**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 BACKGROUND**

Sports for many is just a hobby or leisure time activity but in recent times it is now also a business. In this research assignment commercialization of football in Japan, India, China and Vietnam is the focused subject.

Football clubs have originated since the 1850s and some of the major European clubs are more than 100 years of age. However, football in Asia is seeing a major change in the last decade only. The game attracted spectators and business evolved football in Europe started being known worldwide and countries decided to follow the same culture and tradition of different countries. Business and commercialization has grown largely and it is now an international business. A top watched and broadcasted sport even though in challenging economic times the continued loyalty of supporters and appeals to brand sponsors and broadcasters has continuously increased the clubs revenue.

Now about this research paper of commercialization of football in the four selected Asian countries who like the major clubs and countries are wanting to strive forward in football by introducing cash rich professional leagues and brand teams having their own cultures that will in turn help in the development of football in their respective countries. This paper will show how this privatization and commercialization in different aspects will be helping the nation to improve their football culture or not. This notion will be based on assumption as the countries will have different situations decided in terms of how to commercialize and be known your football.

Often there is a change of culture and some traditions are lost among clubs that have commercialized. As a result many of the supporters have shown their discontent and have contested the fast changing state of modern football (Nash, 2000).

Furthermore, an interesting situation in the football industry is that a minority of clubs are owned by their supporters. In these so called membership clubs, the ownership is spread out among a large amount of fans. Consequently, the fans at these clubs have an important influence on how the club is commercializing. This is a major problem in commercialization of football as if no supporters no revenue. This is one problem the paper will discuss the unique ways of commercialization and the various problem faced and how they have decided to tackle them for reaching their goals set.

**I**

**1.2 OBJECTIVE**

In this research assignment I have decided EIGHT factors upon which the commercialization of football in Japan, India, Vietnam and China will be discussed and at the end assumption provided whether the countries will progress after the various challenges faced and when they will become a force upon their decided targets set by their governing football bodies.

**1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Is commercialization, commoditization and privatization the way forward for these Asian countries to improve their football culture ?

**1.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

Eight factors chosen to be reviewed

* Administration
* Competitions
* National Teams
* Refereeing
* Facilities
* Coaching
* Player Development
* Fan Connection

This factors positive and negative impacts will be discussed and at the end assumption given. The literature review defines the keywords of the research and explores the constructs to arrive at a research framework.

**2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter, an overview of the literature that is relevant for this study is described. The theoretical framework is formed on the four countries football community consisting of eight selected factors and will be individually discussed thoroughly. Each country will be discussed one by one and lastly my assumption on their future will be stated.

**2.1 Japan**

**2.1.1 History of football**

The highest level of club football in Japan used to be the Japan Soccer League(JSL) and it mostly was consisted of amateur clubs. It was well attended by fans during the boom in 1960s and 1970s as Japan won the bronze medal at the 1968 Mexico Olympics. However it started to decline as the national team was below par with the Asian powerhouses and also fewer fans and bad stadium facilities led to its unpopularity during the 1980s.

The Japan Football Association was concerned with the declining situation and hence decided to form a professional league in order to draw in more fans. Officially the J league was founded in 1991 but opened in business in 1993. The road to professionalism and to success, however, was long and full of hurdles. By 1993 Japanese football had already accumulated more than 100 years of history, allegedly dating back to 1873 when British naval officers brought the game to Yokohama. The first tournament, that later became the Emperor’s Cup, dates back to 1921, which is also the year when the Japan Football Association (JFA) was founded. Until the coming of full professional football, two kind of clubs dominated Japanese football: university and company teams. The latter started to bloom in the 1960s and were created with the idea of bringing employees together to practice the sport, in addition publicizing the name of the company. The pivotal figure of this period was a minute German coach, Otto Cramer, who led the Japanese national team to an amazing bronze medal at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico.  Cramer was also pivotal in stimulating the birth of the Japanese Soccer League (JSL), the first national football league. It was populated by company clubs

In 1960, Furukawa Electric (known today as JEF United Chiba) were the first company club to win the Emperor’s Cup and in the following years their achievements were followed by Toyo Industries (now, Sanfrecce Hiroshima), Yanmar Diesel (Cerezo Osaka), Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Urawa Reds)

Despite an overall growth of the football movement, success was relative as the ramshackle stadiums were mostly empty and the Japanese national team repeatedly failed to qualify for the World Cup. Glory was brought to Japan mostly by individual players traveling overseas. Among them was Yasuhiko Okudera, winner of the Bundesliga and DFB Pokal with Koln in 1978.

