

Sports Culture and Introduction of Game of Football in Malabar

Praveen M

Research Scholar University College Trivandrum

ABSTRACT

Cultures can be defined as a total of social structures and religious artistic and intellectual expressions that defines a group or society compared with another. When documenting the history of a society, it is common to emphasize its geographical, political and cultural features and the same time forget many other things that needs to be emphasized. Perhaps the reason for such an assumption is the assessment that these are the only ones that influence the development and evolution of population. Sports activities paves the way for the physical and mental development for a society, provides recreation, aids in cultural development and makes valuable contributions to social gatherings. Kerala's topography, farmers lifestyle and celebration of making the soil its own all played a role in shaping the games in earlier times.

KEYWORDS: Keralam, Sports, Thalapanthu, Football, Clubs, Thalassery, Kozhikode, Tournaments

INTRODUCTION

In very early days onwards Keralites had fond of engaging in sporting activities. The young men were amuse themselves with the games called Panthukali, kuttium kolum, the elders play at cards also chess or chaturanga, they have also games known as Elunayumpuliyum, pathinenchu nayum puliyum etc. in addition to the above mentioned, there are number of traditional sports and games. The onathallu was a kind of boxing where blows are given with open arms rather than with closed outfits. Thalapanthu is the Kerala version of the English football, it is played with the help of both hands and feet. The kili kali which has been a popular game in Thiruvananthapuram area is played with the participation of two teams, each consisting of 5 or 7 persons. Each game is a new development of different abilities, through this not only does the human capacity for social interactions grow, but the lessons that defeat gives can be very helpful in taking precautions in the battle of life. The mental discipline that defeats in the game gives to face the adverse situations that may come in life. Moreover, each games gives a real-life training

With the rise of British domination, in addition to material domination in various spheres cultural hegemony also strengthened. As with society, politics the economy and indeed everything else, the entry of British first as traders and then as rulers from the mid eighteenth century onwards had a profound impact. The British brought with them to India their many organized sports, among which were football, hockey, tennis, badminton, golf. British soldiers along with administrators, sailors and traders began playing sports in India from early as 1700.

From the late nineteenth century and after the 1857 uprising there was conscious effort to get the Indian elites particularly the royals to play English games, especially cricket, tennis, golf. At the same time British administrators and missionaries worked hard at cultivating Victorian games ethnic in Indian society. A crucial element in the diffusion of English games was the clubs, described as the 'free association of

gentleman'. Such clubs which for long time were the pressure of whites, spawned several clones set up by the Indian elite. The best way to keep British soldiers occupied and healthy in the unfamiliar times of India was sport.

In the last decades of the 19th century, cricket in Thalasseri began to be popularised by including sections from all society. The cricket was played in Thalasseri when Arthur Wellesley stayed here to direct his operations against the pazhassi raja. It is said that wherever the duke went he played cricket too. The Thalasseri cricket club founded in 1860 is one of the oldest in India. From the 1890s onwards matches of cricket teams were held largely in Thalasseri and Kannur. It is said that matches were held in Thalasseri between local cricket team and the team of the British who own the plantation and, in this match, locals had defeated the British team. Many such sports forms have great significance in bringing different religious and cultural groups together.

The royal patronage and interest in the sports of the field is as deep as it is in the statecraft and social and religious reform. The example of the sovereign has been instrumental in creating a growing desire on the part of the younger generation to achieve proficiency in games like lawn tennis, badminton and football. Thus, under these influences sports played a crucial role in society. It united the people from different spheres and created a unique way of making a positive impact in society during the times of freedom struggle. Without any differences it contributed to the development of social order and made individuals responsible and purposeful social beings.

Game of football in malabar

The history of football in Kerala starts from the time of the Onapanthu or Thalapanthu. Much before the Kerala state was formed, from the beginning of the 20th century itself in Travancore and Malabar Thalapanthu had become popular and it got rooted and received recognition. But it was the coming of foreigners that we started playing it in the formal manner. With the arrival of foreign army, football spread in different parts of Kerala and drawing inspiration from their play several football clubs were formed in Kerala.

Football has been one of the central components and an inseparable part of popular culture in colonial and post-colonial India. Throughout the games history it has been closely linked to wider historical processes that have shaped the society and culture of the region since the late 19th century. The history of Indian football has also been inextricably linked with the formation of community connections and identities which have been strongly articulated through the game in different ways during different parts of time.

The game of football spread in Kerala also with the arrival of the British. Football was introduced in Travancore for the first time. But it grew more popular in Malabar region. Malabar got the first lessons of football from British military men. Football was the popular sport in British regiments. The army tried to deter aggression by insisting that an Officer be present at every game of either sport and it suggested punishments that might profitably have been adopted by more recent generations: suspension for three months for striking or kicking an opponent, and a ban of six weeks for abusing the referee.

British officers camped at Kozhikode port and west hill barracks started playing football for the first time, gradually football started growing as a favorite past time of all kinds of people in many parts of Malabar starting from Kottapadi ground in Malappuram, Kannur and Talasserry. In the late 19th century companies like Basel mission, Pears lesley, Olkot brothers set up in Calicut and introduced the game to the indigenous people. Earlier local peoples were not allowed to participate in this game. But later due to the shortages of players, they were given chance to participate in football matches. Military officers along with the

commercial companies conducted local tournaments in different parts of the Malabar. British military teams like All-star Rifles, Somersetlite, Lankashare, Fusiliers, started to played the tournaments with Pears Lesley and commonwealth team

During the times of freedom struggle some of the common peoples took the initiative to form football clubs. The most important of them were kuttan club [later known as challengers club] and universal club. With the start of these clubs the arrival of professional players from outside Malabar started. After the introduction of these clubs professional clubs like koyambathoor jaya, Bangloor mohammadans also came to Malabar for Tournaments. This gave boost for emergence of new clubs in Malabar as well.

From 1949 onwards the game of football took more organized form. The Malabar league matches got huge public support. with that all India tournaments were held in Kannur, Thalassery, and Palakkad following Kozhikode. Mananchira ground in Kozhikode grew to be the centre of football in Malabar. The training match of the Indian team that went to the melbourne Olympics was staged here.

CONCLUSION

The state of kerala has a long legacy of sports culture. currently the state has become one of the prominent sports states in India. The introduction of colonial games like cricket, football etc gave new phase to the sports culture in kerala. These games got wider popular attention and people from all strata of society got included thus the social disparity became invisible in the state. The introduction of game of football in Malabar drastically changed the life of peoples

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