A PROJECT ON

"STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON FOOTBALL CLUBS:

AUDIENCE VIEW"

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"STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON FOOTBALL CLUBS: AUDIENCE VIEW"

BY

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SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT SPORTS MANAGEMENET

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DECLARATION

I wish to state that the work embodied in this dissertation titles "**STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON FOOTBALL CLUBS: AUDIENCE VIEW**" is my own contribution. The dissertations carried out under the guidance of **Dr. Deepak R Gupta** in the academic year 2023 – 2024.

SIGNATURE OF THE CANDIDIDATE

PLACE - Mumbai

DATE–

Malad Kandivali Education Society's Nagindas Khandwala

College of Commerce, Arts and Management Studies

(Autonomous)

Department of Sports Management

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mr. **Nikhil Choudhury** has successfully completed the Dissertation as a part of the Semester VI syllabus titles "**STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON FOOTBALL CLUBS: AUDIENCE VIEW"** under the guidance of Dr. Deepak R Gupta during the Academic Year 2023-2024

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Table of Contents

Contents

DECLARATION 2

CERTIFICATE 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4

Chapter 1 - Introduction 6

Objectives 11

Limitations 12

Chapter 2 - Literature Review 13

Chapter 3 - Thesis 18

Chapter 4 - Special Reference to Manchester United vs Mumbai City FC 43

Chapter 5 - Research Methodology 53

Chapter 6 - Data Analysis 54

Chapter 7 - Conclusion 66

Chapter 8 - Recommendation 68

Chapter 9 - Bibliography 70

Chapoter 10 - Appendix 74

Chapter 1 - Introduction

About Indian Football

The origin of football in India dates to the 19th century when the Durand cup was introduced by the British. It was mainly for the British troops stationed in India. The Durand Cup is the third oldest club competition after the FA Cup (England) and the Scottish cup (Scotland). The first-ever professional football league in India was set up in 1996 and was called the National Football League. After failing to meet its objective of creating a talent pool, it was relaunched and rebranded as the I-League in 2007.

In 2014, the Indian Super League was introduced to improve exposure to the Indian public. For the first three seasons, the tournament lasted for three months from October to December each year. It operated without recognition from the Asian Football Confederation, but it was recognised from the 2017-18 season. After its glory, the tournament was expanded to 10 teams for 6 months. The AIFF signed a 15-year deal with Reliance Industries and International Management Group worth billions.

As we can see, over the past few decades, Indian Football has undergone a lot of changes. Strategic Partnerships between the Indian Football clubs and the foreign football clubs, mainly European clubs from different leagues have been ongoing since number of years but since the inception of the Indian Super League, it has been more prevalent. With India developing as a potential market waiting to be untapped when it comes to football, a lot of foreign clubs over the years have established themselves in India.

One of the earliest ways applied by the clubs was to set up their academies in the tier-1 cities or tie-up with an existing academy. Later, as the I-league gained popularity and the Indian Super League was coming into fore, many clubs entered a strategic tie-up or partnerships with Indian Football clubs.

One of the main reasons for these partnerships is simple and the most important reason, the massive market potential that investors forecast Indian football to have in the future. It is no illusion that India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, and they have invested heavily in sports infrastructure in the past decade

Through this research paper, the main objective is to understand the impact that these strategic partnerships have had on the Indian clubs and Indian Football in general. During this research, a

comparative analysis will be carried out between Manchester United, a Premier League club and Mumbai City FC, an ISL club. The objective of this special reference between the two clubs is to understand the glaring differences between the two clubs, with respect to three major things, i.e. – Performance, Infrastructure and Fans over a period.

It is important to understand what factors have been impacted through these strategic partnerships if any. Whether these strategic partnerships have had any effect on the gameplay, tactics, fan engagement, and overall performance of the club.

There have been several well-known European football clubs that have tied up with a club from the ISL. Some of the current deals between European clubs and ISL clubs include Manchester City FC owning majority stakes in Mumbai City FC, Borussia Dortmund tied up with Hyderabad FC in 2020 and the partnership between Bengaluru FC and Rangers FC. For these shareholders, it is essential to understand the growth of the Indian football market.

Despite having a vast potential, there are many limitations to the sport at this moment. Hence, to make the best out of these deals, it is necessary to learn the growth trajectory and market development. When it comes to football, Europe and then America are the places where one can say that the football structure is established. Asian Football, especially the Chinese League and Japanese League have been on the rise over the past few decades and ISL does have the potential to do that. Several strategic partnerships are existing in the CSL and J-League which have had its fair share of impact on the development of football in those countries.

Strategic Partnerships in Indian Football

1. Mumbai City FC – Manchester City FC
2. Bengaluru FC – Rangers FC
3. Fc Goa – RB Leipzig
4. Hyderabad FC – Borussia Dortmund
5. Thane City FC – Southampton FC
6. FC Bengaluru United – Sevilla FC
7. Odisha FC – Avai FC
8. Chennai City FC – FC Basel

What are Strategic tie-ups?

A strategic tie-up is a relationship between two commercial enterprises, usually formalized by one or more business contracts. Typically, two companies form a strategic partnership when each possesses one or more business assets or have expertise that will help the other by enhancing their businesses. This can also mean, that one firm is helping the other firm to expand their market to other marketplaces, by helping with some expertise.

The above-mentioned definition when related to strategic partnerships in football, pretty much explains why there are so many partnerships that exist in Indian football. The expertise that the European clubs have will help the other club (Indian Club) in development and enhancing performance. On the other hand, the Indian club is helping the European club to expand their market in India through this tie-up.

In recent years the growth of partnerships has accelerated, driven by the benefits of risk sharing and resource pooling, technology convergence, industry deconstruction (from linear value chains to industry value networks) and knowledge diffusion.

Strategic partnerships inevitably involve challenges that have to be resolved efficiently to ensure the longevity and success of the alliance, such as isolating proprietary knowledge, processing multiple knowledge flows, creating adaptive governance and operating global virtual teams. If these challenges are not tackled, the partnership will more than likely fail, which, as the empirical research shows, happens in more than half of the cases.

In the end, strategic alliances offer tremendous potential benefits to both parties. But like any relationship, both companies need to carefully assess each other's motivations and expectations before making a commitment. It's necessary for both companies to bring equal value to the partnership. Franchisors should go into partnerships unselfishly and with clear expectations from both sides–just as they would before signing on a franchisee.

For instance, a recent partnership between City Football Group and Mumbai City FC was made official. However, City Football Group took a lot of time in the screening process for acquiring a particular ISL club.

The expectation from there side was that the club needed to be a big city with a good outreach for their business. Much like their other clubs in different leagues such as Girona, Manchester, New York, Mumbai was the final choice. This tells us the modern meaning that these strategic partnership

carries especially when it comes to sports. There are factors beyond the game of football which need to be considered and are impacted on.

Areas of Focus in a strategic partnership

1. Identify and define objectives clearly for each partner
2. Choose partners carefully, making sure they are financially capable
3. The partner should be a relatively good cultural fit
4. To make sure that there is a defined structure in the alliance
5. Plan for the development of the partnership
6. Plan for growth and exit strategy
7. Plan for possible expansion of scope of the strategic alliance into additional areas of opportunities.

Why some of the strategic partnerships fail?

Strategic alliances are not without criticism. Many strategic alliances fail to achieve the stated objectives of the partners. Strategic alliances may fail to meet the objectives of the partners for different reasons. They may fail for fundamental business reasons. One of the partner firms may become financially distressed, the originally identified business opportunity may not have developed as planned or the resource contributions expected by one firm failed to meet expectations of the partners.

Other reasons may include internal and external situational factors that contribute to the alliance failure. A firms' general business or marketing strategy may shift due to unforeseen market changes, new company leadership may re-define strategic priorities and direction leaving the alliance abandoned or the governance structure directing joint decision making is not effective at meeting the needs of partner firms. In addition, the partnering firms may lack the necessary alliance managerial focus to effectively launch and execute the alliance

The management of a strategic alliance takes on a new dimension. The partnering firms have different corporate cultures, different decision styles and changing internal priorities. Overtime, this can make the management aspects of a strategic alliance especially challenging. Without the appropriate skill sets required at the organizational and individual level to cope with this, alliances

may be still born. Companies and individuals can develop a capacity for managing alliances over time gained by experience. However the learning curve is steep and can be costly if not done right.

Strategic Partnerships in Sports must make sure that the alliance in question was developed in the context of a broader alliance strategy for the overall firm, not just in a vacuum for one specific deal and that there exist the necessary managerial skills and abilities to manage the alliance over time.

Special Reference to Manchester United and Mumbai City FC

Manchester United has been an established club in the English Premier League, while Mumbai City was established in the inaugural season of ISL in 2014. To understand the impact on Indian clubs, we will first understand the performance, infrastructure and the fan following of Manchester United and then compare it with Mumbai City FC on the same points.

The special reference between Manchester United and Mumbai City FC based on Performance, Infrastructure and Fans will help us in understanding the current differences that exist in the Indian Football from the English Football. With a league that is still in its early age, there is a lot to be developed in ISL and this study will help in understanding the three main pillars as mentioned above of the two teams.

Mumbai City FC has been one of the clubs which is in a strategic partnership with a foreign club/group of football. It is important to analyse the performance and fan following of the club before the acquisition. To understand whether the acquisition has had any direct impact on the performance.

Performance, Infrastructure development and increasing the fan following are the 3 key areas on which impact needs to be take place. Having a global partnership is going to help it because of the technical knowhow and the need of other club to expand their market in India.

Objectives

Indian Football has been in the development phase for a very long time. With the improved commercial aspect of the Indian Super League and I-League, the recognition for Indian Football is expanding season after season. The Asian Football fans and especially Indian fans, make up for a large amount of fan following for the European clubs. This has resulted in these European clubs venturing into Indian Football scenario in some or the other way. Bottom line, the first objective is to understand the thought process beyond these tie-ups and then its impact.

- One of the first objectives is to understand the reason why these strategic partnerships exist. What is the main reason for these strategic partnerships in football, let alone India.
- Next objective is to analyse the reason for the ever-growing tie-ups in Indian Football scenario. The last few years has seen an increase in more European clubs getting associated with Indian clubs. Therefore, to understand the factors that have led to this increase.
- To understand the benefits for European clubs through these tie-ups.
- To understand what changes have been seen in factors like Performance, Infrastructure and fan following through these strategic tie-ups.
- All the strategic tie-ups that exist in Indian Football right now are not of the same kind. Some have been mergers and acquisitions, while some partnerships are solely based on development of football. Therefore, to understand the different kind of partnerships that exists in Indian Football.
- The last objective is to find out whether these strategic tie-ups are sustainable in the long term and what the future is of these strategic tie-ups.

Limitations

- Not enough data available when it comes to Mumbai City FC and its infrastructure and fan following
- The short period of time given to complete this research resulted in a very low number of responses which could have ideally been more
- Not enough time to conduct deep primary research with regards to Indian football and strategic partnerships
- Very few research papers on the topic
- Specific information of the strategic partnerships unavaiable

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The Benefits of Partnerships in Football – Australian Case Study

The Benefits of Partnerships in Football by Daniel Foley, 4/12/2020.

A common thread between Dortmund, Villarreal C.F and Celtic F.C is that they all have partnerships with football clubs in Australia – which provide benefits to both the local and international organisations.

There are different types of partnerships in football, such as the sponsorship type partnerships which see sportswear companies become the official apparel partner of a club. Then there are the academy and football development partnerships, something that many Australian organisations have been taking advantage of. Partnerships with well-known leagues and clubs from overseas are becoming increasingly common.

The 'Beyond 2020: Professional Football Strategy – A discussion with La Liga' webinar was the first event help through the partnership and was attended by many industry professionals including Capital Football CEO Phil Brown and Villarreal C.F. Business Development Manager, Mar Llaneza. During the event LaLiga's delegate in Australia and New Zealand, Glen Rolls spoke about La Liga's international strategy and how the league is also looking to share its knowledge whilst also learning from the Australian football industry.

"We certainly look forward to developing more programs to help ... professionalise the industry moving forward," he said. Professionalisation of the sports industry is clearly a focus for La Liga, the Director of La Liga Business School, Jose Moya also referred to it in his statement upon the announcement of the partnership with the University of Canberra.

"This agreement reaffirms the commitment of our organization to professionalise the sports sector and, in line with our slogan, it's not football, it's LaLiga, this positions us at the forefront of the industry, not only in terms of sports but also in educational standards," he said.

La Liga is not the only Spanish football organisation that is bringing its knowledge and expertise to Australian football. In November, La Liga club Villareal C.F expanded its presence in Australia with a Sydney academy. The new academy sits alongside its Melbourne academy

Monash Villarreal, formerly Monash City FC. Another example of the advantages provided by a partnership is Sydney FC's partnership with Dutch club, AFC Ajax. Ajax are known for their expertise in youth development and have been sharing their knowledge with Sydney FC.

"As we continue to strive for excellence, it is fantastic to be able to learn from Ajax; we are looking to pick up all we can from a club who are arguably the best club on the planet in terms of bringing young players to an international level," he said. "We aim to continue to share knowledge and experience, as well as building the relationship in terms of exposing our players to the Ajax coaches."

Even the Premier League's Tottenham Hotspurs launched a Player Development Programme in New Zealand late last month. The Hotspurs are partnering with Scots College in Wellington. Tottenham has two football development partnerships in Australia with the University of Wollongong in New South Wales and Nudgee College in Queensland.

Also talking about the Indian league, the main focus of Dortmund's partnership with Indian Super League team Hyderabad FC is coaching and youth development, however Dortmund is also providing assistance with fan-engagement and technology. These arrangements can also benefit teams off the field.

"We therefore look forward towards achieving shared successes, both on and off the pitch, as we continue to build nice stories and special experiences for our fans in India and around the region," BVB APAC Managing Director, Suresh Letchmanan said in a statement regarding the partnership. Dortmund also has an Australian partnership with NPL club Marconi FC, although this agreement focuses on coach and player development.

The Australian football industry is a lot smaller in comparison to the scale of the industry in some other countries – partnerships in football with major clubs and league can help Australian football grow.