The main architect of the final step of Japanese football was Saburo Kawabuchi, whose vision of a fully professional championship finally became a reality in 1993. The 10 founding clubs took enormous financial risks in holding the inaugural J-League Cup but were rewarded by an incredible enthusiasm that engulfed the league for the first few years of its existence and thus laying the foundations for the success of Japanese football. Perhaps the most poignant story is that of the Sumitomo Soccer Club, a small provincial club whose top achievement was a victory in the JSL second division in the 1986-87 season. As they timidly approached Kawabuchi in 1992 with hopes to be considered for membership. Eventually getting the membership they managed to build the first football-only stadium in Japan and are known as Kashima Antlers, the most successful club in Japan to date.  
  
However, they were not the dominating force in Japanese football back in 1993. Such a privileged spot was held by Verdy Kawasaki and Yokohama Marinos, the two teams that dueled on the legendary day in which the J-League finally kicked off. Only 18 months after the creation of the J-League as a corporation, some 60,000 fans occupied the stands of the National Stadium in Tokyo after succeeding to secure tickets for the official opening game. First professional victory went to Marinos, who overturned an initial deficit to win the game 2-1. The opening game was over, but real Japanese football had just started.

**2.1.2 Football Community**

1. **Administration**

Japan Football Association(JFA) was founded in the year 1921 and have played a strong role in making decisions at numerous occasions to change the path of football whenever it has diverted from their dream that is to win the world cup by 2092 which is 100 years from their establishment of a professional football league. The various points that will be stated in the seven remaining factors will be the decisions taken by the football association.

1. **Competitions**

The Japanese association football league system is organized in a pyramidal shape similar to football league systems in many other countries around the world. The leagues are bound by the principle of promotion and relegation; however, there are stringent criteria for promotion from the JFL to J3, which demands a club being backed by the town itself including the local government, a community of fans and corporate sponsors rather than a parent company or a corporation.

J league which consists of J1, J2 and J3 league which consists of 18, 22 and 13 clubs each. Below this is the Japan football league which is semi-professional league consisting of amateur, professional, and company clubs from all over Japan. At the fifth and sixth levels, nine parallel regional leagues are operated by nine different regional football associations, some of which have multiple divisions. The regional associations are divided by political or geographical boundaries.

At the seventh level and below, parallel prefectural leagues are hosted by each of the 46 different prefectural football associations, again divided by political or geographical boundaries. Some have multiple divisions.

Emperors cup is played where lower league teams get a chance to knockout the professional teams showing that smaller clubs are fast improving.

AFC champions league has proven a good competition as clubs gain experience by playing teams from all over Asia and the winners have a chance to play club world cup and facing the likes of Real Madrid. Recent years the Kashima Antlers and Urawa Red Diamonds have reached the Semi-final and final stages.

1. **National Teams**

The Japan national team won the bronze in 1968 Olympics and have been under the radar since. The Samurai Blue have qualified for each world cup since the 1998 and have managed to reach the round of 16 stage during 3 occasions. They made history at 2018 world cup by defeating Columbia 2-1, first AFC team to beat a CONMEBOL team.

Other national teams are U-15 to U-23 showing that a lot is focused on the development of young Japan players.

1. **Refereeing**

Japan Football Association (JFA) has implemented “Professional Referee System” in order for the top-level referees to fully concentrate on refereeing. Professional Referees (PR) will strive to improve their level of refereeing at the same time contribute to the refereeing in Japan as a whole by giving lectures and participating in other instructional activities across the nation. Currently, 10 referees and 4 assistant referees have contract as Professional Referees (PR) with the JFA.

The association has 3 different training centers to develop the mentality and standard of referees. The 3 training centers are prefectural, regional and central. Refereeing training centers and education helps in better officiating of the game and fair play.

At the 2018 world cup 3 Japanese referees officiated the game showing the standards of refereeing have improved over the years.

1. **Facilities**

JFA grassroots is an initiative by the football association that will look into the facilities of providing areas for all kinds of individual to play football. This has helped in schools to tie up with clubs so that facilities are been used to the optimum level.

Programs have been set up yearly for players to enroll in them and they will be trained by professionals. This helps in finding new talents and more youth coming forward to participate in the training programs.

In this manner the large number of stadiums and parks are also kept maintained as players are playing daily and the maintenance is being done properly as it gives people employment.

Most of the stadiums in Japan have minimum 19000 capacity meaning the association is enthusiast that at a time the stadiums won't go empty and more people would like to come view matches.

