

**A SOCIAL HISTORY OF SPORTS : MIZOS AND
FOOTBALL SINCE COLONIAL PERIOD**

Submitted By

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DECLARATION

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July, 2015

I, Michael Hmingthanpuia, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any other University or Institute.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that ‘A Social History of Sports : Mizos and Football since Colonial Period’ written by Michael Hmingthanpuia has been written under my supervision.

He has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the M. Phil. Regulations of Mizoram University. The dissertation is the result of his own investigation. Neither the dissertation as a whole nor any part of it was ever submitted by any other University for any research degree.

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Michael Hmingthanpuia

ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	Aizawl Football Club
AIFF	All India Football Federation
AR	Assam Rifles
ASEB	Assam State Electricity Board
EA	Electronic Art Incorporation
FIFA	Federation Internationale de Football Association
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
MFA	Mizoram Football Association
MFF	Mizoram Football Federation
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNF	Mizo National Front
MRP	Mizoram Police
MSA	Mizoram Sports Association
MZP	Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Union)

NALCO	National Alluminium Company Limited
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PASSA	Photography and Sports Supply Agency
PC	Personal Computer
PHE	Public Health Engineer
PWD	Public Works Department
SAIL	Steel Authority of India Limited
SNES	Super Nintendo Entertainment System
TFA	TATA Football Academy
YLA	Young Lushai Association
YMA	Young Mizo Association

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society is created and maintained through social interaction. It occurs when the individual associates objects and actions with meanings for themselves. Alix (1995) describe symbolic interaction among the variations on his interactionist theory. Symbolic interactionism proposes that prior to engaging in an interaction, human beings size up the other party to determine the value of the interaction in symbolic ways.¹ Since the colonial period, the existence of written works and sources in form of records encouraged the study of society. The works of English officers such as T.H. Lewin, J.W. Shakespeare and early missionaries like J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge left a mark of the evidences on Mizo society. Without any form of evidences, a study would be vague. But the evidences are subjects relating to interest of governance which is one sided. The voices of the participants are lacking in the records. The study could open up the society from different views generated by the participants.

The British had direct or indirect control of India before the middle of the 19th century. After the Revolt of 1857, the English East India

¹ Ernest K. Alix, *Sociology: An Everyday Life Approach*

Company lost its power of government and British India formally came under the British Crown after 1858.² The Mizo Hills formally became part of British India in 1895. North and south Mizo hills became part of the Assam province in 1898 as the Lushai Hills District, with Aijal (now Aizawl) as headquarters.³ During the First World War, Mizos went to Paris as part of Indian Labour Corps. The Mizos who fought during the war came on contact with football during their stay in France. This was the first interaction between the sport of football and Mizos which encouraged in the study of football in Mizo society.

The study is a challenge as written records on sports in relation with Mizo society is not readily apparent. Fortunately, this challenge is met with the existence of concerned person or families of associated study where the interaction would let to a symbol which would construct a evidence on the topic of the study.

1.1. The background of football

Football is a discipline in sports and games believed to be originated in China in 2500 BCE. A Chinese game *Tsu* (to kick with the feet) *chu* (a stuffed leather ball) was played ceremonially. The influence of

² Ved Prakash, *Encyclopedia of North East India, Vol-I*

³ Mizoram History, National Informatics Centre, Government of India

Chinese customs, art and culture was apparent in the Japanese game of *Kemari* with its exquisite skill⁴. *Epyskiros* had a more striking resemblance to football, confirmed by Antiphanes, the Greek dramatist. Greek life and culture cast a spell on the conquering Romans, who adapted it to the game they called *harpastum*. And as the Roman empire stretched and spread, so did *harpastum*. Rival teams defended the end lines of a rectangular field, which also had a centre line. The aim was to get the ball over the opponents' end line by throwing it forward from one player to another. In Roman occupied Brittany and Normandy (or France) the game of *soule* or *choule* was played on Sundays after evening prayers at church and usually at carnival time. Introduced in England after the Norman conquest of 1066, it was more of battle with no holds barred between two whole villages, rather than a game⁵.