The above case study talks about the Australian League and how it benefitted through some strategic partnerships. Villareal FC through their partnership, set up an academy in Sydney. This was their way to establish their presence in Australia. Earlier they set up an academy in

Melbourne. Through Villareal, the Spanish football presence was increased in Australia. Through this we can understand that just like India, Australia did not have a deep history in Football but the strategic partnerships helped to change it.

Football in Australia benefitted through these strategic partnerships. Some partnerships were not only based on on-field tie-ups off-field as well. Tottenham Hotspur, the club from English Premier League is one such example who created two football development partnerships, not with any club but two universities. This shows us the different kind of partnerships that can exist.

To study the different ways in which partnerships can exists, we can take the example of Borussia Dortmund. The German club has partnerships in both India and Australia. In Australia their partnership is with NPL club Marconi FC while in India they have a partnership with Hyderabad FC. However, as mentioned in the above literature review, the partnership with Marconi FC is only limited to coach and player development. However, their partnership with Hyderabad FC is different as it caters to not only coaching and youth development but also assisting in fan engagement and technology by creating fan experience for Indian fanbase.

The above-mentioned literature review was chosen to understand the strategic partnership landscape in Australia, a country with a similar backstory of football but lot smaller in terms of scale. The topic of dissertation aims to understand the impact of strategic partnerships in India, hence it is important to understand similar partnerships happening in a different country where goals are comparable to that of Indian Football.

FC Goa and RB Leipzig's 'strategic partnership': All you need to know

- Article Published in ESPN on 12 November,2020

FC Goa and RB Leipzig have entered into a strategic partnership for 'youth development' that will run until 2023. Goa co-owner Akshay Tandon and Leipzig CEO Oliver Mintzlaff made the joint announcement. The two clubs say it won't 'merely be a licensing deal', unlike some of the partnerships Indian teams usually enter into with foreign clubs. "We want to live this cooperation, not merely send them our logo," Mintzlaff said. According to Goa, this is a first-of-its kind partnership for the Indian market.

The three-year deal is to establish and run football training camps for youngsters, starting with the state of Goa and then expanding across the country. The two clubs have decided to proceed with the courses at the earliest, starting with a series of specially designed online class. Once travel is safe, RB Academy coaches will be flying into India while Goa will be sending coaches and youth-team players for advanced training at the RB facilities in Leipzig. While Mantzlaff stated that this was the first step towards increasing co-operation between the two clubs, he also made it clear that from a Red Bull group point of view, they would not be bringing Goa into the umbrella of RB clubs around the world.

The primary aim appears to be to increase reach, and expand the global footprint of the club. This is Leipzig's first foray into the Asian market, and it's one that Mintzlaff sees as the perfect springboard for the future. The sentence "this is a country of 1.4 billion people" was oft repeated when explaining the reason India was chosen. Mintzlaff believes that after unprecedented domestic success in the first 11 years of their existence, it is time for Leipzig to move global. He also stated that as part of this goal, Leipzig plan to travel with their senior team to India, but the dates are understandably undecided due to the current situation.

On the face of it, it is clear that they are here to tap into the Indian economy, to assess if they can carve out a piece of a potentially large market for themselves, and to do so without coming in blind. The presence of a local partner, especially one with its own strong youth development system enables them to minimize financial risk and maximize reach. And build from there.

Mintzlaff said the programme will give the club a better understanding of the football market in India. "In phase II, we will integrate our youth/scouting in department to identify talents. But those are things you can't plan for," he said. Finding someone who can play for them sometime in the future would make the deal perfect, but that is not the driving force behind this decision. So, don't hold your breath for an Indian tearing it up for RB Leipzig in the Bundesliga because of this one programme just yet.

Tandon had earlier expressed the need for investment in Indian football, and this is a product of that thought process. While the RB group's involvement with Goa will not be on the direct investment lines of the City Football Group and Mumbai City, it is a first step. At the core of it, the deal seems

to be a simple one for Goa. Avail of the technical expertise and knowledge base that has seen Leipzig race through the German divisions to identify, recruit, and develop young talent.

This emphasis on youth appears to be a fundamental platform of all that Goa are doing. In fact, reports at the time suggested that they parted ways with their very successful, very talented coach Sergio Lobera last season because of their differences in approach to the youth programme, and its utilization by the senior team. They, therefore, view this deal as the logical next step in expanding their youth programme.

To Goa, it does not just make footballing sense; it is a smart business decision too. With high-end technical expertise coming in from Leipzig, it helps Goa level up their scouting and development network without overextending their own finances. It remains to be seen how effective it can be, though, and how it will stand out - on the ground - from similar programmes the Indian market has seen.

Chapter 3 - Thesis

Types of Partnerships that exist in Sports

1. **Mergers and Acquisitions:** A merger occurs when two separate entities combine forces to create a new, joint organization. An acquisition refers to the takeover of one entity by another. The two terms have become increasingly blended and used in conjunction with one another. Mergers and acquisitions are the acts of consolidating companies or assets, with an eye toward stimulating growth, gaining competitive advantages, increasing market share, or influencing supply chains. One of the most important advantages offered by mergers and acquisitions is related to a wider range of services or products which can be explored. By joining forces, the portfolio of the new business can increase even more and gain access to a larger market share.

   M&A in Sports: Mergers and acquisitions (M & As) in professional sports evoke strong emotions. Whereas for some economists and club owners they are just business operations aimed to improve sporting and financial performance of a club.

2. **Commercial Partnerships:** Commercial partnerships are relationships between business entities and other parties that increase the likelihood of the former acquiring large volumes of new business and access to new client opportunities

   Commercial Partnerships in Sports: Ambitious strategies to develop and improve elements of the presentation of their sport (e.g. broadcast production quality, live event experience, digital offerings, merchandising, fan engagement) are unlikely to be able to implement all of their plans at once, particularly if they have limited cash reserves. A long-term commercial partnership provides an opportunity for external investment to enter the sport, and thus accelerate the development of these activities. In addition to investment capital, a longterm commercial partner can also provide access to people with the skills, experience and connections required to implement growth activities.

Strategic Partnerships between two football clubs

Football has always been a game with a huge global reach. The likes of FIFA World Cup and UEFA Champions League finals see a huge amount of viewership not only from the traditional "football-playing" nations but also other markets. Over the years, Asia has developed to be one such market. The big clubs in Europe see a lot of fan following from countries like India, China, Japan and Australia. With the developing footballing landscape, it has become important for these European Clubs to reach out to these fans across the globe as well.

One of the main strategies used for engaging with the larger audience has always been fan engagement. Using the likes of social media with targeted post for a specific countries audience has been prevalent. Going on pre-season tour to countries like China, Australia has also helped in connecting with the fans far away. However, if we look at it from a broader perspective, there is a lot beneficial for the club to make their mark in different countries through strategic partnerships. This strategy, although appealing for newcomers willing to raise their international profile and benefit from operational synergies, can still appear risky for more established and prestigious European strongholds. Leagues such as MLS, ISL or the Australian A-League are often closed and operate under strict salary cap regulations, fostering a greater level of competitiveness across the league. Therefore, clubs who might want to be associated only with the highest levels may be more reluctant to follow this path and wish to consider alternative strategies.

For instance, FC Barcelona runs football schools across the major cities in India under the name 'FCB Escola' which has been a success. Rather than getting into a strategic partnership with any club in India they are into youth development by tying up with some football academies. This has worked for FC Barcelona because of their name. However, this may not be the case for all European clubs. The likes of City Football club and Red Bull coming into football and owning different teams in different leagues, opened up many new avenues for a lot of football clubs.

With the footballing scenario developing in countries like China through the Chinese Super league, Australia through the A-League, Japan through the J-league and now India with ISL, having a partnership with a local club has proved to be beneficial for a lot of clubs. The main

objective for a particular European club is to expand their market. To broaden their fan following beyond Europe and tap into the likes of Asian market where there has been an increase in football following. Tying up with a local club gives the headstart for a club to work with an established fanbase in a particular country and then work towards the development.

Establishing themselves without a strategic partnership could prove to be difficult for clubs which are not so popular among the APAC fans. With the football leagues going in the right direction in many of these countries, it gives the European clubs an established structure to work with, not only for their own purpose but also for the development of that local club.

Multi Club ownership strategy in Football

Consolidation, manifesting itself in the form of mergers and acquisitions of smaller companies by larger corporations, is a common practice in the free-market economy. Within the growing football industry, multi-club ownership – defined as an individual or a private company owning shares in two or more clubs – has become increasingly commonplace over the past decade.

In the late 1990s, the portfolio of current Tottenham Hotspur majority owners ENIC (formerly the English National Investment Company), also included a majority shareholding in Czech club Slavia Praha and a minority share in Greece's AEK Athens. After both clubs qualified for the UEFA Cup (1999/2000), the European Court of Arbitration for Sports issued a ruling, which was adopted by UEFA, prohibiting any company or private individual to have control or influence over more than one club in the same European competition.

At a national level, in an effort to guarantee the integrity of domestic competitions, major leagues have implemented more rigorous legal safeguards on common ownership. However, in the global football landscape, these regulations have not prevented clubs' expanding internationally through acquisitions, often targeting other European clubs not playing UEFA competitions or clubs that are members of other confederations.

When the objectives of the ownership-sharing clubs are complementary, a broader network may result that can leverage synergies from both a sporting (e.g. improve scouting networks) and business perspective (e.g. mutualize sponsorship efforts, cost efficiencies, sharing expertise and best practices). However, beneath the surface there are a number of challenges, including multi-club

owners potentially facing opposition from fans if their club's interest comes at the expense of a broader corporate body.

Fast growing groups owned by ambitious stakeholders like the City Football Group ('CFG') – have also chosen this path with the aim of benefitting from a future pay-off. City Football group has a goal of accelerating the growth of their brand. In this regard, emerging football markets such as United States, where CFG owns Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise New York City FC, or India, where they own stakes in Mumbai City FC, provide unique exposure and access to key markets

The Pozzo family case study

The family has demonstrated an impressive capability in identifying talent at Udinese Calcio, Granada CF – recently sold to Chinese firm Desport – and Watford FC. A larger club network has helped to minimize player acquisition costs while maximizing the profit from surging transfer fees as players were loaned between 'sister clubs' and later sold at a premium. However, clubs have also profited from this unique network with both Granada CF and Watford achieving promotion to LaLiga and Premier League respectively at that time. However, it is interesting to note that co incidentally both Granada and Watford have been relegated this season from their respective leagues.

Attraction and Benefits of tapping into the Asian Market

Once commercialization of the brand for European football came to the fore, building, in some cases, a business model that allowed clubs to become proper entertainment companies, the main target market was the United States. Manchester United FC, one of the first clubs trying to leverage a competitive advantage outside of their domestic borders, for example, started to set-up friendly matches in the US at the end of the 1990s, taking advantage of the big, wealthy and football-hungry North American market. Nevertheless, the recent interest of Asian countries towards football, coupled with significant investments made by Asian owners into European clubs, are training the focus of these clubs upon Asia.

The two primary reasons for the ever-increasing expansion into Asia:

1. Brand awareness

Increasing their brand awareness is fundamental in order to create new business opportunities. As mentioned above, a growing number of clubs has already exploited their chances to penetrate into

Europe and North America. On the other hand, Asia represents an uncharted market of more than 4 billion people, which is to say almost 60% of the worldwide population. So tapping into the Asian market has been one of the main objectives for the clubs over the past few years and this has been done through different ways.

2. Mutual development

Consequently, not only European clubs but also Asian ones can leverage on this strategy for their own development. Indeed, many European teams have already developed new academies in Asia, with the aim of finding and nurturing local talents. On the other hand, Asian countries receive the technical know-how and can learn from the expertise of European coaches that ply their trade abroad. By all means, this process might also contribute to elevating the quality of the local game, resulting in a win-win situation.

Academies developed by "Big Five" leagues' clubs in the Asian market



Source: KPMG Football Benchmark research

European teams have adopted different strategies to tap into the Asian market. Many clubs have decided to follow a "traditional" commercial-focused approach, by setting up offices in the region and making partnerships with local sponsors. In addition to that, they have also leveraged on digitalization and the spread of social networks.

As mentioned above, while the major clubs have adopted social media strategies and youth development approaches, the other clubs are entering into partnerships. Over the last decade, football has been in the midst of a geographic shift eastwards. Despite the aforementioned opportunities for European clubs to gain a foothold in Asia and the long-term benefits expected, there are also some limits and challenges to cope with. Indeed, the level of football in Asia is still relatively weak, as in the FIFA World Ranking, for instance, there are no Asian national teams among the top 30. Furthermore, wealth distribution is uneven, as not all local fans have the same purchasing power, while some governments operate through peculiar regulatory frameworks which do not always allow for an easy alignment with the clubs' needs. Time will tell whether such a new wave will bring clear benefits to the clubs and the countries involved.

East Asian Market Development

To establish and execute any idea, the most crucial aspect is to have a blueprint of the concept. Over the past few years, China and Japan have had a surge in their football, but the blueprint was created around the end of the 20th century. Almost at the end of the century, professional leagues were set up in both countries. Soon followed the 2002 world cup which was jointly held in South Korea and Japan. China made its maiden appearance at the FIFA world cup that year.

W. Manzenreiter mentions the enthusiasm of the fans from the Asian countries was 'zealous'. He stresses the commitment of the fans' support through the tournament journey to the round of 16 for the Japanese and semi-finals for the South Koreans. The loyalty of the fans towards their national teams' unprecedented achievement was a witness of the passion which would long stay rooted in Asia. At the 50th anniversary of Asian Football Confederation, FIFA president Joseph Blatter deemed Asia as the 'future of football'. (Manzenreiter & Horne, 2007)

They suggest that the rise of football in Asia is directly proportional to the commercialization of the sport, which is an integral part of the global economy. Along with global media awareness and foreign capital, American marketing intelligence was also an essential contribution to rising football popularity. In China, football icons such as Gary Lineker, Zico and Paul Gascoine were on board to get some experience and improve the quality of the teams. At the time, these were household names around the world, so it was natural that it enhanced some fan exposure to the sport as well. Although only a few Asian players have made it at the highest level in Europe, the impact of those players on the engagement of fans is massive. It

is not new to buy Asian players to be able to make profitable outcomes through business opportunities that arise from it. In 2001, when Ono Shinji signed for Feyenoord, the broadcaster obtained the rights to display matches in Japan. In 2002, when Lin Tie was loaned to Everton FC, all of their games were shown in China.

