



Institute of
Management Technology
Ghaziabad, Delhi NCR



AIFF's Vision: A Pinnacle **for Indian Football** **through State Federation** **Alignment**

By

Dr. Kanishka Pandey

Head – Sports Research Centre

There are times we wonder why a population of 140 Crore fails to field a team of 11 decent footballers who can compete at elite level. It's often believed that India was never a footballing nation and we were good only in cricket. Well, this is not the case because there was a time in 1950s and early 1960s when India was the footballing giant of Asia. The country won two Asian Gold Medals and finished fourth in Olympics. Just when it was thought that we are ready to take the giant leap, things went downhill and this giant went in deep slumber. Top coaches passed away, players retired with no suitable replacements and unprofessional conduct of the All India Football Federation compounded the woes. Also, the period was superimposed with rise of cricket.

Times passed and the football performance kept getting miserable with humiliating losses even to countries ranked much below us. There were times when India competed in tournaments even without a coach. The Federation turned a blind eye. Many foreign experts from FIFA and AFC pointed out the unprofessional conduct and poor administration of AIFF. A general saying goes in India- Iska kuch nai ho sakta (there is nothing which can be done).

Fast Forward to year 2023 and the situation seems to be changing for the better. The AIFF today is one of the most active sports federations in India. Today this sports body has a proper head office, professionals, subject experts, proper marketing team, relationships team and what not! Per se these might seem very elementary issues but it is important to understand that these were the issues which were highlighted earlier by experts, these were the very things which were missing.

AIFF has a proper long-term vision in place- Vision 2047. The same is broken down into several short-term goals. The positive is, today it is not confined to paper work but lot is already being done by the National Body to achieve the goals. Golden Baby Leagues, Grassroots initiatives, proper league structure are a step in the right direction. However, it is pertinent to mention the role of State Football Associations which are yet to become active. A study was conducted by Sports Research Centre of IMT Ghaziabad to understand how active are the State Football Associations today? Are they aligned with the vision of AIFF? Are they organising leagues and tournaments? If yes, then is any information about such initiatives available? Do they have a grassroots program in place? Is the information about their initiatives available on websites or social media?"

AIFF is doing a fantastic job but many state football associations are still found wanting on numerous fronts. Websites and social media pages of different state football associations were studied. Only 8 out of 37 associations displayed information about their Golden Baby Leagues. 10 Out of 37 mentioned about their grassroots initiatives, 13 displayed information about their upcoming tournaments, 15 had valid and active contact information displayed on their websites and social media pages, and most importantly, none of the state mentioned Vision 2047 on their website. Not only this, 22 State associations do not even have a website!

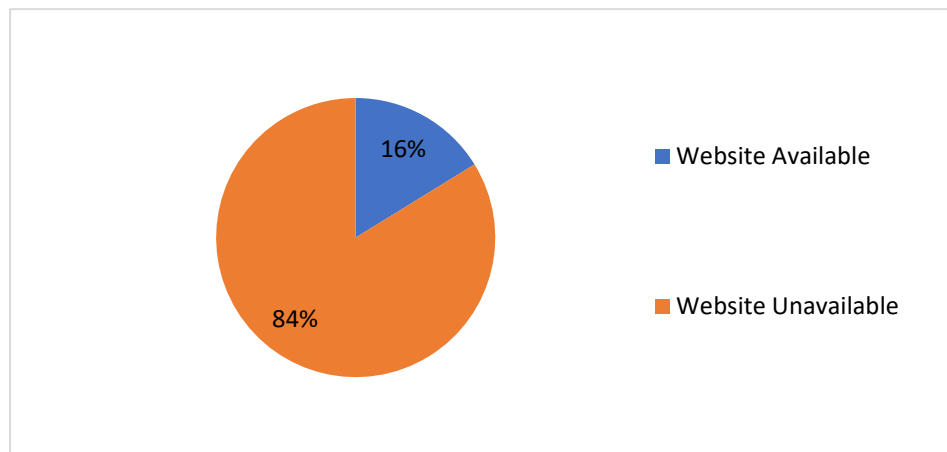
Whether State Associations are taking initiatives or not, one thing is certain that communication is very poor. Today, if someone wants information about an upcoming tournament, grassroots program, information about academies or clubs, licenses from state football associations, then what medium do they have? It is the websites, social media handles or contact persons. It was on this front that most state football associations were found wanting. Also, it is very important for state football associations to be aligned with the vision of AIFF. Every football body needs to be moving forth with the same goals and objectives. Displaying the same on the website shows the intent and that is why it is very important.

The study for sure highlights that its high time when AIFF must rope in the State Football Associations and align them with their vision.

Analysis

1. Website Availability

Dadra and Nagar Haveli Football Association, Football Delhi, Gujarat State Football Association, Himachal Pradesh Football Association, Indian Football Association (West Bengal), and Karnataka State Football Association are 6 of the 37 Indian State Football Associations that are affiliated with the All India Football Federation and have their website. By way of explanation, only 16% of the total State Football Association is active on the internet through websites.