Richard Mulcaster, like many Englishmen on their visits to Italy, had been impressed with the orderly, skilful game of calcio (calciare means to kick) and saw in the adaptation of some of its methods to football played in England a means to eliminate or at least reduce roughness and violence and to promote in the young, the virtues of health, strength and character. He sought to have a stipulated number of players on either side and a schoolmaster to supervise training and settle disputes in matches.

⁴ K. Bhaskaran, *Wills Book of Excellence: Football*, p 11.

⁵ *Ibid.* p-15

These ideas were too revolutionary for his time. They were accepted nearly three hundred years later, in the nineteenth century⁶.

1.2 Mizos and football

Looking into the nature of Mizo society, one can understand how crucial it is to perform a dance. A dance *khual lam* is performed as a traditional welcoming dance and a victory dance *sarlamkai* is also performed at times of successful raid or at victory in war or successful harvesting. Performing a dance is a part of Mizo culture in various occasions. It is no wonder Mizos welcome football in the society within a period of time as dancing is strongly embedded in the culture and the society. The passion of performing a dance can be related to a factor of having a love for football in the society as a 'miracle of dancing feet'. Mizos play football in different way in comparison to other parts of India as Mizos have the ability and capability to grasped and learn from Europeans and South Americans. Mizos have an exquisite skills and great control of a ball when playing in comparison with other parts of India.

Mizoram made history by winning the 68th Santosh Trophy for the first time in 2014 which was the highest competition for state level football competition in India. Mizoram also won gold medal in 2015

⁶ Ibid. p-18

National Games football held in Kerala. Mizoram team was termed as little men who are attractive, quick and so witty that nobody has been able to stop them during the tournament⁷. Mizos could learn football from the smaller sized Spaniards in European and highly skilled Brazilians in South America. Mizos with physical structure could excel on the game without physicality but purely on skills which could be defined by a ‘miracle of dancing feet’ where the trait starts with the passion for dance in the culture and society.

Football in other parts of India will not be highlighted as the Indian influence or inspiration are not found to football in Mizoram. Mizos came in contact with the sports during the First World War as Mizo soldiers participated in the sports in Paris. The sport itself seem to be localized and regionalized in Mizoram itself after knowledge of the sport through early Mizo soldiers fighting in the First World War.

Football in Mizoram can be traced back from the photograph of the five soldiers during the First World War who went to Paris in 1917. These five soldiers were Lianhlira, Lianthuama, Chawngthanga, Zawngauva and Zaliana. Zohnuaia, another soldier who went to Paris narrated football in Paris was played in thousands on one side and thousands on the opposing

⁷ *National Games: A tiny State taking giant strides in football*
Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/sport/football/national-games-a-tiny-state-taking-giant-strides-in-football/article6871445.ece>

side⁸. Ball used in football was not spherical in shape and it was more likely to a rugby ball.

With the introduction of football in the society, certain phases have been passing within a period of time. There was a time when football was played alongside hockey and when popular football players were good in athletics. There was a period of time when a talented person was not known as a only football player because of his engagement to different sports other than football. As time passed on, Mizos concentrated more on a single discipline of sport in their road to semi-professionalism in football. Thus, we can understand in the research that from which time Mizo starts to concentrate on football alone. This is a road to semi-professionalism starting from the period of a hobby or a mean of leisure. Mizos till date could not consider football as a fully professional sport since most of the society depend on government jobs for livelihood. While only a section of the society started to earn their living through football in the present day, football has always been in the society from a period of time. Football as a mean of leisure or at a semi-professional level, the sport has always been welcomed in the society. The study would highlight the reason why football is integrated and regarded as a state sport in the present day.

⁸ Zoliana Royte, *Mizoram Sports Chanchin*, p. 494.