(Manzenreiter & Horne, 2007) John Connell talks about how football has acquired promise in China through globalization, commercialization and development through the concept of soft power. He says soft power is a concept where attraction comes from cultural, social and from the perspective of the interest of the people (in this case, the football fans) rather than forced military coercion.

The template of Chinese Super League

Indian Super League to Indian football is what Chinese Super League is to the development of football in China. India and China have more often than not remained in the same boat when it comes to the level of football, the finances available to develop football, the infrastructural development in football and mainly the population and the fan following which comes with it. However, the start of Chinese Super League and the finances put into it was one of the major things which has taken China ahead of India in terms of football development.

Indian Super League has started on that path as well with big money moves coming in, signing of high-quality European players and the acquisitions from foreign clubs. Hence, for this dissertation, it is necessary to understand the rise of Chinese Super League to then compare it to the current footballing scenario in India.

Chinese Super League was introduced in 2004 with 12 teams which was later increased to 16 teams. The introduction of the CSL fast-forwarded the process of globalization of football in China by years. China's determined effort to achieve soft power through football was enhanced during the presidency of Xi Jinping. Despite heavy investment and a thorough plan for development and globalization dreams, China's failure to reach the world cup in 2014 and a FIFA rank of 109 was a major setback. The following 2015-16 season saw an influx of big-name signing in the CSL from major European leagues. Players like Ramires (£25m) and Jackson Martinez(£31m) were signed from Chelsea and Atletico Madrid respectively. Experienced world-known managers were also brought in to improve the overall quality of the teams. The likes of Andre Villas Boas, Manuel

Pellegrini, Fabio Capello among others were hired for their experience of working with big European clubs and in the hope that they would possibly bring into light the potential of young local players along with developing the quality of the existing players. We can see that although the league was started with a heavy investment in 2004, it wasn't until the mid-2010's that Chinese football started attracting big names such as Paulinho, Alexandro Pato, John Mikel Obi and Oscar. Due to all these efforts taken by China, it currently occupies the 77th place in the FIFA world rankings.

The Chinese authorities have developed a medium- and long-term football development plan. Through this plan they view the development through three stages- to qualify for the FIFA world cup again, to host the FIFA world cup and finally to win the FIFA world cup by 2050. Huge investments have been made by companies such as the Wanda group who own shares in Atletico Madrid along with being sponsors of FIFA since 2016. Evergrande Real Estate Group have also made investments in various fields such as the football school they run in partnership with spanish giants Real Madrid.

The Indian Super League has been compared to the Chinese Super League due to its rise in popularity over the last decade, as it attends to a very similar fanbase, market and follows a similar franchise model. The Chinese Super League attained fame at the highest level due to its international partnerships with clubs and their financial capability to bring in a plenty of world-known players from clubs in well-developed leagues. The ISL has brought in well-known players but at the twilight of their careers and not during their peak years, which results in a reduced intensity and level of competition that the fans find themselves disappointed compared to the European leagues. The reason the ISL has not been able to attract at the peak of their careers is due to the quality and lack of popularity of the league. The shortage of resources in the league creates a further disadvantage for the league.

History of Club Partnerships in India

With a population of 1.3 billion people, the Indian market looks like an attractive prospect for the foreign market. The past few years have seen a massive increase in foreign capital investment in India. The ISL holds no different reading, with an interest of foreign football clubs to form tie-ups on different levels. To start with, the 2000s saw a couple of deals between English clubs and the local Indian clubs. Leicester City FC penned an agreement with East Bengal FC in 2002, and Wolverhampton Wanderers formed a tie-up with JCT FC in 2007, but unfortunately in both cases,

the deals were disbanded in a few months due to lack of basis and understanding of the arrangements. A number of agreements were put in place with I-league clubs such as well- Tata Football Academy with Sheffield United in 2010, DSK Shivajians with Liverpool FC in 2013 among the most famous ones.

Since the commencement of the Indian Super League, there have been a number of much more well-organised deals. Although for a short period of time, Club Atlético de Madrid was the first club to own 25% stakes in Atlético de Kolkata from the first ISL season in 2014 until 2017. As part of the deal, ATK was allowed to use Atlético Madrid's training facilities for pre-season and were helped to recruit foreign players and coaches. In spite of winning the ISL in 2014 and 2016, the deal broke down due to ATM having minority shares and opinion clashes with the other major stakeholders. In 2018, Atlético Madrid penned down a contract until the 2020-21 season with ISL club, Jamshedpur FC. For their first season in the ISL, Pune City FC partnered with Fiorentina FC selling them 15% of the club's shares. They were also allowed to use the training facilities in Italy as a part of their deal. Fiorentina FC helped to sign a number of foreign players, but the arrangement lasted just two years after disappointing performances by Pune City FC.

Hyderabad FC signed a deal with Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund in 2020. The agreement is signed for two years with the option to extend further if progressive development is observed. One of the first things this deal focuses on is for the Dortmund based club to oversee grassroots development of football at Hyderabad FC. In September 2019, Rangers FC formed a strategic partnership with Bengaluru FC. Swiss side FC Basel bought 26% of shares of Chennaiyin FC after they won the 2019 ISL. In November this year, FC Goa entered into a partnership with Red Bull Leipzig to improve development opportunities until 2023. The City Football Group (CFG), which owns the Manchester City Football Club made Mumbai City FC it's 8th acquisition after it bought 65% of shares in 2019.

Major Impact that the partnerships will bring

Through these newly formed partnerships amongst the clubs, most of the agenda remains pretty clear. The partnerships hope to develop the existing conditions of football in India through on and off the pitch improvements. For the European clubs, India forms a huge market, and in order to captivate this fan base, they see necessities of early investment. From all of the aforementioned partnerships, one common factor stands out- the longevity of these partnerships and deals. Most of the deals that were made throughout recent history are short term deals which lasted for a maximum of 3 years. In top teams of Europe, breaking through into the first team from the youth setup is a difficult task. Many top teams have had a relationship with other smaller teams in other countries for the purpose of loaning out young players in order to get some game time and experience of first-team football. This game time is also like an audition for the youngsters to showcase their talents and prove to their parent club that they are worthy of getting into the first-team squad.

Like we saw earlier about Manchester City's owners. City Group Football have been involved in multiple partnerships since 2013. New York City, Melbourne City, Yokohama F. Marinos, Montevideo City Torque, Girona FC, Sichuan Jiuniu, Lommel SK, Esperance Sportive Troyes Aube Champagne are all owned by the City Group. Mumbai City FC has been their latest addition to a list of growing investments. In 2014, Manchester City signed midfielder Frank Lampard from New York City after he had left Chelsea for the United States. This is a perfect example of how clubs can benefit from their feeder clubs. Manchester United was one of the first clubs that started the trend of having a club partnership for selective purposes.

Club partnerships can be very useful in the development of Indian football but only with the right strategies and implementations. Indian football has come a long way since the inception of the Indian Super League in terms of monetisation, the number of followers and the quality of football. There is still a long way to go to be able to match or compete with the level of football around the world.

Strategic Partnerships that currently exist in Indian Football

1) Mumbai City FC – Manchester City FC (City Football Group)

Established Year – 2019

Type of Partnership – 65% stake in Mumbai City FC

Mumbai City FC entered into a historic partnership with one of the biggest clubs in European Football, Manchester City after it was acquired by City Football Group. The City Football Group, one of the many business endeavors overseen by Emirati Royalty, has clear ambitions – own a marquee team on every continent, and utilize football's universal appeal as a bridge between economies and cultures. Since 2008, when they took over Manchester City, CFG has been active in acquiring clubs in different countries. Melbourne City FC, New York City FC, Girona FC to name a few.

With India developing as a football market, City Football Group wanted to establish their presence in the Indian market and Mumbai City FC, the ISL club was chosen. This partnership adds a lot of value not only to Mumbai City FC but also to ISL and Indian Football.

When viewed alongside the relative stature of the other clubs on the CFG roster, this new partnership shows plenty of promise. As a city, Mumbai's positioning as the financial capital of a country whose economy is destined to be a global front-runner is a perfect setting. However, while the coming years bring plenty of reason for optimism, it is key that even the staunchest fans of The Islanders reign in their short-term expectations. The franchise nature of the ISL makes it

competitive, with critics of the format arguing that it comes at the expense of long-term development of the sport.

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The impact of these partnerships was seen instantly as the acquisition brought major changes to the Mumbai City FC franchise. The whole administrative team including the CEO was changed and CFG brought their own people with expertise. City Football Group with their acquisitions in the past has shown their willingness to not only invest funds but improve the organizations as a whole.

Their work in improving infrastructure for the clubs they've invested in, working with a clear plan in sight to guarantee a profitable future. Be it improving the squad itself or integrating a strong grassroot plan, the City Football Group operates every club under its wing as they've done with the reigning Premier League champions. While Mumbai City can definitely benefit with their financial strength, but their reputation as a top Indian club will be amplified with professional investors overseeing their growth.

After acquiring the Mumbai based club, the impact was seen instantly as Mumbai City FC made 19 new signings and also appointed Sergio Lobera, a serial winner with FC Goa. Mumbai City went on to win the ISL that season and also qualified for the AFC Champions League. The onfield success was there to be seen after the acquisition of City Football Group as Mumbai City's quality improved after making new signings.

After sweeping the Indian Super League title along with the ISL League Winner's Shield in their first season as the co-owners of Mumbai City FC, the City Football Group will now turn its sights on longer-term project: Of making the club 'more sustainable from a talent standpoint'. CFG will

now look at investing in developing recreational football programs, bolstering their youth football teams, and the academy.

2) Bengaluru FC – Rangers FC

Established Year – 2019

Type of Partnership – 3 years strategic partnership



Bengaluru FC and Rangers FC signed a two year deal with an option to extend for one more year. This collaboration will present a number of football and commercial opportunities for both clubs. Rangers are looking to explore the Indian football market and grow their international audience. A scouting link-up will also be established which will allow the Scottish giants to identify India's best talents.

The exchange will also see Rangers Academy travel to India, have Rangers Soccer Schools hold training camps in Bengaluru and bring tour groups to Glasgow for a unique experience with the Rangers. A Rangers Legends team will also be making their way to India as part of the deal. Rangers Managing Director Stewart Robertson is excited ahead of the new partnership. He said: "We're excited and proud to announce our partnership with reigning Indian Super League champions Bengaluru FC, especially at this time when football in India, a country of 1.3 billion people, is entering a period of unprecedented growth. "The club's international strategy is a core-pillar to our growth plans and this partnership opens up Rangers to the vast football community

in India and provides a great platform for us to engage with our wider fan base, and the South Asian communities at home here in Scotland."

Speaking at the launch of the partnership, Mandar Tamhane, CEO, Bengaluru FC said, "It is a matter of pride for us to be partnering with Rangers FC – a club that is laden with history and is one of the top football brands globally."

"The partnership is based on an exchange of knowledge and services, one that we are looking to make the most of. Bengaluru FC's endeavour has been to help grow Indian football and our association with Rangers is a big step in that direction. We are excited about the development of our academy, soccer schools and grassroots programmes in the coming years. There is also the prospect of our first team visiting and playing a game at the Ibrox, which is something we are looking forward to. We are certain of the success of this partnership."

Rangers are proud to have developed a wide-ranging strategic partnership with Bengaluru F.C. focused on a number of important initiatives and we are pleased to extend this relationship to supporting the wider community in Bangalore and wider India. In response to the on-going crisis taking place in India due to the surge in Covid-19 cases, Rangers are offering direct assistance to key response groups who are providing critical relief services.

The partnership also led to a friendly being played in 2021 between Rangers FC and Bengaluru FC at Ibrox, the home stadium of Rangers. The partnership created a scouting link for Bengaluru FC to help identify and recruit talent from different parts of the country and, in the years to follow, veteran Rangers players will also pay these camps in India a visit and engage with supporters and youth prospects.

Bengaluru FC also received praise on social media after the club confirmed a charitable merchandise initiative with Rangers FC. This strategic partnership between the two clubs also led to the transfer of Bala Devi, the Indian Women football player to Rangers

3) FC Goa – RB Leipzig

Established Year – 2020

Type of Partnership – 3 years strategic partnership



FC Goa announced a three-year strategic partnership with Bundesliga giants RB Leipzig that will help garner opportunities both in the football and business spheres for the two clubs. RB Leipzig has been one of the rising forces in German football in recent times ever since their formation in 2009. The club worked its way up the league structure and within a period of 7 years, secured promotion to the Bundesliga by 2016. A season later, in 2017/18 the Club ensured a place in the UEFA Champions League. The 2019/20 season again saw them create history, reaching the semi-finals of the premier European competition.

With a vision to grow the beautiful game, the coming together of two of the biggest names in India and Germany presents an opportunity to exchange ideas and make footballing knowledge more easily accessible. The primary focus of the partnership will be Youth Development.

During this period of collaboration, coaches from RB Leipzig's Academy will be welcomed to Goan shores to impart knowledge via workshops. FC Goa will also be sending coaches and players from the club's youth set-up for further training and learning the intricacies of the game at RB Leipzig's Youth Academy.

The Gaurs and The Red Bulls will work in tandem not only to help each other to grow internationally, but also for the development of football in India. The partnership will see both clubs launch a nationwide Soccer Camp programme. The FC Goa National Soccer Camps, both

online and offline, supported by RB Leipzig will make superior footballing skills & knowledge accessible to all football enthusiasts across India.

With an aim to make football knowledge more accessible and helping the children of Goa learn to play the FC Goa way, the FC Goa soccer camps were launched during the 2018/19 season. After a rousing reaction from everyone in Goa, the Gaurs will look to step up even further, this time with the support of RB Leipzig. The 2020/21 season saw the FC Goa Soccer Camps being held online due to raging pandemic.