1. **Coaching**

JFA organizes Licensed Coaches Training Courses for people who are interested in football coaching, according to their level. "Kids Leader Training Course" in which are taught in enjoyable manners the methods for coaching children under 10 (Ball playing and body making), and " Class C ( Class D) Coaches Training Courses" in which are taught the methods of coaching players under12, are organized all over the country. People who pass these training courses and who are registered at JFA, can access to various services such as the subscription to "Technical News" (a bimonthly booklet where are carried JFA's initiatives and various events' reports ), the perusal of JFA Commons' （a web service for Football Family members) services only for registered coaches and the possibility to participate to refresher training courses. We are looking forward to meet you at the training courses.

Also the British Football Academy has been set up that works in establishing and brining their style of football in implementation in the country. They have summer camps for the children and terms too.

The AFC C, B, A license also available to take up which will help in coaching anywhere in Asia as it is a FIFA licensed course.

1. **Player Development**

The football association has stated that the youth development and coaches trainings are the main issues to improve the national team performances. For youth development the association has made compulsory for J league teams to maintain their U12, U15, U19 teams. Grassroots level football competitions have been introduced along with summer camps.

Mr. Byer who is a famous figure among the youth of Japan is the guru of youth development. He used to play for Hitachi Fc in the 1980s and now a coach for the young. He has a manga series based on himself and current famous players Shinji Kagawa and Kieusuke Honda attended his academy training.

Mr. Byer has been so successful with his grassroots training programmes and in expanding the Japanese talent pool over the past 20 years — and ensuring Japan’s national teams qualify for the Asian Cup and World Cup regularly. Many factors contributed to Japan’s current success. The federation has dedicated resources to youth development, for men and women. It has created national training centers throughout the country dedicated to soccer and has a well-organized scouting program to track the most-talented young players. There are nine training regions that have been set up that are made up from the 48 states, or prefectures. I have worked at all of these centers over the years, focusing on the technical development of both players and coaches. The federation also has two full-time academy’s for junior and senior high school players called the J.F.A. Academy.

1. **Fan Connection**

This has been a major problem for Japan over the years with the fan base of the national football team in Japan shrunk by almost 34 percent from approximately 16.5 million in 2011 to 10.9 million fans in 2017. The professional league fans also declined by 1.4 million during these years and the average attendance declining from about 18500 t0 17000 from 2010 to 2016.

However, in recent years, with the inclusion of the A-League in Eastern Asia, introduction to the Club World Cup, and increased marketability in the Asian continent, both the league and the clubs paid more attention to Asian competition. For example, Kawasaki Frontale built up a notable fan base in Hong Kong, owing to their participation in the Asian Champions League during the 2007 season.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J1_League#cite_note-11) Continuous effort led to the success of Urawa Red Diamonds in 2007 and Gamba Osaka in 2008. Thanks to excellent league management and competitiveness in Asian competition, the AFC awarded J.League the highest league ranking and a total of four slots starting from the 2009 season. The league took this as an opportunity to sell TV broadcasting rights to foreign countries, especially in Asia.

In order tackle this situation the association have now introduced ICT technologies for the fans attending the games. The J.League, DAZN(live sports streaming service provided by Perform Group), and NTT Group will cooperate on the Smart Stadium project, a groundbreaking initiative to promote the advancement of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in J.League stadiums and club hometowns. The 10-year agreement will begin in 2017 and continue through 2026.

Beginning with the home grounds of J1 League clubs, the Smart Stadium project will seek to establish Wi-Fi access and information services in stadiums throughout Japan. From internet access to new enjoyable new content and services, the ICT initiative will extend the fan experience from the stadium to nearby communities in exciting ways. Clubs and players will be provided with innovative ways to cultivate new fans through this initiative, in turn establishing deeper connections with their local regions.

**2.1.3 Conclusion**

The commercialization and privatization has helped Japanese football a lot. The professional league generates a revenue of Euro 532 million and J2 league posting the half of J1. The money involved has helped improve facilities and development of players since the formation in 1993. Japan is regularly qualifying for the world cup since 1998 and also are the top clubs in Asia who have dominated the AFC champions league also. They have also won the AFC cup in 2011 by defeating Australia.

They have produced top players who are playing in major European Leagues like Mike Yoshida, Shinji Kagawa, Kiesuke Honda and many more. This has helped increase the number of fans and more youngsters motivated to come forward in football. Byers work has helped immensely in developing the youth to prosper.