1.3 Significance of the study

Football has always been an integral sport in Mizo society despite the unfavorable geographical shape and condition of its landscape. Whenever an open size is met or a small sized field is available, the availability of a spherical object would entertain one or more person to kick about the ball. Kicking of an object has always been a part of Mizos. In spite of the interest of football in Mizo society, keeping and maintaining records and statistics is not given much of an importance. Football is formerly a topic of leisure and a hobby where gatherings of a community would take up football to stir up the enthusiasts as a part of an activity.

Football in the 1980s and 1990s is crucial as it embedded itself in the society as a tool for integration of Mizos by Young Mizo Association (YMA) , one of the largest non-governmental organization in Mizoram. Football also posed a position as a recruitment of services in a government jobs. More than these, football in these periods was a time when football became a mean of pride for every locality or area in and around Aizawl. Every youth would like to make a name for self and attain a symbol of heroism through football. Football is booming since then.

The proof for all the above phases of football in Mizoram is not available before the present study as no certain records in regard to football is kept for further studies. And no statistics is maintained for further

works. It is a challenge for the researcher to organize the available sources and construct for further studies.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Football when perceived by a community or society, it is played and watched as an extra-curriculum and an activity or mean of leisure. Witnessing (watching) alone ends with the game but maintaining or keeping records is not given importance. Without records and written works, it is difficult to trace the impact it has been having in the society that regards highly of the sport. This is the present scenario of Mizoram. This lacuna could be solved only through the help of proper research work.

We can understand that the awareness of records especially in football is very little as the governing body Mizoram Football Association (MFA) started giving importance in maintaining records and statistics only in the early 1990s while the association started in 1973, where Mizos have started writing and maintaining records and literatures as early as the first half of the twentieth century. Yet still we witness the growth and influence of football in the society. We have war veterans among the Mizos who narrated their experience where they come in contact with football and early sportsmen and pioneers of the sports in Mizoram through oral history.

As we have given much importance to the works of the early missionaries, the growth and development of different churches, the development of political parties, the nationalist movement of the Mizo National Front (MNF), football may have been the impact present during all these years where not much written sources are available. But the community and society of every generation have been witnessing the influence and impact of football in our environment, in our day to day lives.

Sports history is not just a matter of looking at how sport reflects society. Sport itself is an active agent in the world we live in and thus the relationship between sport and society is a complex two-way process. In this scholarship the researcher would try to get the answer of following questions:

1. Is there any impact of colonialism in Mizo football culture?
2. Why or how does the behavior of Mizos changed after the influence of football in the society?
3. Why football has dominated over other sports in Mizoram?
4. Is there any connectivity between traditional and modern sports or games of Mizos?
5. Why Mizo loves football?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the origin and growth of modern sports and games primarily focused on football in Mizoram.
2. To analyze the social responses on football and the fan culture in Mizoram at micro level.
3. To examine the contribution of Mizo football pioneers and the development of Mizo football culture.
4. To analyze the influence of business houses, media and new technologies in the Mizo culture in terms of football and its commercialization

1.6 Review of literature

There are works done on football and other discipline in sports and games which attracted the attention of scholars and writers across the globe. The influence and impact of a discipline in sports and games in a society has caught the attention of writers in general and scholars can relate the sports to a culture or a society. Sport was an integral element of urban life across Britain. History must strive to capture what was important to the people who lived it. Sport, of course, has not mattered

to everyone in society, either today or in the past. But the fact that it has been an important part of many people's lives is reason alone to justify its historical study.

Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies by Jay Coakley, deals with the history of global sport and also examine the approaches on how its history can help students to understand sport today is examined.

Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sport by John Horne, Alan Tomlinson and Gary Whannel, in this edited work, the different scholars, based on series of case studies, tried to explain the growth of modern sports together with an examination of some different theoretical explanations.

Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1914 by Neil Tranter highlighted the influence of economy in developing the British sport culture in the second half of 18th century and early 20th century. This work is an excellent introduction to sports history. Written as a teaching resource, it introduces the relevant debates and literature for its period such as the leisure revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, gender and the motives and benefits of the patronage and supply of sport.

Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain by Jeffrey Hill is a perceptive overview of select areas of sport and leisure in

the twentieth century. The first section is on 'commercial leisure' which incorporates chapters on the economics of sport, sport and the media, the cinema and holidays. The second section looks at home-based leisure and voluntary activity. The final section examines the role of state in recreation with chapters on central government and the role of the municipality.

Pay up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914 by Wray Vamplew is a very detailed and important examination of the financial aspects of sport. The author argues that although professional sport was organised on a commercial basis, it was not profit orientated.

In *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945*, Martin Polley expresses his scholarly view that sport is an integral part of society so it needs to be considered in the widest possible context. It should not be viewed in a vacuum, and *Moving the Goalposts* certainly provides an excellent example of how to integrate sport history into general historical studies. Author examines the historical development of popular sports in England, including football, rugby, tennis, cricket, athletics and even elite sports such as polo.

The Football World: A Contemporary Social History, by Stephen Wagg deals with the development of professionalism in British football. He tries to draw the attention of his readers with his scholarly

views that the game did not develop in isolation, in fact, has reflected the changing political, economic and social conditions of Britain.

The Picador Book of Cricket by Ramachandra Guha is a tribute to the finest writers on the game of cricket and an acknowledgement that the great days of cricket literature are behind us. There was a time when major English writers took time off to write about cricket, whereas the cricket book market today is dominated by ghosted autobiographies and statistical compendiums. "*The Picador Book of Cricket*" celebrates the best writing on the game and includes many pieces that have been out of print, or difficult to get hold of, for years.

Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life by Alex Bellos, talks about the arts of performance - in music and dance, ecstatic religion, soap opera, plastic surgery, transvestism and football - Brazilian style tends to both sublimity and excess. In the case of football, the sublime and the excessive go hand in hand. Brazil has the most brilliant and graceful players, and the most extravagantly dedicated fans. He also wrote the other face that it also has the most corrupt professional organizations, subject to recurrent accusations of match-fixing, nepotism and drug-smuggling. Mismanagement at the professional level condemns young footballers to penury.

Playing the Enemy, John Carlin, he describes Mandela's methodical, improbable and brilliant campaign to reconcile resentful blacks and fearful whites around a sporting event, a game of rugby.

CHAPTER II

SPHERE OF FOOTBALL

As a ball in football is stitched to form a shape, there are different area of study which are gathered to form a shape. There are different factors and consequences which lead to the formation of football as a part of Mizo society at different level of study. The early phase of football in the society which highlight the pioneers in introducing football, a body of association which made an attempt in developing football in the society, the nongovernmental organizations who believed football as a source of integrating the society, job generation through football, the emergence of football clubs, football at a local and micro level, a step forward outside the society through football shaped the sphere of football.

The study deals with different persons who are associated with football in different ways. Some may directly participate in the sport while others may indirectly involve with the sport. The study also deals with different associations who are directly and indirectly involve in the sport. The contributions of all may seem to differ at different stages but it cannot be ignored in the development of football in the society.

Football develops in the society within a period of time and gradually forms the most loved sport in the society. To understand this, the study is crucial to shape the different incidents at a particular time period. It is a challenge of the research to integrate the different levels of football and highlight how these levels are inter-connected and inter-linked for the gradual development of football as a sport of Mizo society.

2.1 The Early Phase

The First World War (1914-1917) had made an impact in various ways. An important impact could be the contact of football by Mizo soldiers who went to Paris, France in 1917. These soldiers namely Lianhlira, Lianthuama, Chawngthanga, Zawngauva and Zaliana were members of the labour corps who fought in the war. They were pictured in a photograph holding a ball outside Paris. As narrated by Zohnuaia who also went to France, football at the time was like a sport of rugby where the ball was not spherical in shape. The game was played with unlimited number of participants. It was played as a village against another village⁹. The format of the sport was more like choule or la soule, a popular game in Europe. This sport was an amateur sport as a part of social activity in Europe.