The footballing youth now be able to learn about ingredients that are needed at a young age to take up football and strive to be the best at it. Coaches from both FC Goa and RB Leipzig have come up with a unique curriculum and novel approach which allows for learning as per one's own pace, personalized feedback and a tailored approach for all players.

In the years ahead, the Gaurs will look to conduct these camps in cities around India, giving the youth a chance to learn from the best and showcase their skills. These camps will also help popularize the game and take modern coaching techniques to the interiors of the country. The top players scouted through this program will then be accepted into a comprehensive training program under the Technical Directors of both Clubs.

In this collaboration, the focus will be given to help coaches get better footballing education. Coaching teams from RB Leipzig will be welcomed to Goan shores to conduct workshops for the youth coaches at FC Goa. The Gaurs will also send coaches to Leipzig to accumulate further knowledge about the beautiful game and inculcate best practices from one of the most consistent footballing nations. FC Goa will also be conducting workshops in Germany with the view of imparting knowledge to the German youth about playing the FC Goa way.

4) Hyderabad FC – Borussia Dortmund FC

Established Year – 2020

Type of Partnership – 2 years strategic partnership



With this agreement HFC became the Official Club Partner of BVB in India. A first for such a cooperation for HFC and the fourth one for BVB with its currently ongoing club partnerships with Thai Premier League Club Buriram United, Australia's NPL Club Marconi FC and Iwate Grulla Morioka in Japan.

Development of youth players has been the focus of the partnership between Borussia Dortmund and Hyderabad FC. Under the partnership, Borussia Dortmund will focus on building and supporting Hyderabad FC on its academy structure as well as guiding their coaches on coaching education, according to an official statement announcing the partnership between the two clubs.

Suresh Letchmanan, managing director - BVB Asia Pacific, added that the Nizams might get a clearer idea of everything if both teams collaborate on the field rather than virtually. He also explained the goals both clubs wish to achieve during their tie-up. "Virtual stuff is great but nothing like being on the ground. We want to have the team here and vice versa, not just the players but the staff and management," he stated. "There are four key objectives we want to achieve alongside HFC. One is to have our coaches in India. I think this is long overdue. We are hopeful that at some stage, we can have them there to share our philosophy as well as create new touchpoints for the youth players, giving them an understanding of our system and showing them the BVB way face to face." "Secondly, to have the Hyderabad team coming over to Dortmund. We are fortunate enough to have the academy train pretty close to the first team. It's inspirational

for the young players who want to progress to the senior side. So, these are experiences that we would like to share in person with everyone from HFC."

Borussia Dortmund will help in developing young players and will now focus on building and supporting Hyderabad FC on its academy structure as well as guiding their coaches on coaching education. The partnership will also include BVB's expertise in technology to drive innovation, enhance connectivity between the clubs and positively grow and expand its fanbase.

In addition to providing excellent brand visibility and raising each of the club's profile among football fans around the Indian sub-continent, the partnership is particularly good news for Indian football fans as it shows a long-term commitment of one of the biggest German football brands to the country's footballing ecosystem.

5) Thane City FC – Southampton City FC

Established Year – 2021

Type of Partnership – 3 years strategic partnership



The Indian club signed a partnership that will see Southampton FC's Football Partnership team supporting Thane City's development goals over the next three years. Thane's aim is to create an

environment that challenges, inspires, and encourages aspiring footballers, by enabling them to reach their fullest potential. The partnership will see a range of opportunities for Thane City FC staff, players, and parents to engage with Southampton FC's coach and player development program. SFC Academy staff will also undertake a visit to Thane each year to work with both coaches and players.

The Southampton model will help to create one of the best Residential Academy Set-Ups in India. The aim is to have each player, coach, and parent in our setup to experience Southampton FC's Curriculum here. The partnerships would thus incorporate player development programs, and coach education program as well.

6) FC Bengaluru United – Sevilla FC

Established Year – 2021

Type of Partnership – 5 years collaboration



Spanish football club Sevilla FC and FC Bengaluru United announced a five-year collaboration in 2021. Through this partnership, Sevilla FC will look to strengthen their presence in the Indian football ecosystem. For FC Bengaluru United, owned by Gaurav Manchanda, this "represents a great opportunity to share Sevilla FC's vast sporting experience and know-how".

As part of the agreement, fans will be able to see FC Bengaluru United as well as their academy players in Sevilla FC's traditional white and red colours from the start of the 2021-2022 season. Sevilla FC and FC Bengaluru United will also explore opportunities to set up shared footballing schools in Karnataka.

As part of the endeavour, Sevilla FC will assist FC Bengaluru United in various aspects such as sports management, analysis, talent spotting, player development and optimisation of performance and usage of sport technology.

Commenting on the partnership, Manchanda said, "Sevilla FC's desire to be part of the Indian Football journey is a great validation of the growing global appeal of Indian Football. Their decision to partner with us is also testimony to the potential of FC Bengaluru United." Jose Castro Carmona, president of Sevilla FC, added: "For Sevilla FC, this partnership with FC Bengaluru United represents a step in the right direction. It is a great opportunity for Sevilla FC to grow in a country like India, a country that is key to our international expansion strategy.

7) Odisha FC – Avai FC

Established Year – 2021

Type of Partnership – 3 years collaboration



Odisha Football Club, in 2021 announced the finalisation of a strategic football and commercial partnership with Brazil's Avaí Futebol Clube as a part of OFC's Global Football Alliance initiative. This relationship marks the club's and country's first partnership with a Brazilian football club.

This historic tie aims to bring many benefits and opportunities to both the clubs and the countries. The primary objective is to strengthen footballing and commercial relationships in order to have mutual gains in their sporting and wider activities.

The partnership further expands Odisha FC's global presence and focuses on developing players and commercial opportunities on a domestic and international stage.

Avaí Futebol Clube, is a Brazilan football team from Florianopolis in Santa Catarina. Renowned for a strong Academy with many players playing for the national team and focus on youth development, the history of the Club dates back almost a century.

The agreement with Avaí Futebol Clube generates great access to this unlimited source of talent, specially with the background of Avaí in developing youth players. Also, is an opportunity for the technical staff of both clubs to exchange football knowledge and applicate it to the teams."

The relationship will involve sharing of technical information, working with basic categories, training and even the exchange of players. This partnership will put all professionals from Avaí's technical committee and from the youth categories available for the development of football in Odisha.

Avaí has a strong history in all youth categories, it is a training club recognized by the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF), with the revelation of talents for the main and international team, which can help in this process. Avai Head coach Claudinei Oliveira, who has already participated in a video conference with the technical managers of Odisha, will also be able to help with his experience, knowledge and ideas. Claudinei spoke with Francisco "Kiko" Ramírez González, the current coach of Odisha FC, a former professional athlete, from Spain, about the development of the joint work.

Growth opportunities in business and commercial prospects will be a key development driver. Both countries have long-standing trade associations and parallels. This symbiotic relationship is a key factor both clubs wish to pursue through their existing business relations in each country and respective states.

A long-term strategic plan is being constructed to use the power of football in connecting companies and institutions in both continents to the betterment of trade and educational associations.

8) Chennai City FC – FC Basel

Established Year – 2020

Type of Partnership – 26% stakes in Chennai City FC



With guidance from Swiss club FC Basel, the former I-League champions have an ambitious grassroots project in the works. It wouldn't be a huge surprise to say Chennai City FC were one of the catalysts behind the increasing stature of football in Tamil Nadu in recent times.

The current jewels of Tamil Nadu football - Edwin Vanspaul, Dhanpal Ganesh, Nandhakumar Sekar, Michael Soosairaj and Michael Regin - all owe Chennai City in some part for the rise in their fortunes. Ever since the Netaji Sports Club was taken over by Rohit Ramesh and re-christened as Chennai City FC, developing local talent and giving chances to youngsters have been a priority. It was evident even when the club entered the I-League through corporate entry.

With the expertise and know-how of Swiss outfit FC Basel, who bought 26 per cent shares in the club in February 2019, Chennai City have revamped their youth set-up and are looking to establish a state-of-the-art academy in Coimbatore.

When Basel invested in Chennai City, most expected an influence in the first team with exchange of coaches and players. However, the Swiss club were more keen on grassroots programme and the development of a youth academy. The long-term vision was clear for the Chennai City management and Basel, right from the moment they entered into an

agreement."Their philosophy is similar to ours. We want to target young footballers from the community at a very young age. Our main focus during our initial conversations with them was focused on our grassroots programme," revealed Chennai City owner Rohit Ramesh.

"FC Basel look at it as an investment and they know India has a lot of potential. But they know we need help in terms of youth development. They have a brilliant academy and have been running it successfully for quite some time. They are trying to help us by sharing the knowledge and setting up an academy," said Chennai City's recently appointed U19 head coach Mouriya Sethupandian.

While the majority of the forays made into India by European clubs end up as publicity stunts with little to no exchange of ideas or staff, the case with the Chennai City project is different. Basel's seriousness is evident by the fact that Massimo Ceccaroni who was the head of academies at Basel for the last nine years is shifting bases to India to lead the project in an official capacity. More importantly, Ceccaroni is someone who played his entire professional career at Basel and is considered a club legend. In fact, his shirt number is retired by the club in his honour.

They plan to take in about 60-70 kids into the academy, with around 50 per cent of the kids from Tamil Nadu ideally. The facility will have a dedicated staff consisting of a team of 11 coaches including Massimo apart from non-technical staff like wardens, cooks and the likes.

Importantly, the club is planning to offer a full scholarship to the kids selected to be a part of the academy. What is key here is that it is not just football that the kids will get a chance to learn, their academic needs are taken care of too. The club have already secured a partnership with a nearby school to take care of their school education. And the plan is afoot to help them complete their university education too so that those players who do not make the jump up to a professional level have something to fall back on in their career.

Which is why the club is planning to have teams till the U23 level in the academy apart from U13, U15 and U18. Incidentally, the club did not field a team in the U18 I-League this season due to accreditation issues. However, they will be fielding the same from the coming season.

While they plan to develop players from their residential academy from the age of 13, the various soccer schools and grassroots programmes (in Chennai) in the works for kids aged 8-12 will ensure they are able to identify and nurture talent from a very young age. The dream is to one day develop a player who will make it into European football on merit, according to Rohit. However, both Chennai City and Basel are under no impressions that it will be easy. What is clear is both parties understand it is a long project, but the indications are that they are in for the long haul.

Fan Following of Indian Clubs and its partners

ISL team	Partners	Instagram		Facebook		Twitter	
		ISL	Partners	ISL	Partners	ISL	Partners
Mumbai City FC	Manchester City	162k	21.8M	568k	39M	174.9k	8.8M
Bengaluru FC	Rangers FC	234k	443k	358k	721k	281.2K	585.3k
Chennaiyin FC	FC Basel	297k	199k	464k	1.8M	875.9K	24.1k
FC Goa	RB Leipzig	303k	892k	455k	573k	340.7K	120.8k
Hyderabad FC	Borussia Dortmund	56.2k	12M	34k	14M	11.6K	3.5M

Taking a look at the table, it is pretty evident that most of the ISL clubs with partnerships have a below-average social media presence, especially with a consideration of the total population of the country. With exceptions of Chennaiyin FC which exceed the number of followers on Instagram and Twitter, and FC Goa which exceed the number of followers on Twitter, all the other clubs have a social media presence which can be improved further. Even if comparisons are made between the ISL clubs with some of the IPL teams from corresponding cities, it is clear that football visibility in India has not quite reached its full potential. Instagram which is the most used social media platform for the age group of 18-35 according to Kellogg(2020) shows that in the IPL teams Mumbai(6.1M), Bengaluru(5.2M), Chennai(6.2M), Hyderabad(2M) have all got followers in millions. The same can't be said for most of the ISL clubs; hence, the idea of community building and marketing to get this attention at this stage is

necessary to create a culture amongst locals. In terms of partnerships, they can use this as a strategy to develop significant interest amongst local fans. The social media platforms of the clubs barely display a presence of these deals which have taken place for reasons unknown.

A thorough reading of the data from the 2019-20 season reveals that 13k supporters were present at the stadiums on an average with around 40.9% capacity of seats being filled throughout the season. In terms of stadium capacities and structure, much can't be said in terms of investment required to be made. However, there has been significant evidence around the globe that stadium renovations can have an impact on the economic value and attractiveness of the club. The best example that comes to mind is the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, which was built last year to hold a crowd of 62,000, with 65 food and drink outlets and a microbrewery inside the stadium. The pitch is retractable, and a new surface emerges which is used for NFL games and other events such as concerts. The stadium has uplifted the excitement amongst fans and brought people around the world to visit and experience the stadium atmosphere, especially on matchdays

Chapter 4 - Special Reference to Manchester United vs Mumbai City FC

The main objective of the dissertation is to understand the impact that the several strategic partnerships that exist have had on the footballing landscape in India. In order to find the different technicalities which exist between European Football Club and an Indian Super League Club, this special reference between Manchester United vs Mumbai City FC has been carried out.