League used to have 2 phases with not the team winning most games taking the trophy but winner of knockout stage the winners. This measures were taken to keep the fans entertained however declining of fans led to change the decision in 2017 that the one winning most games is the champion.

Facilities have improved over the years and now ICT technologies have been introduced to give the fans a new experience and keeping them nearer to their favorite club. They have also been successful in signing top European players like Podolski, Iniesta and Torres who have great experience and are also winners of the world cup. Targeting top players like these will draw crowds and lot will be learned from them and football will improve. The fans and families of these players will talk about Japan and its culture of football and both revenue and popularity will increase.

Players all over Asia are trying to play in Japan with the facilities they provide and the rules of having one other Asian player allowing that. Total only 4 foreign players are allowed with 1 being Asian so more of Japanese people gain experience. once the league will be top class players will be playing around the world and collectively helping the national team to continuously strive for success of winning the world cup by 2092.

**2.2 Vietnam**

**2.2.1 History Of Football**

Football came into Vietnam with the French in 1896. It was first introduced in Cochinchina, and then spread to other parts of the colony - the central and northern parts. The first people who played football in Saigon were French civil servants, merchants and soldiers; some Vietnamese then picked it up. A club called Saigon Sports Circle was founded and later the oval-shaped ball was replaced by a round-shaped one and the games were played at the city park, called Jar din de la Ville. Some Vietnamese learned the game's regulations and established their own teams. The first two Vietnamese teams founded in 1907 were Gia Định Sport run by Ba Vẻ and *Phú Khai* and *Ngôi Sao Xanh* (Blue Star) run by Nguyễn Đình Trị. These two teams then came together to form "Ngôi sao Gia Định" (Gia Định Star). Prior to 1920, it had defeated all other teams, including Saigon Sports Circle (in 1917), and became the champion.

Football activities in Vietnam were delayed during World War II and the Indo-china Wars and soon restored after 1954, when the Geneva Accord was signed, causing division between North and South Vietnam. When Vietnam was divided into North Vietnam and South Vietnam, two national teams existed. The North Vietnamese team was not very active, playing almost exclusively other Communist countries between 1956 and 1966 whilst the South Vietnamese team took part in the first two AFC Asian Cup finals, finishing fourth both times. Football is the most popular sport in Vietnam. Its annual V-League competition has taken place since 1980 till now. Despite achieved less successes than other teams in Southeast Asia and has never considered to be a top team of Asia, Vietnam is often noted for demonstrating a spirit style of playing, as well as passionate supporters when playing football. Supporters of Vietnam team, regardless of age levels, often comes and cheers for the team of their country with full spirits. Vietnam has gained recognitions from other supporters of other countries for demonstrating a passionate style of cheering.

In 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup and 2018 AFC U-23 Championship, Vietnam had won fair-play awards.

**2.2.2 Football Community**

**1. Administration**

Association football in Vietnam is run by the Vietnam Football Federation. The federation administers the national football teams and national leagues including V League 1 which is the top level of professional football in the country. In 1960, Vietnam Football Association was established in the North and in the South under control of the Republic of Vietnam, a similar Association was also founded to administer football activities.  In 1989, VFA was renamed to Vietnam Football Federation..

To meet the demands of supporters the federation decided to launch a professional football league in 2000 thus bringing commercialization of the sport being conducted at huge scale. They followed South Korea and the name of teams were decided by the highest sponsored bidder.  The Công is the most successful club in the league's history, having won the title five times. The league turned professional in the 2000–2001 season, which allowed clubs to hire foreign players. Vietnam Professional Football (VPF) was established in 2012, and the organizing power was transferred from the Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) to VPF.

Despite representing Vietnamese football, the Federation has been criticized for their inefficient handling of the national football team in recent years.

**2. Competitions**

The V.League1 season starts in January and ends in September. In each season, each club plays each of the other clubs twice, once at home and another away, for a total of 26 games. Teams are ranked by total points, head-to-head, goal difference and goals scored. Top team qualifies for AFC Champions League Prelim. Stage 2.For 2010 season, two bottom teams are relegated to the Vietnam First Division while third lowest placed team goes to play-off with the third highest placed team from the First Division. Starting in the 2013 season, the number of clubs participating in the V.League 1 would be decreased from fourteen to twelve after three clubs failed to register. Also in the same season, the bottom team will be relegated to the First Division while the top three teams from the First Division will be promoted into the V-League 1. Starting in the 2015 season, the league is competed by 14 teams.

