Design Thinking Developing Indian Footballers to represent the FIFA World Cup

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I.   Introduction

Sports in particular 'football' absolutely provides an opportunity for any country to be globalized and have a substantial impact. Despite the poverty and lack of standards, India has traditionally tried to lay their efforts either into consuming this global sport or at least cheering for local clubs. India being an under-developed country, the national football team has restlessly tried to compete in the main tournaments but never got success since two to three decades. Recently, the lot of efforts has been made to boost the spirit of football in the nation about the fortunes of Indian football team (Dimeo, 2002, p.74). Football in India has consecutive races from the 19th century when many clubs have contested and competed among themselves. Colonial army used to distribute Football to India sepoys, since then it became popular sport for subaltern class. As Football has a rich history in India which is almost as old as cricket, it should be a great Indian game undoubtedly (Kapadia, 2001, p.1 /Sen, 2002, p.27). Nowadays, the need to describe the concept of Design Thinking (DT) is evident and the structuring of innovative proficiencies. Inspired by design and its vision, DT has developed as a crucial management tool encouraging change in ideas. However, empirical studies show that this concept with large verities has been adequately conceptualized and investigated in administrative backgrounds. A conceptual model of Design thinking consists of five core principles that it is taken into account to shape this paper into several applications (Carlgren, 2013, p.3).

The aim of this article is to develop the right football players focusing on strengths & strategic plans, in order India can compete at the FIFA football world cup in a span of 10 years. Today, it is a huge challenge to build and equip young talented footballers and to develop an integrated strategy so that Indian Football senior team can reach the final stages of the FIFA world cup 2026. The paper begins with design thinking literature, its definition, and other aspects. It then majorly focuses on the application of design thinking stages on the challenge. Finally, I will draw a conclusion and self-reflection in the end after applying the theoretical and practical aspects to our challenge.

II.   Theoretical Framework – Design Process

The paper is divided into two broad frameworks. First, a theoretical framework that will suggest literature view of Design thinking with a brief description of all the stages. Second, Application of these process to make an innovative organization.

In the recent years, Design thinking has been considered as an exciting new model for various occupations such as IT, Business or Medicine. The Design is a method that turns a raw material into a finished product. Also, there are basic reasoning's and core design practices that need to adopt to solve the problem and create innovations. This innovative research has led to a deep understanding of new perspectives and implications that emerge during an investigation (Dorst, 2011, p.521). In response to our challenge, we have developed a design thinking framework using six core principals i.e. Scoping, Research, Synthesis, Ideation, Prototyping, Validation, and Implementation.

The first stage is *Scoping* where the relevant problem is defined and established. It involves generating of design brief which contains a specific goal and defines the problem. A specific plan is identified and mapped with important objectives which are straightforward and achievable. Objectives need to be quantified so that design thinker recognizes what has to be achieved. A general proposition is used to define ideas and values that design thinker anticipates presenting to the target group. To define the problem, one must need to make sure that it is designed for its user, select limited sets needs and should express insights of the challenge (Ambrose, 2009, p.13). The second stage is *Research*; there is a need for background information and relevant data to feed into the creative process for the next stage. Researchers can conduct either quantitative, with solid statistical figures or qualitative like survey or interview with appropriate target groups. It will help to understand the need and requirement of the participants and give researcher more data to work on. Sources from the primary research include feedback generated during the education phase whereas secondary research contains the information collected from secondary resources like scientific journals (Ambrose, 2009, p.17).

After doing relevant research comes the third stage *Synthesis*. It is a phase where one's point of view needs to be made based on the specific audience. Synthesis also accounts data on needs and insights to form a statement. Also, one must adhere to his principals and designs to work ethically (Carroll, 2010, p.40). Now

comes the fourth stage *Ideation*, where there is a need to create potential solutions and presenting applicable ideas. Researchers here gather the data and constraints settled during the previous scoping stage. Subsequently, this information used further used to create innovative ideas which can solve the problem identified. Some of the methods to ideate include brainstorming, sketching ideas, and mind mapping. These methods differ from each other and involve a range of creativity that maximizes the potential for innovation. Things start to become much clear as the ideate stage advances. Errors and misunderstandings can be identified here to avoid any further consequences (Ambrose, 2009, p.19).

The fifth stage is *Prototyping*, which helps to resolve the issues and can be anything that user can relate with. It contributes to estimating particular aspects that can be tested and offer better horizons for comparison. A prototype could be the technological device of a design idea to check whether it works. Prototype handle design concept and it must be developing to evaluate all the aspects (Ambrose, 2009, p.21). The last stages are *Validation & Implementation*, where researchers finally test their prototype. This provides an opportunity to get feedback and reaction of the participants to evaluate the quality of the prototype. Also, this will refine our prototypes and find another solution, if needed. The aim of testing is to ensure that end results meet the design outlook (Ambrose, 2009, p.21).