Through this special reference, the objective is to understand the major differences that exist between the two clubs based on 3 parameters over a period of time:

- Performance
- Infrastructure
- Fans

Manchester United Football Club

Manchester United Football Club is a professional football club based in the Old Trafford Area of Manchester, England. The club competes in the Premier League, the topflight of English Football. Manchester United is one of the most successful clubs in English football, having won a record 2 League titles, 12 FA Cups, five League cups, and a record 21 FA Community Shields. They have

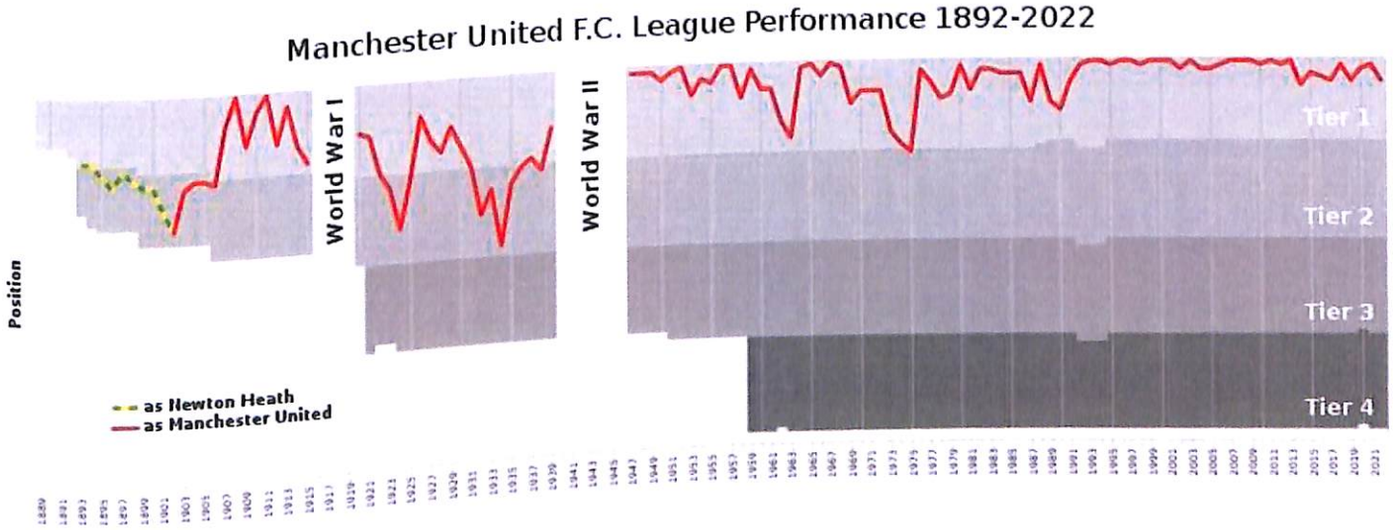
won the Champions League three times, and the UEFA Europa League, the UEFA CUP WINNERS CUP, the UEFA Super Cup, the Intercontinental Cup and the FIFA World Cup once each.

Manchester United is one of the most widely supported football clubs in the world. Manchester United was the highest earning football club in the world for 2016–17, with an annual revenue of €676.3 million, and the world's third most valuable football club in 2019, valued at £3.15 billion ($3.81 billion).

Manchester United as mentioned above has been one of the most successful clubs in English Football and European Football. When it comes to global fan following as well, Manchester United have always been one of the top sides with fan following all around the world.

The recent history of Manchester United has not been satisfactory due to their poor performance in the last decade. However, overall they have been one of the most consistent sides in the English top-flight league.

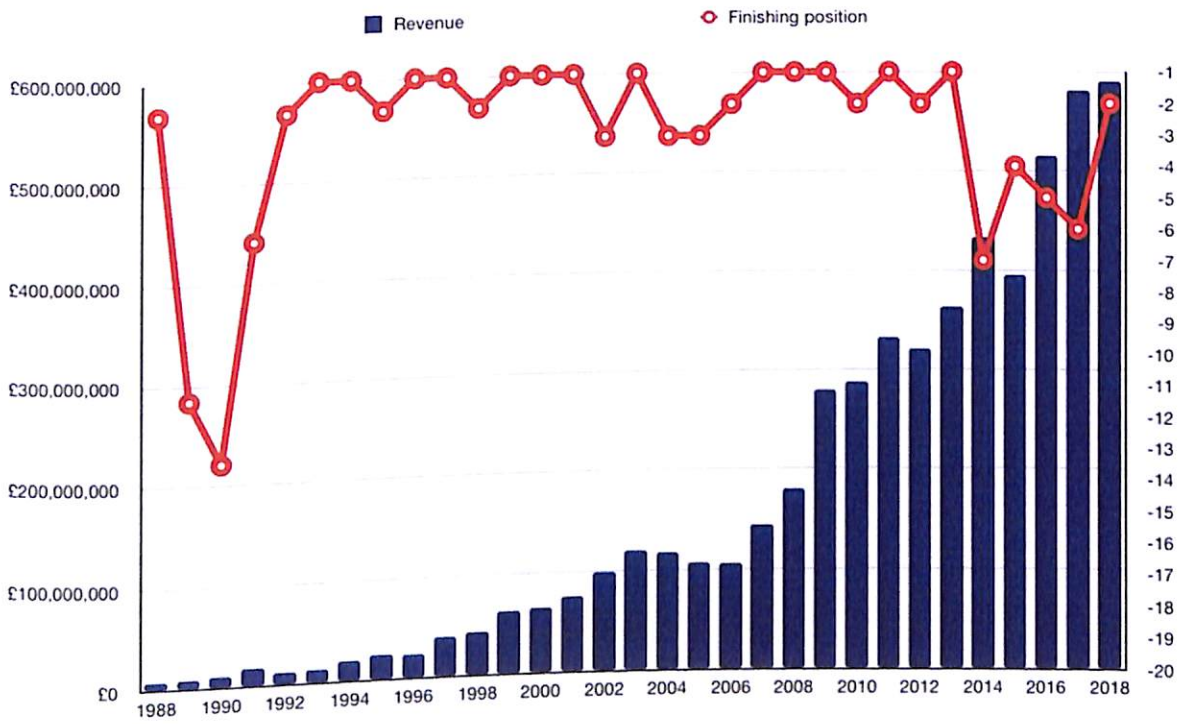
Performance of Manchester United over a period of time



The graph above, gives a detailed look at Manchester United's performance over the years. Since the start of Premier League era in 1892 till 2022 season which finished on Sunday. As mentioned above, which is visible in the graph as well, Manchester United have been consistent

performers over a period of time. Having won 20 premier League titles in the Premier League era, rightly they are on top quite frequently in the graph above.

Talking about the recent history, since the 2012-13 season, United have not been able to win the Premier League title. The departure of Sir Alex Ferguson, United's most successful coach led to the downfall of the club recently. Towards the end of a disappointing 2013/14 season, with United unable to win any of the cup competitions and lying in seventh place, it was announced that Moyes had left the club. On the same day, 22 April 2014, the Reds' longest serving, and most-decorated player Ryan Giggs was placed in temporary charge until the end of the season.



The above graph shows a mixed bag of reality for Manchester United. The graph depicts the fnishing positions of Manchester United in the league and the revenue that they gained over the same period of time. Despite performing poorly in the last decade, Manchester United has still made a lot of revenue through its commercial aspects. While such a high revenue is always positive, the sporting performance should not take a back seat.

Modern sports team exists to do two things. First, to win – its sporting aims. Then, to make as much money as possible – its commercial aims. The two can coexist in harmony, but not always. Increasingly, United are a case study in what happens when commercial aims triumph over sporting aims. This is what happens when commercial aims are embraced with such gusto.

The numbers of downloads and subscriptions become the metrics by which teams judge themselves. United have perfected the art of victory without needing to win on the pitch. Woodward and his team have developed an institution that no longer depends upon the results of its football team to sell itself to fans, advertisers and broadcasters the world over. The first team is now an addendum to the serious business: making as much money as possible.

Infrastructure of Manchester United



Manchester United are home to one of the most iconic stadiums in the world, Old Trafford. The legends of Old Trafford are known for a long time. With a capacity of 74,140 it is the 11th largest stadium in Europe. Manchester United are expected to extend Old Trafford by approximately 15,000 seats to boost the capacity of their famous stadium to around 88,000. That would make Old Trafford the UK's second biggest stadium, behind the 90,000-seater Wembley.

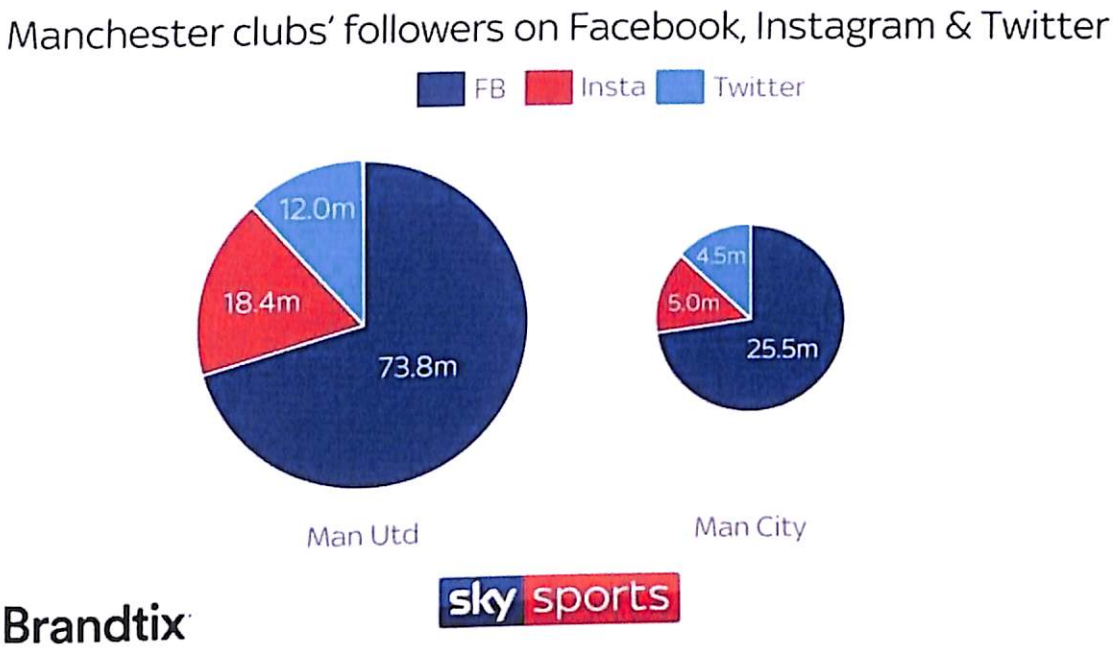
Despite United frequently failing to impress on the pitch this season, there remains a massive demand for tickets at Old Trafford. United already have over 50,000 season-ticket holders, plus a further 100,000 on a waiting list.



Trafford Training Centre is the training ground and academy headquarters of English football club Manchester United F.C. It is near the village of Carrington, Greater Manchester, England, and replaced The Cliff as the club's training ground in 2000.

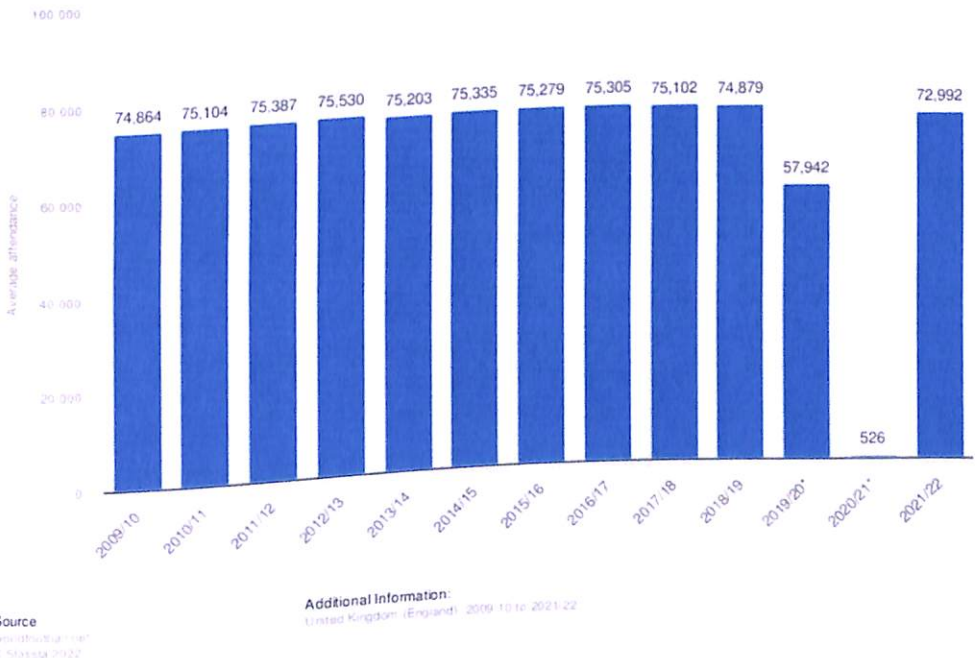
Fan following of Manchester United

United are recognised as one of the most valuable sports teams in the world by Forbes with an appeal to football fans that is comparable to that of Clasico rivals Real Madrid and Barcelona. For example, as of March 2022, Manchester United's combined social media following (across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube) stood at 180.2 million followers.



The above-mentioned pie chart clearly depicts the difference between the two Manchester sides when it comes to fan following. Manchester Unite boast one of the top fan following in the world despite their poor performance over the last few years.

Average per game attendance of Manchester United from 2009/10 to 2021/22



Source

Additional Information:

It can be seen here, that despite Manchester United's poor performance over the last decade their stadium attendance for home games over the last 10 years has been close to full capacity. An average of 75,000 fans attend their home games every season which makes it one of the top clubs in that category in England.

This overview of Manchester United's fan following suggests that they boast one of the biggest and most loyal fans in club football.

This special reference of Manchester United was to understand the results of the club's performance, infrastructure and fans over the past few years.

Mumbai City Football Club

Mumbai City is an professional football club based out of Mumbai, Maharashtra which plays in the Indian Super League. It was founded in 2014. Mumbai City became the first Indian team to win a game in the AFC Champions League. In 2019, City Football Group bought 65% stakes in the club which made it a sister club to Manchester City.

Performance of Mumbai City FC over the years

Mumbai City FC initially were a bottom half team. In the first 4 seasons of ISL, Mumbai City never finished into the top 4. After the acquisition of City Football Group, changes were made to the club for their improvement. Mumbai City made 19 new signings in the 2019 season and

appointed Sergio Lobera as coach. It led the side to their first ever ISL title as they also became the first side to win both the ISL Shield and Cup.

Recently, Mumbai City FC also became the first Indian side to win a game in the AFC Champions League. They went out in the group stage after winning two and drawing once. In conclusion, Mumbai City since the start of ISL in 2014, performed poorly with their best performance coming in the 2018 season where they lost in semis before winning the double next season.

The likes of Diego Forlan, Nicolas Anelka, Freddie Ljunberg played for Mumbai City FC in the initial seasons, but they were not able to have any impact.