Now known as Nuti Cafe V league 1 has one relegation and one relegation playoff. Below this is the V league 2 consisting of 10 clubs and there is one promotion and one relegation. Below this are the second divisions of north and south consisting in total of 15 clubs with two promotions and no relegation and the last tier is third division that consists of 4 clubs.

All V.League 1 and V.League 2 sides qualify for the Vietnamese Cup tournament. The Super Cup is the first game of the season, played between the previous years' winners of the V.League 1 and Vietnamese Cup. If the same team wins both tournaments, then the team finishing second in the previous years' V.League 1 take on the V.League 1 winners. Since 2017, one Vietnamese side, the team finishing top of V.League 1, qualifies automatically for the AFC Champions League Prelim. Stage 2. The team finishing second in the V.League 1, and the winner of the Vietnamese Cup qualify for the AFC Cup Group Stage.

**3. National Teams**

The south Vietnam national football team finished fourth during 1956 and 1960 AFC Asian Cup. Fifa considers Vietnam as the successor of South Vietnam team even though the current government denying it. Vietnam won the ASEAN football championship in 2008.

With the success of its youth teams, notably the Vietnam national under-20 football team and Vietnam national under-23 football team by qualifying the 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup and reaching the final of 2018 AFC U-23 Championship tournament for the first time, this has brought a significant and positive influences to Vietnamese senior team. The senior team begun to play a better football than years ago suffering drought. During 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualification, Vietnam, after managed two draws against Afghanistan and Jordan, had repeatedly defeated its neighbor, Cambodia, both away and home matches. Vietnam was having a big chance to qualify to an international tournament since the 2007 AFC Asian Cup which Vietnam was a co-host, if they didn't lose to Afghanistan later. On 14 November 2017, after managed to hold Afghanistan with a 0–0 draw, Vietnam managed to qualify to the AFC Asian Cup for the first time in its history.

**4. Refereeing**

Referees caught in match fixing and scandals have led to set back of football in Vietnam. the federations decisions to bring in international referees was also questioned when one Thai referee was found guilty of match fixing in his own country. Currently Japan, South Korea and Thailand referees along with 4-5 Vietnamese referees are active in the league. Federation has decided to have FIFA standard referee but the decision is yet to be approved by FIFA. The Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) and football’s world governing body FIFA are holding a joint training course for coaches and referees from Southeast Asia and Australia. Five Vietnamese referees took part and got certified.

Following a recent conference held by deputy minister there will be stricter rules for referees and even players who will be heavily fined and even jailed if found guilty. A board will continue to look in these matters daily to bring back the prestige and honest football.

**5. Facilities**

In 2003, Hanoi hosted the 22nd SEA Games and it is expected that the tournament, which was first held in 1959, will return to the nation in 18 years. Ho Chi Minh City, the biggest economic hub of the Southeast Asia country, will likely be selected as the host of the 2021 SEA Games.

An already well established and known is the Promotion Fund for Vietnamese football. They handpick children up till U-19 and give them a platform of training and experiences of playing at international level. PVF currently provides training for 190 budding talents selected from 51 provinces and cities nationwide and divides these aspiring trainees into eight classes. Players are also borrowed from this facility and play in the V League.

Rising star football academy at Ho Chi Min city in British International School, Fox football Vietnam, Arsenal school all hold camps and tournaments from U-4 to U-19 to find and develop new talents.

**6. Coaching**

The set up of various private academies has helped bring coaches from various nationalities around the world to develop and train players in Vietnam. Job listing is posted on the internet which helps coaches come to the country and share their knowledge and help improve football in the country. The current national team coach is of Korean nationality. As a top team in the South East Asia coaches and players are willing to come and reside in Vietnam. The Hanoi sports academy developed. The Hanoi sports academy created by two professional coaches in 2017 to train youth players after gaining experience from four different continents. Also FIFA and AFC licensed courses are available in the country and many coaches trying to give their best to be certified. Coaches having various certificates are working both with the youth and individuals who want to become future coaches.

**7. Player Development**

With all the private academies set up in the capital and different parts children are more than willing to participate in camps and tournaments. Schools and universities also provide a platform with the national team scouts working their best to find new talents and give them the best facilities. Most V League teams now have their young teams to help them flourish in future with their club culture being known around the world. As the league allows 2 foreign players to play in the league Vietnam football culture learns from these players and help in increase their performances and fan clubs from around the world.