III.   Application of Design Thinking process

3.1 Scoping

After brainstorming various ideas, industries, and markets to analyze, our team determined that Sports sector especially Football offer the greatest opportunity for success and implementation of design thinking process. India as a nation has the population of over 1.2 billion people with various talents of individuals. At the moment Cricket is India's most commercialized sport. The availability of proper sports infrastructure affects the participation of players (Goswami, 2010, p.3). Certainly, people in India are obsessed with cricket whereas football undoubtedly takes secondary relevance that leads to many consequences. Cricket's momentum was intensified right after India won World Cup in 1983. However, in the recent years, there has been an increase in the footballing fans in India, with the emergence of the Indian Football League. Currently, India's men football team is ranked at 137 in the world FIFA rankings (FIFA, 2016). The problem we are addressing is that the current status of football in India stands nowhere in compared to cricket. We want to make it popular because football has a global presence. In fact, FIFA world Cup is the only competition where a maximum number of countries participate.

As we are a service agency working with the systematic perspective and following all aspects of various resources, procedures, and clear mindset i.e. to reignite the spirit of football. We began our project with a pitch to give an idea as to what kind of services, problems, and prospects our agency sought to address. Our agency is meant to offer services especially to potential footballers and coaches that will help these players to show their talents. Moreover, they will make full use of all the facilities like training camps, proper equipment, learning materials and other more benefits that will help to make a star football team. Unique training and hiring process makes our company special. We did initial market research and mapping to determine whether there was a continued need for these type of services we would be providing. Essentially we are a platform that connects aspiring young talents from not only developed cities but also from remote areas in India with training camps and relevant recruiters. This structure allows us to essentially eliminate the costly and time-consuming selection process that players are subject to. Additionally, it also permits the proper training and practices that players need. We are confident that the project has a future relevance and opportunity for growth as we can help with our prototype other countries in the similar situation.

3.2 Research

After we had pitched our idea, we conducted some further research on the current Football scenario in India, to determine both strengths and weaknesses to develop a perfect team. It helped us determine how we can create an improved system that can provide our target groups i.e. footballers and coaches with even better amenities than other football playing countries. In this paper, it has been discussed various agendas, partnerships, and developments which we can entail to achieve the goal to reach the World Cup finals.

In modern sports, different processes of globalization are influenced by the energy and passion about the sport. Simple theories like culture imperialism and hybridization disguise the difficulties of cultural exchange and adoption. In the case of Indian football, philosophies of globalization are coherent and hard to apply. For instance, historically, there are several phases of cultural encounter, political expansion and increase in brain drain in India can be examined through schematics of globalization (Dimeo, 2002, p.84). Football has the power to unite countries, create new identities, maintain political establishments. India's sporting culture has been widely viewed as revolving around the most watchable sports i.e. Cricket. However, Football has a grave impact in specific states like Goa, Karnataka, Assam, etc. (Armstrong, 2001, p.105)

3.2.1 Comparative Analysis

A comparative research was done based on the Croatian Football team, which had a similar business model. The Croatian Football is one of the top 20 Football teams in the world. The nation is known for its sports involvement although having a population of 4 million. (7Innovation, 2016)

It is known that the Croatian football has a good infrastructure. Every kid is given the opportunity to train at a very young age of 5 years or less, with the clubs or academies. By reaching the age of 8 or 9 years, they are inducted into competitions where they will have first-hand practical experience. From the very young age, the trainers train the children based on techniques and give advice. It is understood that by giving this training helps the kids to think innovatively and build up ideas. Croatia is also known for its top innovation ideas in the world and is among the top 3 countries in the European Union. (7Innovation, 2016)

In football as the coach develops strategies so that the teams can face the challenges of other teams, these strategies are a form of innovations, by which the group can be identified. For example, the Spanish team in football is known for its tiki-taka football methods, which includes many passes between the players and keeping and maintaining possession among the players. Hence they were recognized for their style of play, and such is the case for most teams as they build their styles and strategies. Based on this research and scenario, we can be optimistic to say that for a country like India, where there are more than 1.2 billion people live, it could work out as well, when developed from a young age.

We also determined different countries what they are doing to develop young talents. For instance, Germany has talent development program running throughout the country to train their young football aspirants. This program is structured in different stages Fundamentals, Basic & talent development and then top football to develop skill players. The program has certain objectives like motivation, the training aid for youth coaching, promote individual talents, train technically and providing additional support for health care, social integration, leisure activities (DFB, 2016). These facilities not only motivate the participants but also give an opportunity to prove themselves and become a part of the national team.

