they had, and they did all this with relatively a small part of support compared to other clubs in the leagues which is why this achievement is very fascinating. Bengaluru fc then shifted to ISL, one more Major league of the country, in its first 2 whole seasons it managed to reach 2 finals and even win one in its Second season despite coming to a completely different league compared to the I-League, but by the time it made the transition from I-League to ISL it has gained a support worth playing for. Bengaluru now has a total of 7 trophies in its belt, which included the federation Cup, Indian super Cup and recently it added the Durand cup to its collection, this makes Bengaluru fc 4th in terms of trophies won, apart from this Bengaluru fc also boasts of being a runner up in the prestigious AFC club which only a few clubs have done in the past, now that we have seen the achievements of the best club in Bengaluru let's what these achievements have impacted on the current status of Bengaluru.

IMPORTANCE- Bengaluru since its formation in 2013 has been following a European model of football, founded by the JSW groups they quickly understood that in order to change the existing status of the football they need bring in different model of football the one that is played in Europe to back this up they even hired Ashley Westwood a European manager for this project. The club understood that youth development is of significant area which a lot of clubs especially in Bengaluru so they started football academy, football schools and residential football training center, when I interviewed an ex Bengaluru

youth development coach Anthony Selva who currently has his own football coaching center he said that Bengaluru fc believed and put efforts as it does for the first team, this shows that youth development can also be the reason why Bengaluru fc is so much successful even though it is relatively a new club. One more important thing the Bengaluru fc has successful in doing is built a viewing culture and also making sure that supporters create a fan union which is something similar of the European football, the viewing culture especially for domestic football is very less and it's also very less when we look at as an overall over review of nation, but Bengaluru fc has built an impressive fan base and viewing culture mainly thanks to its performance, so this tells us that the viewing culture and a clubs achievement go hand in hand. Bengaluru fc has also has a youth team currently playing in the super division, this shows that it wants to increase the number of players it can recruit and develop youth of the domestic football. The Westblock blues the epic fandom of Bengaluru fc is spreading the viewing culture that is necessary for the club as well as the sport to grow. Bengaluru fc should be treated as a role model by other clubs in Bengaluru, these clubs should try to incorporate the aspects used by Bengaluru fc and make sure they that we have much more teams just like fc Bengaluru so that the potential youth talent we have here in Bengaluru can be put to good use and later they can be helpful in strengthening the National team, which Bengaluru fc has done by having 5 out of the 11 players in the national team, showing a good domestic football structure will eventually end up helping the national team.

THE MAJOR FLAWS IN BENGALURU FOOTBALL – The interview with an ex youth development coach Anthony Selva, he said that the current status of Bengaluru football is definitely growing and is also in a transition period current but is not completely free of flaws which needs to be resolved to take the Bengaluru football to next level, without these issues resolved there is a chance of current status of Bengaluru football will stagnate, now let us look at these issues in depth-

The lack of infrastructure is one of the most primary and crucial flaw of the current Bengaluru football setup without adequate football stadium, football turf parks and the public grounds are usually not maintained well or is often reserved to other sports like cricket. The stadiums here are not maintained well except for the kanteerava football stadium which is maintained well but on the negative side it is a multi purpose stadium and sometimes football matches have to be shifted to elsewhere, the other football stadium which comes under ksfa are not maintained well and needs a lot upgrades, a football stadium or the infrastructure is the basic requirement for the sport and the player to go grow without it things will stagnate, although the KSFA is currently working on fixing stadiums and bringing in new football stadiums there is still a long way to go but if the process of working on this aspect doesn't get initiated it'll be a huge problem for the domestic football.

The youth development is an aspect that the professional clubs in the Bengaluru football circuit doesn't focus on, only a handful clubs like BENGALURU FC do it, most of the club's don't usually tend to put much focus on youth of the club, rather they focus on the first team which mainly consists of ageing group which include - 25 to 35. The problem is not putting focus on ageing group but the problem lies in not laying emphasis on the youth of the domestic football in Bengaluru. The youth of football in Bengaluru is like a root for the future generation of not only the Bengaluru football but India as well, so more and more clubs needs to have youth development system set up so that they can nurture the future.

The clubs not being professional is a detrimental flaw currently, there is no professional approach towards football by a lot of clubs, worst scenario is that some clubs don't even have a KSFA approved football coaching licence, in the name of making money they simply hire a football turf and in the name of coaching they get money but without the knowledge of football tactics and it's depth they end up instilling wrong notions of football to the young players, this proves to be very complex in the later stages of the footballers career, because of the wrong notions of football instilled they can't endure the actual football training and techniques that needs to be learnt to make it professional due to the inconsistent and unprofessional approach they show towards football, a lot of footballers not only lose money by enrolling themselves to these clubs, the inefficiency of KSFA is also seen here , but currently they are working on to legally take action on such clubs but due to internal corruption fake football licences are going out of hand but without this issue resolved the football youth of Bengaluru is in grave danger.

The football culture is one of important aspect of development in football as sport itself, but that things very much lacks in Bengaluru domestic football, if we exclude fc Bengaluru other clubs have not helped in creating or enriching the football viewing culture. Almost 60-70% of football viewing population don't watch Bengaluru domestic football, to give an instance why football viewing culture is important, any sport becomes popular only when it has support backing it and people watching it with passion, without it no matter how good the sport is or how good they play it the sport won't grow. The viewing culture is slightly interlinked with the way how football is played, basically the quality of football played this is the main reason why more than half the football viewing population is inclined towards watching European football mainly because of the quality they provide. But the people should realise that if the initial support is not given to the domestic football here in Bengaluru, clubs won't get the funds necessary through broadcasting and advertising, so people should give atleast a bit of importance to the domestic scenario of football in Bengaluru. Football can only grow to bigger heights in Bengaluru only with the support of people, without it no matter how many good footballers Bengaluru produces the sport won't grow.

CONCLUSION – The reasearch paper began with introducing how the football structure in Bengaluru Exists and works, it looked at the different tiers and flaws,. The scouting system and it's importance is told here , with the Scouting system in place the football scenario in Bengaluru can go to places and can reach peak football If it functions the way it is planned. Bengaluru fc an Elite football club from Bengaluru and it's journey from bottom to the highest level of football played in the country we also discussed about the importance it has laid in Bengaluru football circuit finally we speak of the major flaws which hindering the growth of football in Bengaluru and things that need to changed in order to secure the future of Bengaluru football. The research paper aims to lay emphasis on the domestic football played here in India and how it's structure and flaws have been completely ignored by mainstream football watchers . Indian is currently 106th in the FIFA rankings and couple of years back it was at a very low at 173 , but thanks to the improvements that occurred in domestic football and new leagues being inrkcuded the quality of the footballers increased very drastically and that can be seen clearly with the change of football rankings. The research aims to show the significance of domestic football by taking the example of Bengaluru, the domestic football circuits all over India acts as basement to the Indian football structure, ignoring it might destroy the future of sport in our country and laying emphasis on it will greatly impact the quality of football we play, India currently has a lot potential in terms of football with the population we have and if they are rightly developed, Indian football will reach greater heights in the near future

REFERENCES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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