Infrastructure of Mumbai City FC



Mumbai City FC shifted their home base to Mumbai Football Arena, in Andheri from the third season as DY Patil stadium was allotted to go under construction for 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup. Mumbai Football Arena is relatively small but a multi-use FIFA and AFC approved stadium, located in the heart of the city. i.e. Andheri. Mumbai Football Arena has a capacity of 7,790 seats. The Arena is filled regularly by the team's dedicated fan base. The stadium also has a separate section to accommodate Away fans. The Mumbai Football Arena is modified during the ISL season to incorporate a VIP stand to the east of the stadium.

Fan Following of Mumbai City FC

Mumbai City FC is reputed to have one of the most vocal fan bases in India. The *West Coast Brigade* is the official fan club of Mumbai City FC, which is known for its support to the team at both home and away matches. West Coast Brigade is held in high regard by the MCFC management, as they have dedicated a stand for West Coast Brigade members in the Mumbai Football Arena.

The players and the coach have often acknowledged the fans' support in the success and always engaged in fans interaction and promotional activities. In 2017, the Islanders became the first club in ISL history to announce a special section for away fans as a progressive step towards football fan culture.



As we can see in the figure above, Mumbai City has the 6th highest fan following in Indian Super League when it comes to Instagram. The club needs to increase its social media presence and activate new strategies in order to increase fan following.

Through this study carried out in the special reference to Manchester United vs Mumbai City FC, there are certain findings that we can look at:

- Manchester United is one of the most successful clubs in English Football while on the other hand Mumbai City has been inconsistent over a period of years.

- The impact of City Football Group on Mumbai City FC can be clearly seen as after their arrival, Mumbai have performed well and became the first side to win the double.

- While on one hand Manchester United boast one of the highest capacity stadiums, Mumbai City FC have the lowest capacity stadium in ISL.

- This suggests that Mumbai City FC need to revamp their stadium infrastructure and expand it to take the club at a higher level, especially after the arrival of City Football Group.

- The fan following of Manchester United has been consistent over the years, while Mumbai City FC have struggled to fill the capacity of the stadium.

- Mumbai City FC need to undertake fan engagement activities in order to improve stadium attendance for their games.

- Overall, it is difficult to compare two sides of very different stature because of the age of ISL and Mumbai City FC.

Chapter 5 - Research Methodology

The research's main objective is to understand the impact that strategic partnerships have had on Indian football. There are many existing partnerships between Indian and European clubs. The aim is to understand what these partnerships have led to. This study will mainly be qualitative to understand the different types of partnerships that exist and what these partnerships are based on.

The idea behind qualitative research is it gives an in-depth analysis of diverse points and their knowledge or lack thereof, about club partnerships. Other reasons to carry out qualitative research are coming across different points of view, which might spark ideas for further research. Since there is no existing research available at this point on the same topic, this will be an inductive approach, and a theory will be proposed after analysing the obtained data.

Data collection

There are multiple sources of data collected for the purpose of this research. Both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed thoroughly to display the potential of the market, and possible solutions were proposed to bridge the gap.

Primary data- This study mainly focuses on primary data obtained through a survey conducted by the author. The survey was formed by a list of questions which are created to understand the behaviour of a football fan in India. The goal of the survey was to recognize the expectations of fans from the ISL and influence those club partnerships made on their decisions. It also helped to gain an understanding of the knowledge about the awareness that the audience has on the development of the sport.

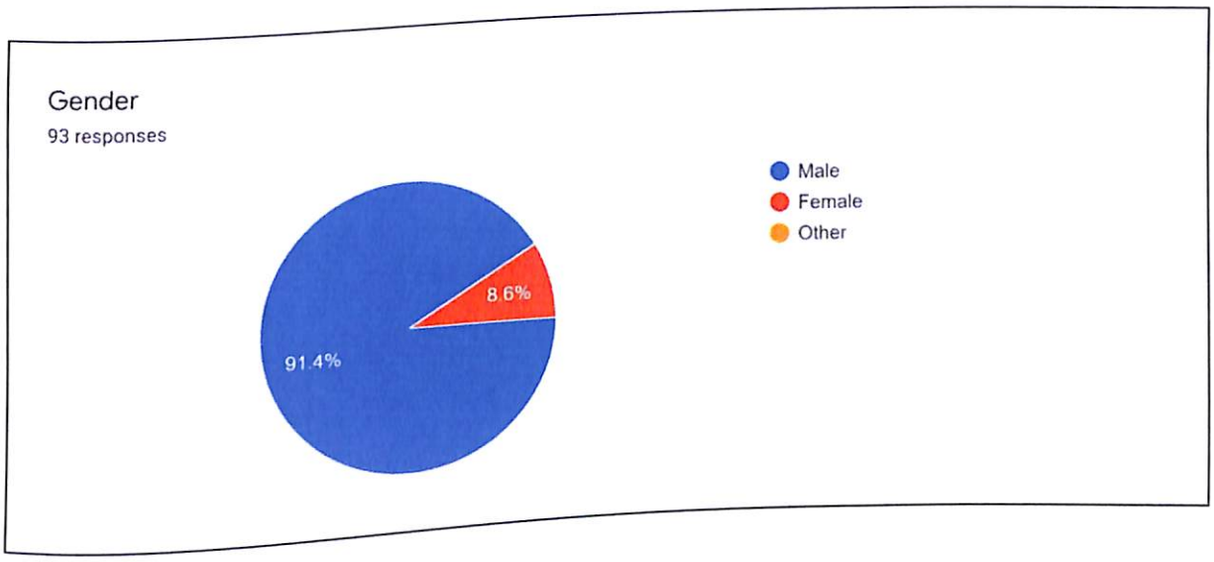
Secondary data- For the purpose of this research, secondary data was acquired from various literature on factors such as social media, grassroots development initiatives, stadium capacities and potential growth, club partnership deals and more. The idea behind studying this data is to find out what initiatives have been taken in the development of football in different aspects which are mentioned above and to recognize the gap in between the existing strategies and possible developments

Chapter 6 - Data Analysis

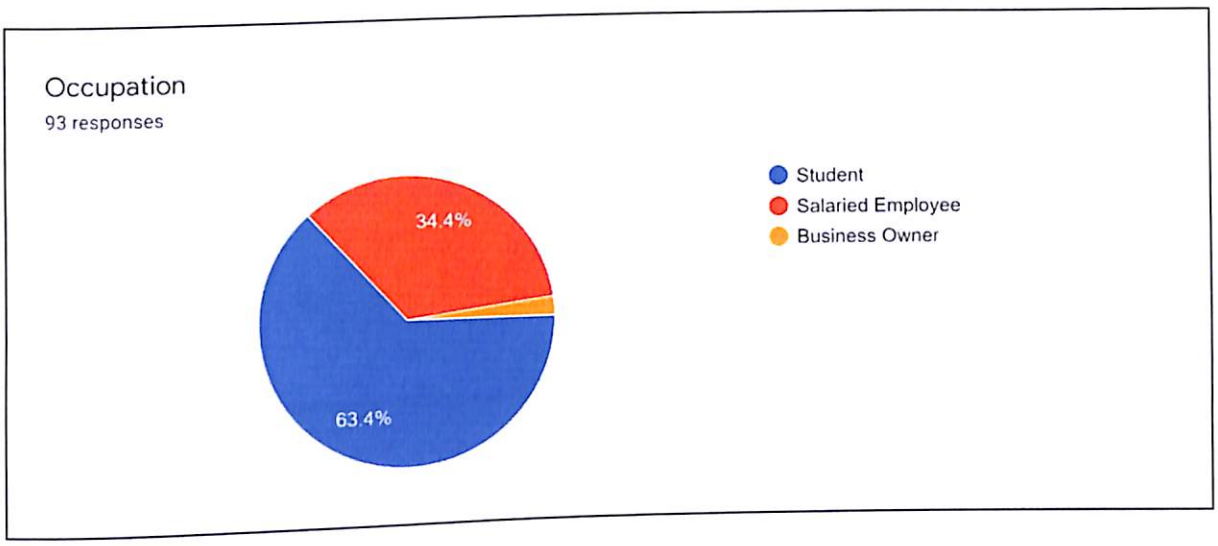
This section focuses on the analysis of the Primary Data which was collected through a survey conducted on google forms. The survey was completed with a total response of 93 football fans. The aim of this survey was to understand what the fans think about the strategic partnerships. Whether the fans are aware of these strategic partnerships and their perspective towards it.

This primary research will help to understand a key perspective towards the dissertation topic. The survey aims to answer the question. "Fans perspective towards the impact of these strategic partnerships."

The set of responses obtained from the football fans is the basis of understanding transactional and non-transactional points. Let us now study the samples derived from the survey.

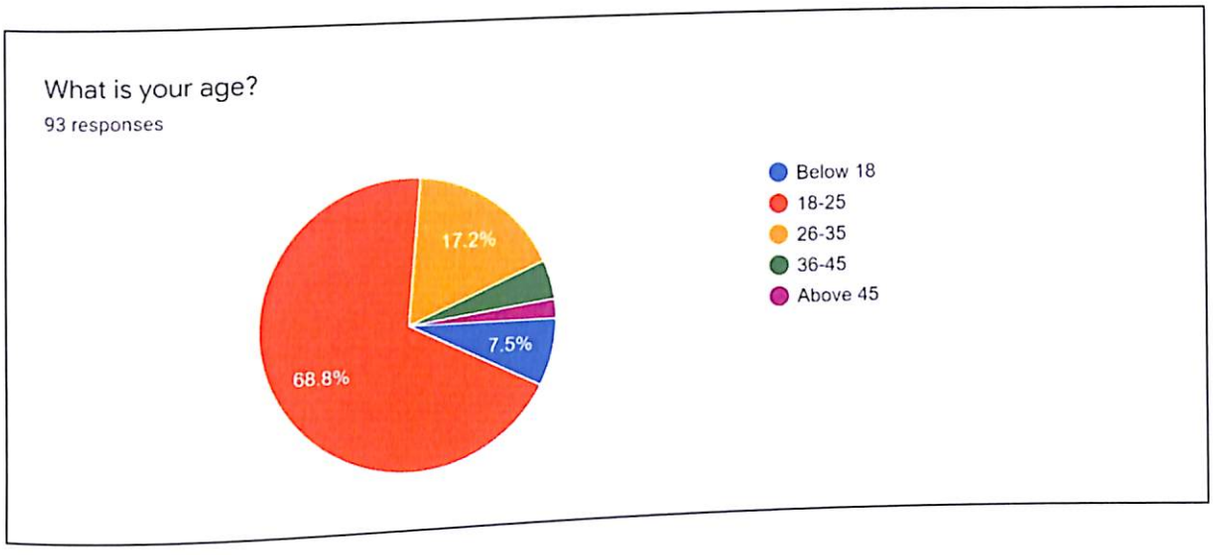


Amongst the 93 respondents merely 8 (8.6%) were females, which is in itself a testament to the fact that efforts need to be made to make the sport aware amongst girls, especially the younger generation. The purpose of gender was mainly to understand the interest of girls who watch the sport as well and value their presence in the game. With women's football coming up strongly around the globe, it will be an important aspect in the future of football in India as well.

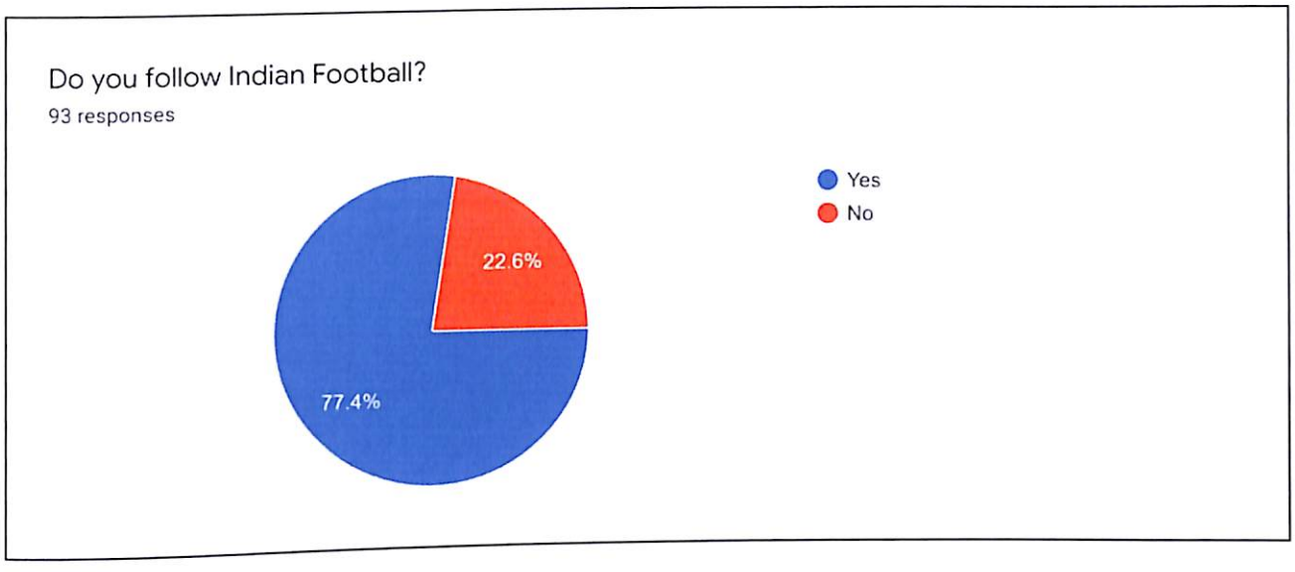


Majority of this survey was answered by students which comes under 'youth.' Although there were 34.4% responses from people who are employees and 2.2% from people who are business owners.

This tells us that the target age group for this survey was students who make up for 63.4% of the responses.