3.2.2 Interview
Interview with a footballer – Vijay Krishnan

Vijay Krishnan plays club football in Chennai. Having a good knowledge of how football works in India, he was asked the question regarding our challenge, "how can the Indian football team compete in the FIFA Football World Cup by the year 2026".

He said that the footballing board is controlled by the government officials. Many politicians do not have much idea about sports who have high positions in this industry. Also, the management board of members is mostly old people who are older than 70 years of age and still stick on to their posts, instead of letting the next people in line. It is believed that they use this privilege to visit many places, for the sake of power and reputation. They do not do anything concrete towards the development of Football.

Solutions and ideas he provided were,
1. The inducement of the private sector, taking an interest in the Football Administration.
2. Create a corporate professional plan for running an association and various leagues in a city and state. When the quality of the town level leagues is good, the talent and interest are also generated.
3. When the clubs are shown a way to generate revenue as well, then the private sector would be encouraged more.
4. When these situations are in place, the clubs will have the revenue to have an academy and grassroots program to help the young children to develop in football.

3.3 Synthesis

We aim to create an awareness of football as a prestigious ritual that can be connected to the national existence and in the end a national status. India, being a post-colonial developing country, with marginal International politics and traditional background of several cultures has the potential to develop a star-studded football team. We will work with our most important principle of 'no discrimination' among people on gender, caste, color, race, etc. It encouraged us to open a training school is that we do not want discriminate players according to their castes. Players from any place and cases apply to take admission in our school. We highly believe that caste does not matter, what matter is skill & passion for winning. It will help us also to spread a message and will reduce significantly caste discrimination in the society (Sen, 2002, p.29). Recently, In India, Sponsorship and Broadcasting of football has been increasing significantly. Big brands like Nike, Adidas and Reebok sponsors and promote football which inspires the youth. We want to make a young talented player a successful international player by providing systematic training starting from the beginning.

3.4 Ideation

We mapped the market and identified our most critical target groups mainly coaches and potential footballers. Hence, the paper makes two major practical contributions using Design Thinking (DT) theories. First, it argues the building of training school with the name *Transcender Football School* (TFS) in India to educate and train the exceptional pool of young talents to enhance their skills. Our motto for this project is 'success only comes by proving you are right' and we believe in to 'prove yourself by going beyond the limit.' We look forward to providing world-class infrastructure, user-friendly facilities, and expert coaching to the players as these are the factors success depends on. It discovers the implementation of design thinking process to business management. Sufficient knowledge, analyzation, and optimization of resources are the requirements for a successful business operation. Certain design thinking factors like physical elements (use in building prototypes), operational guidance and participant contribution leads to a successful organization (Plattner, 2009, p.18).

Second, it claims the application of DT by developing software. To smoothen the recruitment and hiring process, we came up with an idea of mobile application namely *TransFoot*, where players from any corner of India either urban or rural areas can use it. We integrated the design thinking elements to expand already further existing advanced approaches to software development. This app will be user and code-centric that will allow problem-solving with high-quality database and easy-to-use features. DT not only offers innovate ideas but also integrate its application to solving the critical problems. The app also supports remote-collaborative tool so that players can interact and share information among themselves (Plattner, 2009, p.18). By using this software app, players can register themselves and make their profile with all the relevant information. Thus, this will reduce the lot of paperwork and make the selection process much easier.

Once we determined what needs to be done to become operational, we began looking at effective ways to market our organization. We are confident that catchy billboards advertisements of our football school in certain target cities could be quite successful. Moreover, we thought of making a team of marketers who can personally reach the doors of people in remote areas in India and spread the word. Being an online tech software app, we decided online marketing would be the most effective methods, in the form of Facebook/Twitter advertisements as well as in-app ads. Also, the costs for such advertising is typically determined by the number of views, so we would only be paying the massive amount if many people are noticing our ads. The next step that needs to be taken is to estimate our suggested prototypes and their implementation to find out the final results. We also need to iron out some details with a lease for the land (licensing) and familiarize ourselves further with government regulations in India. As it will be important to ensure that there are no problems in the future and that our services are secure and reliable for our target group.

3.5 Prototyping
3.5.1 Designing a Football School – First Prototype

Test target group who are our young footballers. Since it is a form of education, the benefits, and the feedback through which this process is undertaken can be uplifted as the year progresses, the idea being a new one. In this context, it is also important to accept and receive client approval. It is important to understand that model, dummies and storyboards can be used to convey ideas. This stage can help us to give potential solutions for the design. (Ambrose & Harris, 2009).