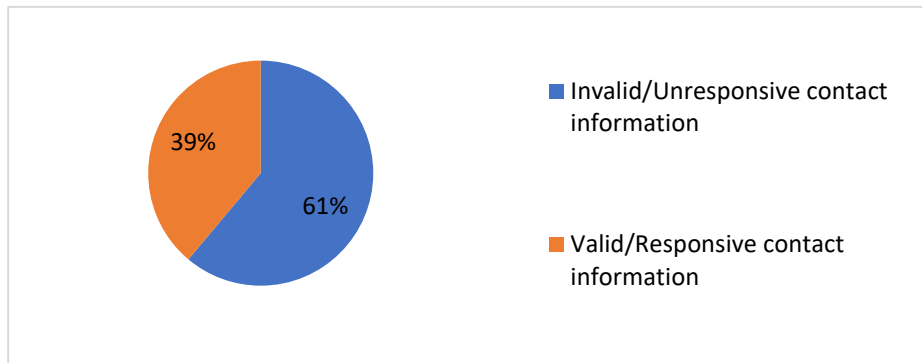


2. Valid/Responsive Contact Information

There are only 14 Football State Associations out of 37, that have mentioned valid or responsive contact information either on their website or on their social media platform. The graphical representation is also attached for your reference of comparison. Those active associations are listed below.

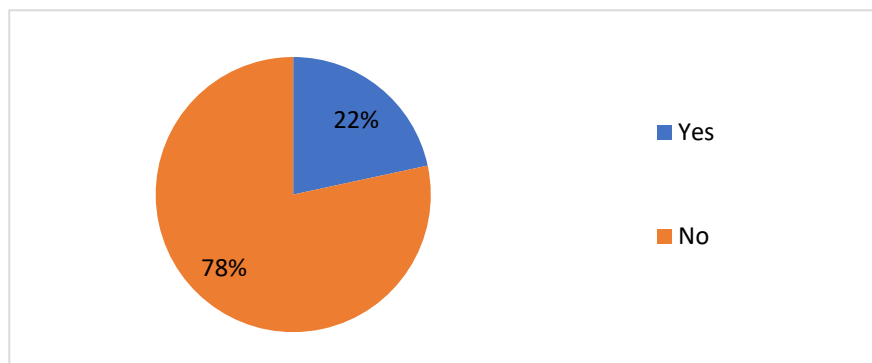
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli Football Association
- Football Association of Odisha
- Football Delhi
- Gujarat State Football Association
- Haryana Football Association
- Himachal Pradesh Football Association
- Indian Football Association
- Jammu and Kashmir Football Association

- Karnataka State Football Association
- Kerala Football Association
- Ladakh Football Association
- Meghalaya Football Association
- Mizoram Football Association
- Tripura Football Association



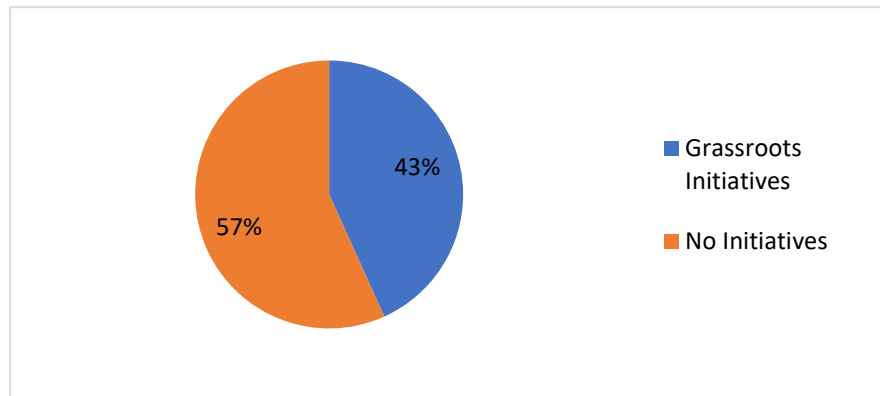
3. Golden Baby League

The information of Golden Baby League was mentioned by 8 State Football Association.



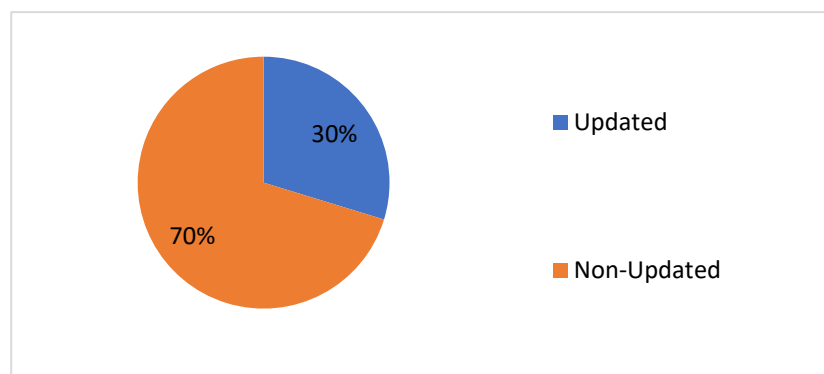
4. Grassroots Initiatives

The information of Grassroots initiatives was mentioned by 16 State Football Association.



5. Future Tournament Information Availability

The availability of information for upcoming tournaments or leagues was there on the website or social media platform of 11 States Football Associations.



6. The study has been done on certain parameters and likewise, the ranking is given. The total parameters were 15. The following graph shows the ranking of every State Football Association accordingly. There are 8 Football Associations that are not able to get even 1 score.

The data can be studied in three categories:

- Below Average
35 has below average
- Above Average
Only 2 has scored above average that is Football Association of Odisha and Football Delhi.
- Top 5 State Football Association among all
According to the below graph top 5 state football association would be the Football Association of Odisha, Football Delhi, Gujarat State Football Association, Karnataka State Football Association, and Western India Football Association.