⁹ Ibid. p. 494

In 1926, the sports pioneers namely L.H. Liana of Mission Veng, Chuauthuama of Mission Veng, Hrawva of Venghlui, Kailuia of Dawrpui (all from Aizawl) who were early educated outside Aizawl requested a wealthy businessman Pachhunga of Dawrpui to sponsor a trophy for youth in Aizawl. Pachhunga Football Trophy became the first official tournament known among Mizos. The tournament went on for three decades till it ended with the demise of Pachhunga in 1958¹⁰. At the time, Assam Rifles (AR) were dominant in this tournament and they were no match for Mizos. But, the defeat of AR by Aijal Dawrpui Blue (Aijal was the previous name for Aizawl) in 1946 and by Aizawl School team the following year in 1947 were remarkable for Mizos in the record of the tournament.

Chhotelal Seth, a Marwari businessman in Aizawl presented a shield to the AR where Chhotelal Seth Football Shield was to be won in 1933. This football match was important as it paved the way for the recruitment of Mizos in AR. With this tournament, a speech made by Commandant W.B. Shakespear who termed Mizos as unsuitable for recruitment in an army was challenged¹¹. The tournament was a test of bravery and determination of Mizos. The venue Lammual, the playground of Assam Rifles was occupied fully by spectators. The matches were played

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 495

¹¹ Ibid. p. 10

by 8 teams under a heavy rain and playground was filled with dirt. The IGP who handed the shield made a speech saying that Mizos were as brave as Gorkhas who are known for their bravery in the service. After the tournament, over 50 new Mizo soldiers were recruited and sent to Sadya (present Arunachal Pradesh) and Naga Hill (present Nagaland)¹².

The first Charity Football match was held in 1948. The charity was to aid the students' union Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) which was established in 1935. The charity football match was played between the students who studied outside Aijal and students who studied within Aizawl. The sum of money received from gate entry was rupees forty one in total which was given to aid MZP¹³.

The early tournaments and attraction of spectators were initiated by the early educated Mizos who received education with the help of early missionaries. These shows that the awareness of promoting football among Mizos was in the minds of educated elites in the society where they could get the assistance of businessmen like Pachhunga and Chhotelal Seth. The fully packed spectators at Lammual shows how much football is welcomed and integrated as well as how much football is starting to drive the spectators more .

¹² Ibid. p. 11

¹³ Ibid. p. 11

Football at an early phase went side by side with hockey. The known athletes in a community were known to excel both in football and hockey. However, a game of football with its simplicity and its high tempo has been driving more spectators to witness a match. Football in its early phase goes along with hockey as a team sport. So, we cannot say that football is more popular than hockey in the society.

2.2 Sports Associations

The idea of promoting sports in Aizawl was in the minds of western educated Mizos where Aijal Sports Association (ASA) was established in 1945. The association was revived in 1952 after few years of not progressing. Sports lovers namely Lalhmingthanga of Dawrpui and his friends made an effort to revive sports. The aim of reviving the association was to promote football and hockey through tournaments¹⁴.

The first football team which played outside Mizoram was sent by ASA on 30th September, 1957 at Silchar in the state of Assam. Later, teams were sent by the association at Inter-district football tournament R. K. Jain Memorial Shield, played at Karimganj, Assam in 1962 where Mizos won the shield. This was a new step in football for Mizos as a tournament was won outside Mizo district for the first time.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 19

Chhotelal Seth Football Shield was also revived by the association in 1959¹⁵.

In 1972, Mizoram was put into a status of Union Territory under the government of India. ASA was changed as Mizoram Sports Association (MSA). The following year in 1973, football association became an autonomous body where Mizoram Football Association (MFA) was established. Lal Thanhawla (the present Chief Minister of Mizoram) became the first president of MFA¹⁶.

MFA, the first organized sports association in Mizoram was affiliated to the All India Football Federation (AIFF), the highest football governing body in India in 1987. It was in this year itself Mizoram participated in the Senior National Football Championship. From 1987, the members of MFA held important posts in AIFF. Zothangliana became a member of technical committee in 1992. J. Lalhmachhuana became a member of camp and tour committee from 1994 to 1995. K. Liantlinga held the post of chairman of youth competition in 1996 and he was also a match commissioner in 1997.