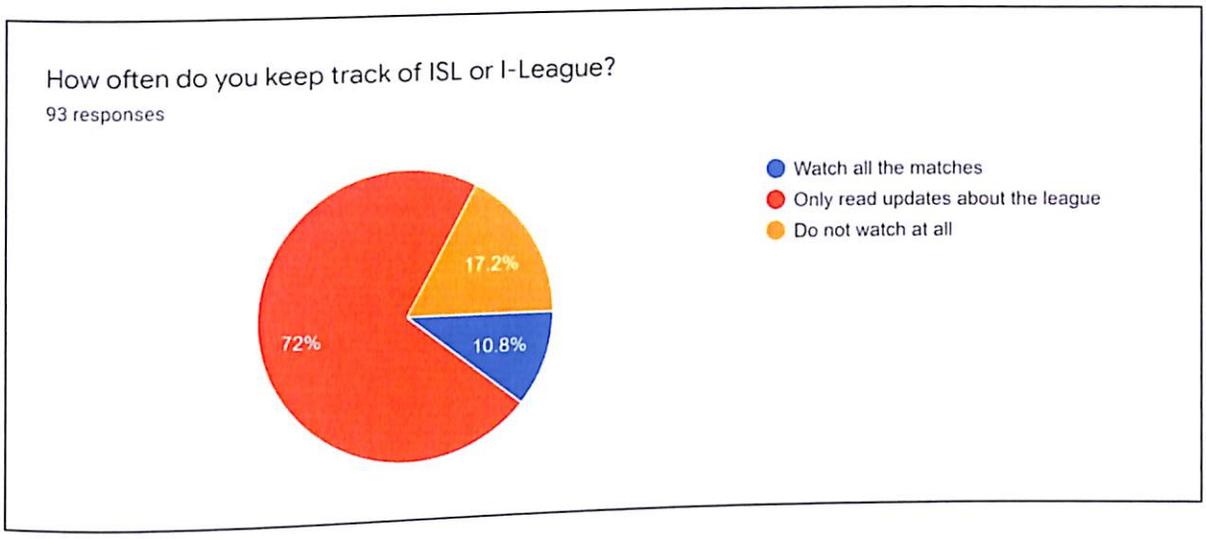


Although there are enough responses from all age categories as can be seen from the pie chart, the best part of the sample (68.8%) ages from 18-25 with the next best being age group 26-35 with 17.2% of responses. There are almost equal number of responses from the age group 36-45 and above 45. Having a majority in such a young age group is important as they are the future so to get their inputs on these matters means an important contribution in the analysis of the survey and for future studies on the matters of Indian football. There were 7.5% of respondents below the age of 18 as well and their opinions will show diversity amongst the age groups. Each group will have a different view towards the sport and these views will help to organise a structure for recommendations.



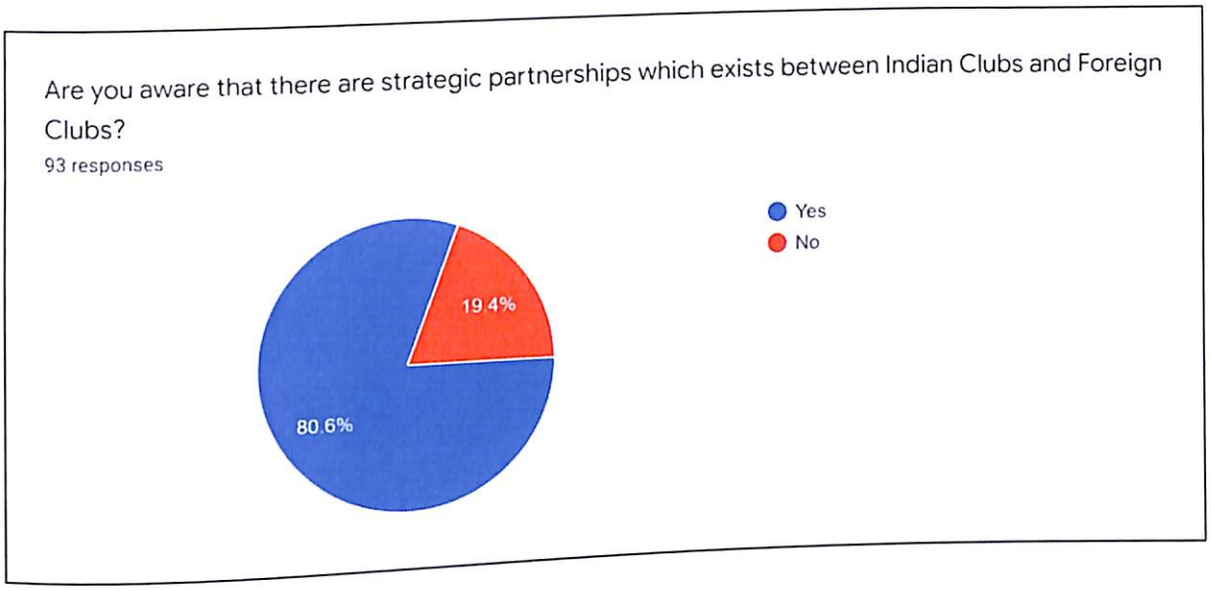
This was one of the first questions in the research to understand whether the football fans follow Indian Football. Many a times what happens is, football fans tend to follow European Leagues but they do not follow Indian Football.

As it has been the case here, out of the total 93 respondents, 77.4% of them follow Indian Football in some or the other way while the rest 22.6% do not follow Indian Football.



The next question was to understand whether these football fans have an idea of ISL or I-League. As it turns out majority of fans (72%) only read updates about the league and do not watch matches of ISL or I-League. This tells us a lot about the viewership of ISL or I-League.

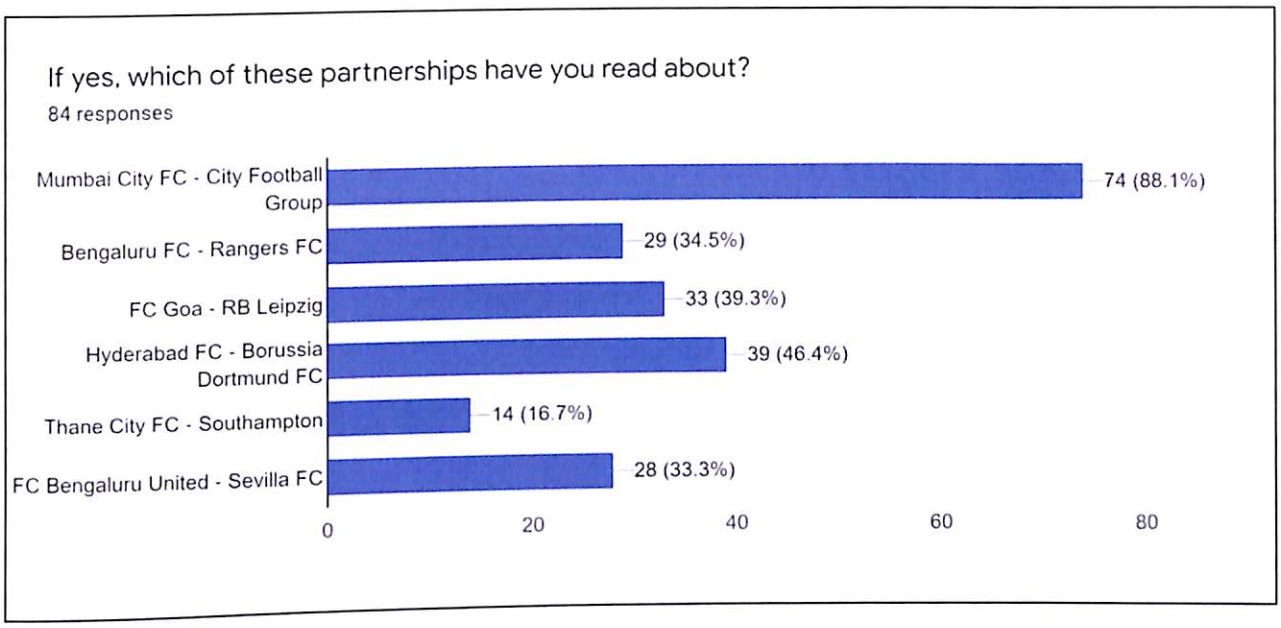
Then there are 17.2% of respondents who do not watch at all while a merely 10.8% of people watch the matches regularly. This shows a clear lack of interest of football fans in Indian football.



The next set of questions focused on the topic of dissertation that is the impact of strategic partnerships between Indian and Foreign Clubs. Hence to start off with, a question was asked to know how many fans are actually aware that there are strategic partnerships which exist between Indian and Foreign Clubs.

As it turns out, 80.6% of respondents were aware of some or the other strategic partnerships that currently exist in Indian Football. The main reason behind this being the fan following of clubs such as Manchester City and Borussia Dortmund who have strategic partnerships with an Indian club.

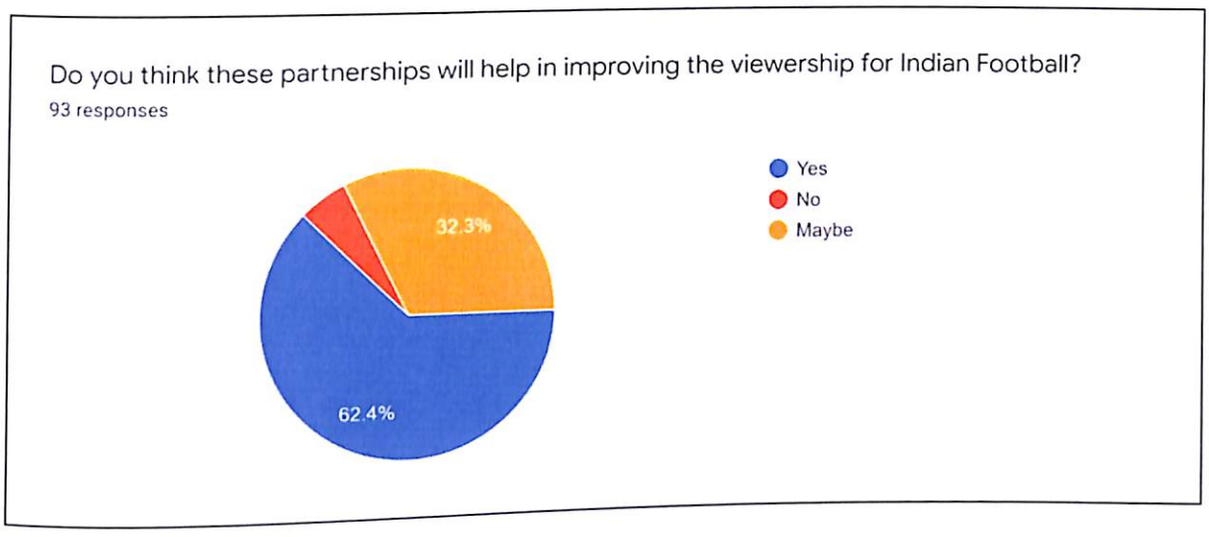
The European clubs have posted on their social media accounts about these strategic partnerships and that looks to be the primary reason that there is awareness about these strategic partnerships that exist.



In the follow up question, the respondents had to choose the strategic partnerships which they knew about. Not surprisingly, 88.1% of respondents knew about the Mumbai City FC and City Football Group partnership. The main reason being the fan following of Manchester City and certain fan engagements activities which were carried out regarding this partnership through the social media channels of Man City.

Next popular was the Borussia Dortmund and Hyderabad partnership again due to the fan following of Dortmund. There were similar set of responses in and around 35% for the partnerships of Bengaluru-Rangers, FC Goa-RB Leipzig and FC Bengaluru United and Sevilla.

This tells us that the % of people aware about a certain partnership is based on the popularity of the foreign club which is involved in the strategic partnership.

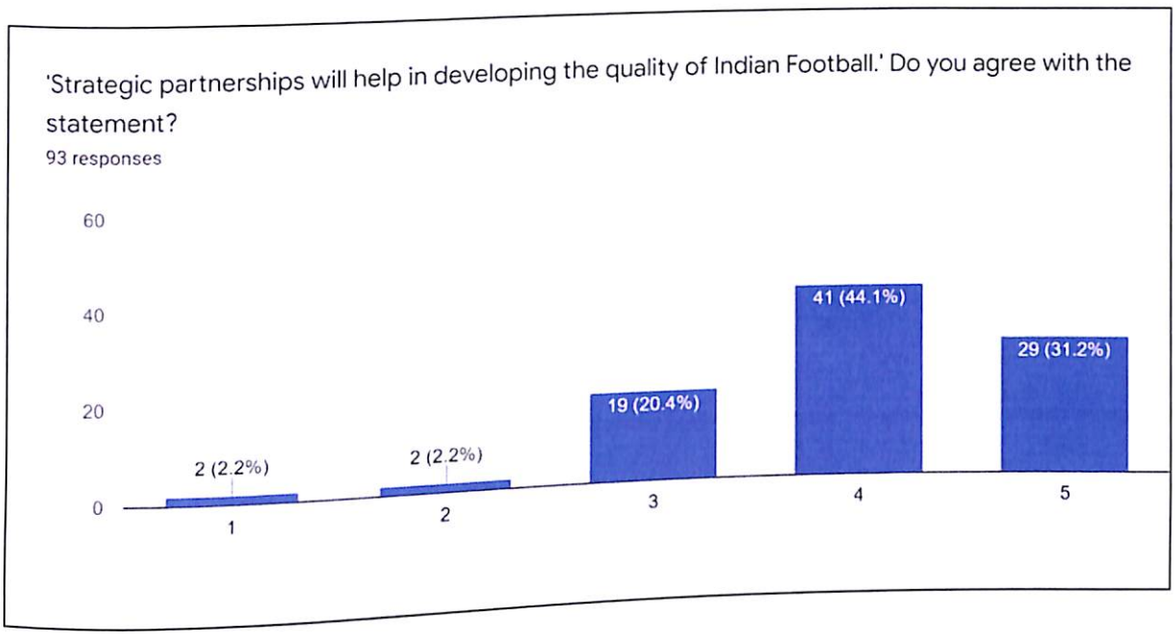


The next question was the most important one with regards to the topic to understand the fans perspective whether these partnerships will help in improving the viewership for Indian football.

Majority of respondents (62.4%) felt that yes the strategic partnerships will help in improving the viewership of Indian Football. While there also was a good 32.3% of audience which felt that strategic partnerships and increase in viewership may not necessarily be directly proportional.

5.4% of audience felt that strategic partnerships will not lead to increase in viewership.