Before the selection of the prototype, it could be necessary to work further on the most promising design of these solutions and results ascertained. We have realized to remodel and modify a school, which is already in Bangalore. Moreover, implement designs and make it attractive. This will allow particular aspects, such as facilities, to be tested by the authorities and get a certification standard such as the ISO 9001, to have a public image approval. It will provide a better basis for comparison at the selection stage if this model fits into our design process. In these circumstances, a prototype can be created. The school is expected to have one of the best football pitches to train, helping the players to have the best experience in the world. The staff induced within the school will be from abroad, who have a conscious experience. The classes will take place from 8.30 A.M. till 1 P.M. every day in the week, weekends being free.

The rooms for lodging will be in the form or single rooms, having common bathrooms and kitchens. Understanding the need for air conditioning and electricity in India, they will be implemented as well, along with a generator backup facility. Cleaning activities are expected to be done by the individuals themselves, and they are supposed to keep their rooms clean. Common areas are to be managed and cleaned by the individuals taking turns. Additional furniture is to be expensed at the individual's expense; basic amenities will be provided. A single room will contain, one cot, one fan, one air-conditioner, one double cupboard, one table and one chair. Water facilities will be taken care of; it will also have heating systems and for the use of bathroom and other necessities in the kitchen. The refrigerator will be provided by us. Washing machine and dryers will also be

given. Electricity usage will be monitored strictly. Internet facility will not be provided. Hence, it must be taken care of the students themselves. There will be a vacuum cleaner provided as well, however, re-usage, and refill covers must be taken care of the individuals. Basic kitchen articles will be provided. Individuals are allowed can have their items in the kitchen.

We sought to look for the age group of the teenagers, also taking into consideration that they could develop the responsibility aspect at this particular age, and become more independent. When compared to the Croatian Football Case, which gives us the idea to develop players from a young age of 5 years. However, we choose to develop from the age of 12, the reason being that, we believe that children in India, develop their interest with the relevance to the sport, and choose a sport to their liking and stick with it for the rest of their lives, based on our research. Instead of forcing them by getting into a sport, we become motivators by bringing in the opportunities which can be availed. We also believe that to obtain these opportunities from our organization; they will automatically train themselves so that they can be selected by us. Hence, the age decision is probably the best time frame that benefits the young footballers and us becoming a win-win situation.

3.5.2 Developing a mobile application – Second Prototype

About our challenge perspective of bringing in, and equipping the Indian football team for the future, we understand the ideas of bringing up a training school for the footballers and also an application for the use to find players. The process starts at an early age, where these gifted footballers are recruited from different parts of the country. In the major cities and towns, where the internet is quite predominant, as an organization. We seek to use an application which is provided through the mobile, for instant registration, as a second prototype. We have named it the TransFoot app. Following the registration, the footballers will be asked to come to a specific location, and later be assessed by their abilities, which involve technical and physical attributes. An in-depth screening will take place concerning these players. This application is a simple registration application, which gives a history and the vision statement of our service, to equip young and promising footballers. Information will be saved; data will be made simple, as a person can register and create an account with us, which will contain the basic details. These details can be filled in by email accounts, or even Facebook accounts, which provide the primary information like Name, Age, Date of birth. There will be no differentiation between these footballers, as everyone will be given the same importance. Caste system will not be a criterion for the decision-making process. It will be entirely merit based. This application will be completely in English, and no other languages. Our company website will also be provided, for more details about our organization.

The young footballers selected will have an opportunity to take part in the Football School – Transcender Football School, which means 'to go beyond the limit,' situated at Bangalore, which also provides an option to study other subjects, however, the superior being tied to football. It was introduced to the idea that these professionals can also take care of themselves after their footballing career. These teenagers will be entirely funded for their schooling which includes football and traditional education. For those living outside Bangalore, a residence will be provided, for their stay, with a unique lodging experience.

3.6 Validation

The validation stage is the blueprint which represents the choice what the company or the organization has taken a step to stand off so that it will continue to follow. The best design with its components are laid out. This design is expected to meet the needs of the vision statement that was to build and equip young talented Footballers over a span of years so that the Indian

Football Senior Team can reach the final stages of the Football FIFA world cup. Moreover, so we can cash in on the project and see its progress. From the management side, we expect the project to be successful, and competent.