From 1993, MFA initially divided Mizoram into 15 zones and further to 25 zones with a view to promote football all over Mizoram. It encouraged children and youth from all over the state to represent their

¹⁵ Minute of Aijal Sports Association (1956-1970)

¹⁶ Zoliana Royte, opcit. p. 495

localities, villages, districts, state. Club registration in the format of advanced countries began in Mizoram where registered clubs were categorized into Division I, Division II and Division III in 1994. In 1998, district football associations was organized in 8 districts namely Aizawl, Lunglei, Lawngtlai, Champhai, Kolasib, Saiha, Serchhip, Mamit¹⁷. The categorizing of district football associations under MFA was aimed at promoting talents as well as spotting talented children for a bright future of football in Mizoram. Football began to reach every corner of the state since then. Till date, football associations at different districts of Mizoram would expose children with talented football skills where MFA would spot these talents and select them to represent the state at different age level competitions. MFA would acquire the talents all over the state with the co-ordination of football bodies all over the state guided by MFA.

2.3 YMA Football

Young Mizo Association (YMA) was organized as Young Lushai Association (YLA) on 15th June, 1935 as an organization integrating and uniting Mizos. It was renamed Young Mizo Association (YMA) on October, 1947¹⁸. Till date, YMA is a large non-government organization

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 496-497

¹⁸ R. Lalhmangaihsanga, *Mizo General Knowledge*, p. 44

(NGO) aside from the church organization in Mizoram. YMA did not mention sports in its original constitution as they did not foresee how sports and cultural activities would integrate in the society. It later included sports under 'extra curriculum' in the constitution. YMA began to organize football tournament for men and volleyball tournament for women from the later part of 1980s. The main aim of organizing sports was for integration of different YMA branches across the state.

Football tournament started for the first time as a part of YMA's Golden Jubilee celebration in 1985. This year, 32 teams from 32 YMA branches participated where Armed Veng defeated Vaivakawn to win the maiden YMA football tournament. The tournament continued in 1987 where 47 teams participated. Electric Veng defeated Ramthar in this final. A notable event was that Ramthar was previously a part of Electric Veng where the two YMA branches met in the finals. It was an interesting final. The 1988 final was won by the newly formed branch of Armed Veng North (Armed Veng was divided into Armed Veng North and Armed Veng South) by defeating Chaltlang in the final. 47 teams participated on this year. YMA football tournament was a crowd puller as the tournament was a battle for superiority for branches in dominating football in Mizoram. Branches participating in the tournament increased to 53 in 1989. Electric Veng defeated Chanmari. 68 teams participated in 1990 where Dinthar defeated Chanmari.

YMA football continued in 1995 after a gap of almost four years. YMA Diamond Jubilee celebration was held on this year where 77 teams participated. Chaltlang won the grand tournament by defeating Armed Veng South¹⁹. YMA football tournament at the time was the most watched football tournament in Mizoram as YMA branches represent their respective localities where the winner of the tournament was a symbol of pride as a locality and it was a sign of dominance of football in Mizoram.

YMA football tournament continued till date but other MFA recognized football competitions arose with the busy calendar of football. To locate the areas in Mizoram who are performing well in football and who have good records in Mizoram, YMA football tournament winners' branches are the first which comes to mind till date. YMA have been integrating different branches through football as well as popularizing football among the communities.

2.4 Inter-Departmental Football

The football governing body MFA during 1984 to 1987 organized tournaments for 18 teams. This was the initial stage of shaping football into a modern stage. 15 teams from Aizawl along with government departmental teams played with each other²⁰. This paved a way

¹⁹ V.L. Sanga, *Central YMA Sports, YMA Chanchinbu*, June, 1998. pp. 19-25

²⁰ Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* p. 498

for a league system of football followed at the highest level of football competition under FIFA, world's football governing body.