**8. Fan Connection**

One of the main aspects of commercialization and privatization of football is to have a growth in the fans and supporters involved with both national teams and clubs. Fans help in creating a culture and atmosphere that collectively helps in the growth of football in a country or even a club. Vietnam is obsessed with the Premier League and are one of most watched league from Asia. Mostly you can see Arsenal and Manchester United fans but the country's youth progressing in football tournaments at international level has brought out great support and enthusiasm to also watch games in Vietnam. Average attendances in the V league are 5500 and the federation and clubs are working to increase them. Fans in the country are passionate about the game and if level of play and facilities are improved they would not give up supporting clubs and the country. Football is the most popular sport in Vietnam. There are big celebrations even when Vietnam loses but scores a goal against foreign competitors. Betting on soccer is a major pass time. So is soccer violence in some cities. The sport has been blackened by riots, dead fans and match-fixing. A member of Vietnam’s national sports committee once said, "Our players have to relearn the spirit of sport and understand that we don't play matches using deceit."

**2.2.3 Conclusion**

The process of commercialization and privatization has started showing rewards and benefits in the recent years with the progress of Vietnam youth at International Level. Although the Vietnamese stadiums aren't full, the atmosphere is always impressive. The fans go to the stadium with big drums and spend the whole 90 minutes singing and dancing, no matter what the score is. It is a very friendly atmosphere, far different from what I'm used to at European stadiums, where fans boo the opposing team, referee or their own team for large parts of the match.

 The match itself is much slower than in Europe, but it is also much tougher. In Germany we often talk about "British Hardness" in tackles, but compared to Vietnamese football the British are positively tame. As a result, there are far more stoppages fouls and a lot more penalties. For the first time in my life I witnessed a match featuring four penalties, which isn't a rare event in the V-League. Partly due to the penalties, but maybe also because of the smaller goalkeepers, you see a lot more goals in local stadiums..

 The last surprising aspect is the player. Most teams at least have one tall African striker and several players from South America, especially Brazil and Argentina. There are even some Europeans playing for Vietnamese teams.

There have been controversies and fixing scandals but these are bound to come when there is huge amount of money involved. Football was once a declining force with cubs getting no sponsorship and government spending less on football. Government was urging FIFA to lend more money for the development of football. But surely announcing a professional league like various Asian countries has helped bring culture of football in the country and now people know that Vietnam is also striving towards being successful in the game. "Denilson, who was once the world's most expensive football player, scored a goal from a free kick in the first minutes of his only V-League appearance, which helped Hai Phong Cement defeat former champions Hoang Anh Gia Lai 3-1 and snap a losing streak.

 In the mid 2000s, dozens of referees, coaches, players and officials were arrested on charges of match-fixing. In January 2006, China’s People’s Daily reported: "In addition to match-fixing cases with the deep involvement of bookies, the police have recently uncovered many cases, in which local clubs bribed referees and their opponents so that they got promoted, won championships, or did not have to be relegated in national tournaments. Since August 2005, local police have uncovered some 50 local corrupt referees, as well as managing directors and coaches of some clubs. To date, 19 out of 60 local referees and teams' officials who have allegedly involved in match-fixing over the past two years have been prosecuted. [Source: People’s Daily, January 10, 2006. Scandals and supporters clashing with police were common during these times. Football betting is also legalized since 2013 but there are no clear specifications. According to the Ministry of Finance, the legitimacy of the betting business is to meet the entertainment needs of a segment of the population and to attract tourists, contributing to narrow illegal gambling and betting activities, limiting the negative impacts and having more revenue to invest in social welfare programs. Talent and passion for the game remains but these scandals and match fixings are major issues preventing the nation to move forward. According to my assumption corruption may hinder the chances of their culture of football un till they are improved and stricter rules existing. In recent years scandals have decreased and youth teams have performed well an important period of football era in Vietnam has started.