While the 62.4% of respondents could be based on the fact that due to these strategic partnerships, the fans of that foreign club might turn in to watch Indian Super League. However, being sceptical is also fair just like the 32.3% of audience as partnerships may not really increase the number for viewership.

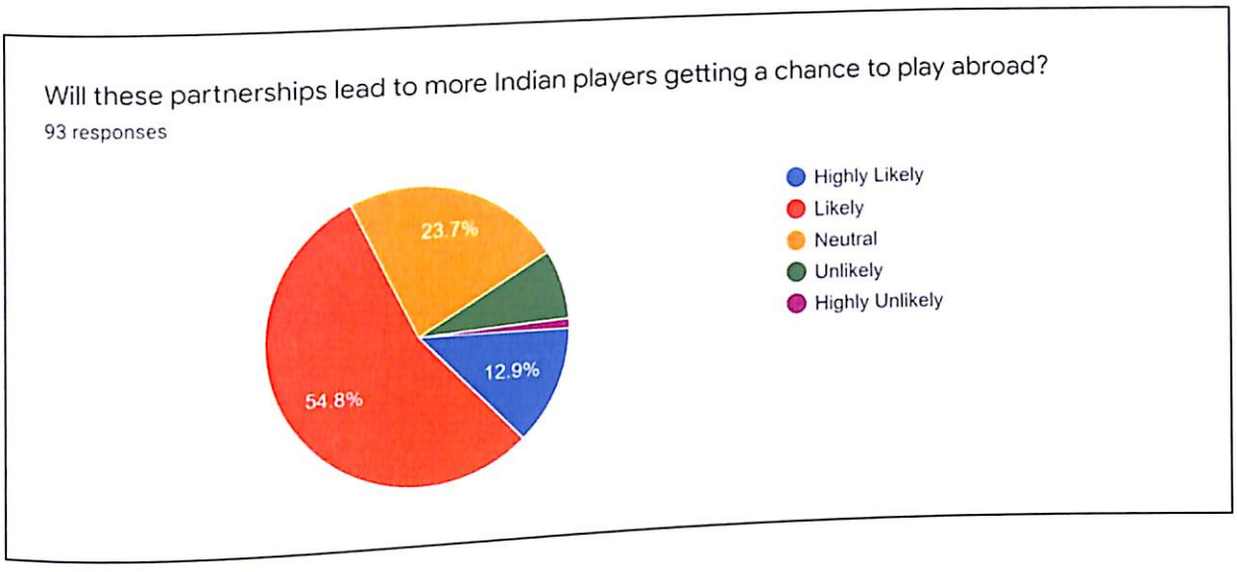


The next set of question was to understand the extent to which people agree that strategic partnerships will help in developing football.

Majority of respondents (44.1%) and (31.2%) agreed to the fact that there is a very high chance that strategic partnerships will help in developing the quality of Indian Football.

While there were 24.8% of respondents who felt not necessarily that partnerships will have a direct impact on quality of Indian football.

The main objective of the dissertation was to understand the impact that these strategic partnerships will have and improving the quality of football played in ISL and I-league and national team is one of the main aspects of it.



The next set of question was to understand whether the fans think that these partnerships will lead to more Indian Players getting a chance to play abroad.

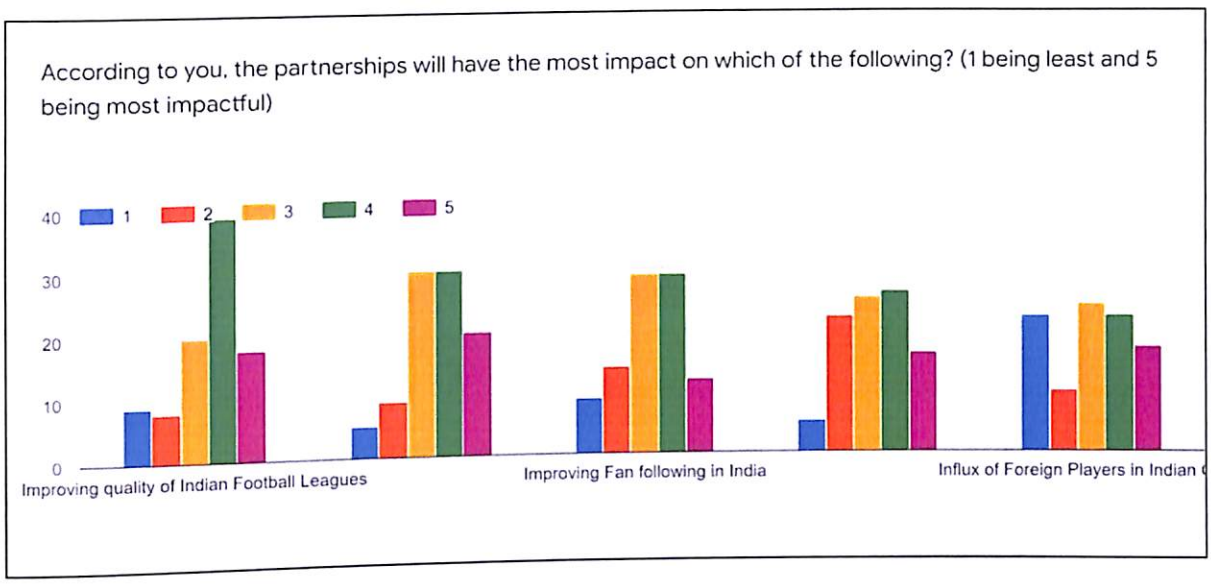
While 78.5% of respondents felt that these partnerships will lead to more players getting a chance to play abroad, there were also a large amount of neutrals (23.7%) who felt that the two aspects may not be directly proportional.

Around 8% of people felt that despite these strategic partnerships, Indian players will not get a chance to play abroad.

If we look at it from what is happening currently, yes Indian players have got a chance to play abroad and these strategic partnerships have played a part in it.

For example: Bala Devi the Indian Womens team football player got a chance to play for Rangers FC through the partnership between Bengaluru FC and Rangers FC.

A Study on impact of strategic tie ups between Indian vs Foreign Football Clubs with special reference to Manchester United vs Mumbai City FC



The last set of question was to understand the fans perspective on what the most impactful factor through these strategic partnerships could be. Options were given such as improving the quality of football leagues, Improving fan following in India, influx of foreign players in Indian leagues, development of Indian players and financial stability for the Indian club.

Out of 93 respondents, 22 respondents felt that influx of foreign players in Indian leagues will be the least impactful factor through these strategic partnerships. This does not come as a surprise as foreign players have been playing in the Indian leagues even before the partnerships came to fore.

22 respondents felt that 'Financial stability for the Indian club' will be the next least impacted factor. I agree to the respondents here as the main objective of these strategic partnerships is based on development and fan engagement and not on developing financial aspect of Indian club.

Development of Indian players got a mixed response from the set of respondents as 30 respondents each felt that it will be the 3rd and 4th biggest impactful factor while 20 respondents felt it will be the most important factor.

Improvement of fan following in India saw an equal number of responses in 3rd and 4th place as respondents felt this is yet another big factor which will be impacted the most through strategic partnerships.

A survey high 39 respondents felt that majorly the strategic partnerships will have an impact on developing the quality of these Indian Football Leagues.

To conclude, we can say that the respondents feel the strategic partnerships will have the most impact on improving the quality of Indian football leagues and fan following.

This survey tells us that the respondents answers are in line with the main objective of these partnerships.

Overall although the fans have given their opinions on how football can develop in India, they also believe that it is a matter of time and patience. The ISL has done well since its inception, but it is not an overnight thing but a process over a long period of time. Developments need to be targeted strategically to provide the best results in overall aspects of the sport.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

- To conclude this research, the analysis which was carried out helped us to understand the different impacts that these strategic partnerships have on Indian Football
- The strategic partnerships have been existing in football for a very long time and India is now getting used to it
- These strategic partnerships will help in developing many different aspects in Indian football
- However, the major improvement that these strategic partnerships will do is to bring expertise in the field of football which will help development of Indian players and coaches.
- Fan Following is another major aspect which will be improved majorly through this.
- The special reference carried out between Manchester United vs Mumbai City FC helped us to understand the gap that exists between Premier League and Indian Super League.
- Performance can be secondary but there needs to be infrastructural development especially for Mumbai City FC
- This will in turn lead to an increase in fan following.
- To sum it up, strategic partnerships will lead Indian football to a new high if they are implemented properly
- The mentality of fans in the country is based either on the success of their club or the regulatory achievements and fame the club goes on to bring to the community. Improving these communities and fan bases majorly depends on the country's approach to developing the football culture it carries and its response to the demands of fans and viewers across the country, which hopefully could go a long way to address the demands of viewers across the globe.
- In response to the football culture and the development of football in the country, the respondents from the survey feel that certain factors carry more importance and influence in the development as compared to other factors. The factors, according to fans, that would experience the best improvement phases through international club partnerships can be put in order of importance as Infrastructural development of football in general

- The author has compared the Indian Super League to the Chinese Super League due to its rise in popularity over the last decade, as it attends to a very similar fanbase, market and follows a similar franchise model.
- The Chinese Super League attained fame at the highest level due to its international partnerships with clubs and their financial capability to bring in a plenty of world-known players from clubs in well-developed leagues.
- The ISL has brought in well-known players but at the twilight of their careers and not during their peak years, which results in a reduced intensity and level of competition that the fans find themselves disappointed compared to the European leagues.
- The reason the ISL has not been able to attract at the peak of their careers is due to the quality and lack of popularity of the league. The shortage of resources in the league creates a further disadvantage for the league.
- This further provides satisfactory evidence that there is a need to develop communities within the Indian footballing world. The international club partnerships and fan engagement are correlated with one another, as proposed in the model.
- The partnerships have a potential to attract more followers for the sport due to the hype it can generate in the country, vice versa increase in fan following attracts international partners due to the large market potential it carries which could boost their brand equity.

Chapter 8 - Recommendation

- The strategic partnerships will be helpful only if there is clear communication between the clubs.

- The Indian clubs should be making sure that the fans know about these strategic partnerships.

- There needs to be more awareness regarding the strategic partnerships that exist.

- Currently all the strategic partnership deals are 2-3 years, however, in order to have a long term development, these partnerships need to be long term deals

- As studied throughout the paper, there is a large potential for development in the Indian Super League and Indian football in general.

- Football club partnerships are great initiatives when it comes to bridging the gap between the quality of Indian football with that of European football. But in order to get the best out of these deals, it is important to make sure that the fans are well informed about these partnerships. Being a football fan and looking through their perspectives and adding valuable information retrieved from the conducted survey displays a lack of hype and buzz created through these deals.

- These are deals which should be making fans jump up with excitement to allow them to follow the sport. While the deals are done, there is a lack of clarity about what each deal aims to provide for Indian football fans.

- The ISL clubs need to start using social media in a much more effective way which makes fan interaction an important part of their digital marketing plans.

- Through social media, the clubs should be able to analyse their fans' prosocial behaviour and other non-transactional aspects, which are an important indicator of fan satisfaction, and eventually leads to determining the clubs brand value.

- Fans should be able to feel a part of a reason and form an emotional relationship with the club and other fellow fans. To fulfil this purpose, the clubs should come up with innovative ideas like the use of chants for every player, player interaction sessions with fans, enabling personalised merchandise and providing season tickets at discounted prices to fans, so they go to the stadiums more often than not.

- Majority of the survey audience also believes that the partnerships are more sustainable and impactful if it is a long term goal that they wish to achieve. Having short term partnerships of less than five years is not the ideal solution to develop football, and it affects the stability of the clubs.

- When the people in charge of overseeing development schemes and operations are constantly changing with changes in club partnerships, it affects the linear growth line, which is obtained through long term partnerships.

- There is a major need for the development of infrastructure of football stadiums to entice football fans to come and watch the sport live. When a sport like cricket which is a game that goes on for hours can have packed stadiums with larger capacities than the football stadiums in India, then it is not impossible to find ways to attract the crowd into football stadiums. The marketing strategies and improvements in stadiums facilities should help create that interest among fans.

- The future of Indian football is in the hands of the kids who probably have not even started playing yet. It is paramount that grassroots level initiatives are given equal if not more importance to allow the budding footballers to enjoy and learn the art of football and hone their skills under the right conditions. This includes improvements in training facilities and scouting the right talent to move forward. The kids should not be allowed to worry about the injuries which they suffer at an early age, and education should be provided to these kids about nutritional and dietary habits as well.

- There is a large market potential for the fan parks, and ISL should be taking into account their massive return on investment it might attain through these ventures. Having a fan park is like having a carnival for football fans, and many would be interested if they are organised by event management professionals who have the ability to make these events a huge success.

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Chapoter 10 - Appendix

Strategic Partnerships in Indian Football

Thank you for visiting this dissertation questionnaire! This questionnaire is rolled out to understand the respondents views on the strategic partnerships that exist between Indian and European Football clubs.

Name *

Short-answer text

Gender *

- Male
- Female
- Other

Email ID *

Short-answer text

Occupation *

- Student
- Salaried Employee
- Business Owner

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What is your age? *

- Below 18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- Above 45

Do you follow Indian Football? *

- Yes
- No

How often do you keep track of ISL or I-League? *

- Watch all the matches
- Only read updates about the league
- Do not watch at all

Are you aware that there are strategic partnerships which exists between Indian Clubs and Foreign Clubs? *

- Yes
- No

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If yes, which of these partnerships have you read about?

- Mumbai City FC - City Football Group
- Bengaluru FC - Rangers FC
- FC Goa - RB Leipzig
- Hyderabad FC - Borussia Dortmund FC
- Thane City FC - Southampton
- FC Bengaluru United - Sevilla FC

Do you think these partnerships will help in improving the viewership for Indian Football? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

'Strategic partnerships will help in developing the quality of Indian Football.' Do you agree with the statement? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

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Will these partnerships lead to more Indian players getting a chance to play abroad? *

- Highly Likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Highly Unlikely

According to you, the partnerships will have the most impact on which of the following? (1 being least and 5 being most impactful) *

	1	2	3	4	5
Improving quali...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development of...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improving Fan f...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial Stabili...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Influx of Foreig...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