Mizoram Police Sporting Club (MRP) dominated the tournament during these years. Other departmental teams were Public Work Department (PWD), Power Sporting Club and Public Health Engineering (PHE). There were few private owned clubs like El-El Sports Club and Aizawl Football Club (AFC).

The period from 1984 to 1987 was an important era for football in Mizoram as football talents all over Mizoram were starting to make their living by playing football. Football became a job generation. Departmental teams were recruiting talented football players in their departments. The football players represented their respective departments on tournaments and they were also made to work as a staff of the offices on those days when they did not have to play football. The period co-incided with the status of Mizoram shifting from Union Territory to State under the Government of India. There were employment openings on various departments under the state government. Ambitious and talented football players made an effort to get their chances offered by the departments. There are many former football players who are still working in the departments till date.

2.5 Emergence of a private football club

It was in the mid 1980s where generations of football players were getting employments in the department under the newly formed state government which gave the hunger and competitive feeling to the football players who were still attending colleges at the time. Witnessing the hunger, K. Liantlinga of Venghlui started the first private club in Mizoram. El-El Sports Club (El-El) was formed in 1983. The name of the club was in the memory of Lallui, the wife of Hrawva, chief of Venghlui. She was the mother of K. Liantlinga. The club competed with departmental teams at the highest level from 1983 till 1990. This was new in the face of football in Mizoram.

K. Liantlinga had learnt the structure and management of football clubs in Europe. Based on their structure, El-El Sports Club was started. Recruitment of football players began among the college students of Aizawl College and Pachhunga University College, the two big colleges in Mizoram. The club started following western traits by learning from the video cassettes played in a Panasonic video player which was bought from Myanmar for Rs 45,000/-. The cassettes during the time cost Rs 1000/- per cassette which was an astronomical figure. The football players watched the football played by Europeans during the early parts of the day and they tried to practice those skills in the afternoon at the practice sessions.

The football players were between the ages of 20 to 22 where they competed with top teams in the state comprising of players who were older to them. Football equipments were also provided to the players. The players were the first team to wear a European branded sportswear made by Umbro. It was an expensive sportswear which cost Rs 8000/- in 1984. The club also paid their players for their services²¹.

Private clubs like El-El and Aizawl Football Club (AFC) which was later formed paved the way for professionalism in football. The structure and management of the football was copied from European clubs in those days. Recruiting football talents from all over the state and also from neighboring state of Manipur and neighboring country of Burma as well as paying these players in salaries and equipments are all part of modern football clubs in the world. This had opened up a new phase of football in Mizoram in the road to professionalism.

2.6 Changes in football

In the mid 1980s, there was a demand for change in the format of football tournaments in Mizoram. The governing football body MFA organizes tournaments with no such kind of individual prizes. And also teams participating in the tournaments did not get any shares from the revenue of gate entry. With the increase in demand and cries for

²¹ Interview with K. Liantlinga

‘professionalism’, Mizoram Football Federation (MFF) was formed in 1986. It seems that there was a clash of ideas between MFA and MFF. While MFA was willing to go on with amateur set up of football in Mizoram, MFF wanted ‘professionalism’ in the format of football tournaments²².

Lalthangvunga Memorial Football Tournament for men and women was first organized by MFF in 1986. In this tournament, aside from the cash prize and trophy for the winner and runners-up, individual prizes were given by the organizer. 25% of revenue from gate entry was also given to teams as a match money. Another significant step initiated by MFF was an endorsement system of the clubs during the tournaments. Business houses, government offices and hotels around Aizawl were providing sponsorship for the clubs. All these were a new step in football in Mizoram. It was an initial step of organizing clubs and tournament as of other advanced countries in football.

The functioning of MFA and MFF created a competition between the two bodies where football tournaments were numerous held in Aizawl during 1987 and 1988. Laldenga Gold Cup and Federation Cup were held in 1987. Laldenga Gold Cup was an invitational tournament where best teams in the north eastern part of India were invited. The tournament became the first tournament in north east part of India

²² Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* p. 498

where teams from seven states called Seven Sisters participated²³. The competition between two bodies became the catalyst for the exposure of football beyond the boundary. Football in Mizoram began to expose and it became a step for improvement and ‘professionalism’.