**3. India**

**3.2.1 History**

The history of football in India is a long and detailed one, as it was the national sport at one time. The force for this was to unify the Indian Army. Football started its journey in India when the British rulers brought it with them and in no time, it became popular among the masses. The first recorded game held in India took place between the 'Calcutta Club of Civilians' and 'The Gentlemen of Barrackpore' in 1854. The first ever football club in the history of Indian Football, the Calcutta FC was established in 1872. However, there are reports that the club was initially a rugby club and later switched its attentions to Football in 1894. Some of the other ancient Football clubs in India include Mohan Bagan Athletic Club, founded in 1889, the Dalhousie Club, the Traders Club and also the Naval Volunteers Club. The Mohun Bagan AC was later named as the 'National Club of India'.  The decade of 1951 to 1962 is referred as the golden era in the history of Indian Football, as the country put up a commendable performance in a number of international competitions. India won gold medals in the 1951 and 1962 Asian Games, held at New Delhi and Jakarta, respectively and it became the first Asian nation to reach the Olympic football semi-finals, in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Even in the recent years the Indian Football team has shown some great performances, like winning the Nehru Cup in August, 2007. The team also won the AFC Challenge Cup in August 2008, and in turn qualified for the 2011 AFC Asian Cup in Qatar. Apart from the Indian National Football team, various Indian Football clubs have also shown wonderful performances in different international tournaments. India played in the 1966 Asian Games in Bangkok but were eliminated in first round. India then took third place in the 1970 Asian Games, beating Japan 1–0 in the third place, play-off. In mid-70s, Indian youth team jointly won the Youth Asian Cup with Iran. Indian football would go through a barren phase in 70s, 80s and 90s, gradually losing its foothold as a top Asian team.  India played in the 1966 Asian Games in Bangkok but were eliminated in first round. India then took third place in the 1970 Asian Games, beating Japan 1–0 in the third place, play-off. In mid-70s, Indian youth team jointly won the Youth Asian Cup with Iran. Indian football would go through a barren phase in 70s, 80s and 90s, gradually losing its foothold as a top Asian team. India also got a major boost when the All India Football Federation created the National Football League in 1996. This was India's first ever national domestic league. In 2016, Mohun Bagan AC of Kolkata became the first Indian club to qualify for the second round of AFC Champions League Qualifier, when they defeated Tampine Rovers FC of Singapore on 27 January 2016. In addition, they created another history by defeating South China AA of Hong Kong with a margin of 4 goals in 2016 AFC Cup on 9 March 2016. This is, till date, the highest margin of victory by any Indian club side on foreign soil. In 2017, The FIFA under -17 world cup was hosted by India.

**3.2.2 Football Community**

**1. Administration**

The first football association in India, the Indian Football Association (IFA) started its journey in Calcutta in 1893; however, it did not have a single Indian on its board till the 1930s. In 1898, the oldest in India and also the third oldest football tournament in the world, the Durand Cup football tournament was started in Shimla. The tournament was inaugurated by and named after the then Foreign Secretary of India, Sir Mortimer Durand. The first mentionable achievement for the Indians in Football came in 1911, when Mohun Bagan AC became the first Indian team to win the IFA-Shield Trophy. The trophy was previously won only by the British teams based in India. The win is still referred as one of the biggest achievements in the history of Indian Football.   
  
After the huge success of Mohun Bagan AC of winning the IFA-Shield Trophy, football tournaments and football clubs spread rapidly. The increasing number of football clubs led to the formation of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) in 1937. The AIFF got affiliation from the international governing body for Football, FIFA in 1948 and it was also one of the founder members of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in 1954. All these events are considered as memorable milestones in the history of Indian Football.

The main league of India is I-League as it is FIFA recognized but they decided to go with creating a new professional league known as the Indian Super League to attract more crowds and sponsors. It was inaugurated in 2013. The two divisions of I-league continue to take place and is not completely disrupted as decorated football clubs still play the league and attract some amount of sponsors and players. Most of the decorated clubs have their second teams and a competition taking place between the B teams.

**2. Competitions**

Before 2013 I-league was known as the only professional football league in India which was launched in 2007. 10 teams contest for the title each year in a league manner where team having maximum points in the end claims the title. 2 teams are relegated each year to the I-League second division and 2 promoted to the main league. The winner of I-League qualifies for the AFC champions league competition and the AFC cup title where top two teams are selected. There is also a domestic cup competition where the second division league team get the chance to play against teams of main division. Due to decrease in number of crowds and low attraction of sponsors the federation decided to create a new professional league known as the Indian Super League(ISL) where initially 8 teams contested and last year 2 new teams were added with one leaving the I-League and joining the ISL. There exist no divisions and hence no team gets relegated. Crowds have increased and the cup system has changed from 2017 where both ISL and I-League teams contesting in it.

Apart from this there are huge number of schools and college competitions hosted each year. Also there are zonal, district, state and national level competitions hosted each year for better scouting of players and facilities to play football.

**3. National Teams**

 Under the global jurisdiction of FIFA and governed in Asia by the AFC, the team is also part of the South Asian Football Federation. The team, which was once considered one of the best teams in Asia, had its golden era during the 1950s and early 1960s. During this period, under the coaching of Syed Abdul Rahim, India won gold during the 1951 and 1962 Asian Games, while finishing fourth during the 1956 Summer Olympics.