Name	Transcender Football School
Chairman & CEO	Ankit Jain
Managing Director	Joel Lawrence
Share Capital	10,000,000
Major Investors/ Shareholders	1. S. Ganguly (Owner of Atletico Football Club India and also a retired Indian Cricket Team Captain)

	2. S. Tendulkar (Retired legend of Indian Cricket Team)
Sponsors for kits and equipment	Nike
Football Sponsors	Arsenal Football Club, London, England
Services provided	1. Recruiting high potential young talent footballers and equipping them (Age group 10-12) 2. Football training facilities for any interested personnel. 3. Education in Football
Company website	www.transcenderfootballschool.com
Mobile application	TransFoot Available in all mobile software
Motto	"Success only comes by proving you are right"
Current project	To help the Indian football team to reach to final stages of FIFA Football World Cup
Project Span	10 years

As the project develops additional procedures are expected to be added to shape and make it into an all-round project. The roll-out of the blueprint will be addressed to the Board of Directors and the top management. Moreover, once it has been decided, it will be presented to the government of India, who is the client, and soon make a contract that is binding by law.

3.7 Implementation

This is the stage when the final project is revealed out to the world. The main specifications and the concept of the design will be marketed and advertised to the world. Hence, about our Football Design, we will be reaching out to the schools and universities, and also through the Facebook website. Since our first stage of the project is based on recruiting we will send in information well in advance to the schools and universities. We will also advertise in newspapers, magazines and also, we hope to publicize the school in a special inauguration ceremony by inviting the Sports Minister of India, to open the school. We believe this will throw a light to many people and automatically create an awareness in the media, which includes newspapers, magazines and television reports and such that it reaches to the entire nation. To the areas where there are no means of proper communication, we will take a step to go there personally and voice out this idea, to help the young children, and give them a dream that could assist them to become great. The mobile application will be tested and proofed such that it does not have any bugs or errors in the mobile application.

V. Conclusion & Reflection

The mass implementation of Design Thinking is a reality, and it has been strengthened over the period due to increase in technology and innovations. Design thinking leads to technical feasibility and economical practicality that produces valuable results. Moreover, these results are based on the different stages and dimensions of the DT. The paper has discovered these processes in the context of our challenge to equip skilled players for the future tournaments. Throughout the procedure, we applied to design concepts based on the

empirical studies claiming to make Indian football better.

In summary, it can be stated that Indian football is growing, but there is a need to of world class infrastructure and accomplished players over the next coming years. India is seen as one of the most diverse and multicultural country in the world. It is continuously growing regarding economic, social and cultural values. In this strong financial state, there is an opportunity to become a world champion someday. After estimating all the steps of DT i.e. problem framing, research, and experimentation, we made two porotypes to solve the current issue. The proposed model addresses problems like lack of training, selection process, etc. Firstly, The Transcender Football School is the perfect place for young aspiring footballers. We believe that opening a school will be a great chance to grow football in India. Also, we will follow values and morals that will help to eliminate problems like inequality and discrimination in the future. Secondly, the software TransFoot, will not only reduce recruiting burden but also contribute to shaping a football network all over the India by connecting Coaches and Players.

Design thinking is a powerful tool that involves interaction and collaboration of different individuals to achieve desirable goals and solve inventive problems. My motivation behind selecting this course was to enhance my knowledge base to learn Design thinking as the creative and innovative research. Through this course, I learned different factors and stages that contribute to the success of an organization. Also, we had several in-class activities to understand the logical problem-solving ways by doing team work. Through this project now I have learned about theoretical and practical aspects of design thinking. The Indian football was the fascinating case to work on. I am delighted to work with my team member Joel, an avid Football supporter. As I am also passionate about sports in general and by seeing the problems that make Indian football not so successful. We thought of developing the right solutions so that we can mitigate the obstacles majorly concerning training, selection and caste system. Group work also helped me to improve communication and co-ordination skills. To summarize, I would say Design thinking is a creative concept that contributes to eliminating irrelevant ideas. This course helped me to make creative business model and solve critical problems. **Word Count** – 4946**5.**

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Appendix
Interview with Vijay Krishnan, Club footballer at Chennai, India
Question
How can we develop the right Football players in India, in order they can compete at the FIFA Football World

Cup in a span of 10 years?

From my experience, I think firstly eliminate political inclinations from the associations. Be it state associations or AIFF (All India Football Federation), because there are a lot of old people who are past their 70's just sticking onto their posts, so that they can travel with the team and visit places and for the sake of power, they just still hold the post and don't do anything concrete towards the development of football.

I think gain the interest of private sector into football and football administration. Create a corporate sort of professional plan for running an association and the various leagues in a city and state. When the quality of city level leagues is good, the talent and interest is also generated. And if the clubs can be shown a way to generate revenue as well, then the private sector would be encouraged more. And the clubs would be able to have an academy and grassroots program.

Great initiative by you. All the best!

Vijay

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