India has never participated in the FIFA World Cup, although the team did qualify by default for the 1950 World Cup after all the other nations in their qualification group withdrew. However, India withdrew prior to the beginning of the tournament. The team has also appeared three times in the Asia's top football competition, the AFC Asian Cup. Their best result in the competition occurred in 1964 when the team finished as runners-up. India also participate in tournament six times since it began in 1993.

Despite India not achieving the same results as their golden era, the team has seen a steady resurgence since the beginning of the 21st century. Besides the SAFF Championship triumphs, under the guidance of Bob Houghton, India won the restarted Nehru Cup in 2007 and 2009 while also managing to emerge victorious during the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup. The Challenge Cup victory allowed India to once again qualify for the Asian Cup for the first time in 27 years.

The national team will also participate in the Asian cup starting in 2019. Apart from this there are also U-17,19,20 and 23 teams participate in international matches. The U-17 team got a chance to play the in the world cup as a host nation even though losing their group matches and only scoring once in the group stage.

**4. Refereeing**

Currently there are 16 Indian referees and assistant referees approved by the FIFA panel. The federation is finding it tough to get people register for the courses. Western India football association has a vision of having certified 1000 referees in the next few years. There are three state class and two national class courses for age 18-45 and SSC pass. All parts of India has their football association setup for all types of courses available to join in football. Currently there are very few professional referees due to their very less salary in terms of match intensities. As two professional leagues are being run simultaneously they get very little rest as are always on flight on the next day most of the times.

**5. Facilities**

This is where India is falling behind as due to overpopulation in major cities lands are hard to find for football fields even if it is a turf. Most of the times footballing events are cancelled to pave way for other events for the public where more revenue can be fetched. Most of the schools in districts have been ordered to have their own grounds. Turfs are coming up in major cities and private institutions too. The problem with this is that this facilities are not far reached as most of the population cannot avail it due to its fees. Even in top schools and colleges having football grounds opportunities are hard to come by with either low support from parents to pursue the career or parents not having enough money. However commercialization has helped the country improve a lot with facilities starting to improve and with that opportunities increasing. Each ISL clubs have been asked to find and train a player who cannot afford the facilities but has talent. Commercialization has also helped parents support increasing with huge money involved after initial trainings.

**6. Player Development**

India Football Federation initiative, Mission XI Million, is a school contact program that aims at improving the football culture of India, building the football ecosystem and ultimately widening the talent pool for the various national teams. It is intended to spread the scheme across 36 cities, reaching out to more than 15,000 schools and over 11 million children.

Grassroots has been at the heart of Hero ISL. The ISL grassroots and Reliance Foundation Youth Sports have already reached out to over 3.3 million youngsters across the country. The most talented players are selected for a residential program, based near Mumbai, known as Young Champs. Started in 2014, the scheme's first target is to give 500,000 children between the ages of six and 14 the chance to play football and get coaching.

AIFF launched the ambitious Grassroots football development program in October 2012 with Mizoram as the pilot project. The program aims to create playing opportunities for kids between 6-12 years of age. AIFF has launched project “Lakshya” which aims to ensure that India qualifies for the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

**7. Coaching**

With commercialization individuals have started applying for coaching courses and has helped bring players like Zico, Matterazi, David James and many more experienced to come and train both players and coaches in India. There are both AFC and AIFF certified courses available to join to become a coach. A compulsory made license now to even become sports teacher in schools and colleges has helped bring more individuals aware of the game development part.

**8. Fan Connection**

India comes in the top 10 countries who watch elite football leagues even due to a bad time zone to watch games. ISL and the hosting of U-17 world cup has helped in luring out crowds. Average attendances are ranging from 15-20000. Even the Indian National Team has improved through young players development and the average age now is 24. This has helped in improving crowds and even stadium facilities. Stadium entries are cheaper than cricket in India and also food and beverages at cheap cost has improved people wanting to come to stadiums. North East and the south are very football enthusiastic and even before commercialization had huge fan bases for the local clubs.

**3.3.3 Conclusion**

Once famously described as a "sleeping giant" of world football by former FIFA President Sepp Blatter, India is finally waking up to the most popular sport in the world and has stepped up efforts to unlock its potential as a football champion with the hosting of the Under-17 World Cup.

Football has the potential to become the leading sport in the country. India is the second most populous country in the world, with around 1.3 billion people. 54% of India's population is under the age of 25 and 65% of the population is under 35 years old. With a population of 1.3 billion, it is unimaginable that we cannot have a sport other than cricket.

As a fan base of major European Leagues Laliga has decided to invest in India with the el clasico being played in recent years at Indian favourable time.