2.7 Football at a local level

There is a saying in Mizo society that a locality which is having a playground excels in football. Since Mizoram is a hilly area, all localities are not favored to have a playground. The saying is true to some extent as localities that have good records in YMA football and localities that produce good football players are mostly from areas who have a playground. Localities like Armed Veng North and Armed Veng South who shared Armed Veng field, Electric Veng and Chanmari which are close by to Government High School field, Chaltlang who have their field dominated football in Mizoram for a long period. Among them, Chaltlang with their small sized playground dominating football is very interesting.

Chaltlang is one of the popular localities who have their chief in the early years. Once under a chieftainship, the locality is a closed knit community. A fine generation of youth are crucial for the dominance in football. It was around 1983 that a generation of youth spent most of the day in their small sized playground. They were joined by younger

²³ Interview with K. Liantlinga

generations after witnessing their elders playing most of the time in the playground. Chaltlang Sports Club was organized in 1983 along with junior teams. They dominated the northern part of Aizawl from 1985. They also reached semi finals in YMA tournament in 1987 and 1988. The success was an effort and contribution of a generation of youth.

Chaltlang Sports Club composed of a well setting up of teams within the community. There were age level teams such as team below 10 years of age, team below 12 years of age and team below 14 years of age aside from the men's team. Tournaments were held frequently within the community. An article related to football was a regular column in the community's weekly newsletter which created enthusiasm in the minds of the youths and children supported by the parents. These help in consistency of good performance for the community in football²⁴.

An interesting feature of football is being a factor for building up a friendship and relationship to group of friends. Mizo communities in the 1980s and 1990s saw the feature of group of friends hanging out in a single household. This household is mostly a widow's house. The guest of the house, a widow entertains group of friends where they spent most of their times drinking on liquor or singing together with a musical instruments. It was popularly called '*in leng*' where this word was connected to the guest's good name. In a locality, one group of friends used

²⁴ Interview with Laltanpuia

to play a friendly football match with another group of friends. At the end of the game, these participants would jointly share a supper at a common location. Football serves as a means of relationship and means of friendship during the years.

2.8 First Mizo to represent India

India, as a nation is still hardly regarded as a footballing nation. Mizoram, as a state hardly make a mark in the national championships where footballing states compete at the highest level. On the other hand, an extraordinary talent emerged among Mizos. Kawllianthanga, also known as K. Kawla was born on 17th November, 1941 at Churachanpur in Manipur to Rev. Dr. Lalthanliana and Rongengi. His father was a preacher. Due to his father's mission, he grew up in Burma (now Myanmar). In 1959, he represented Chin-State Football team as a goalkeeper. It was here where he got contacted and recruited by Post & Telecom department where Sports Authority of Burma had high regard of him. He then represented Burma Youth team at Asian Youth Football Tournament held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

K. Kawla went back to Mizoram from Myanmar in 1974 where he played for Mizoram Police team. In 1976, he represented Mizoram football team which went to Shillong. In 1977, he then represented Assam football team after accepting an invitation of Sports

Authority of Assam. He was noticed by AIFF, the highest football governing body in India while playing in the Santosh Trophy. AIFF selected him as a member of India national football team. He represented India at Afghanistan Republic Day at Kabul where India won third place. He also represented India at 1978 Aga Khan Gold Cup Football Tournament held in Dhaka where India won second place.

K. Kawla was also the first Mizo to play for top Indian football club where he played for Mohamedan Sporting Club of Calcutta from 1978 to 1979. He came back to Mizoram and joined Mizoram Police as a rank of sub-inspector of police. He continued to play football and acted as a coach of Mizoram football team at Diphu, Meghalaya and Bhutan King's Cup 1991. He not only represented India at an international level but also represented Burma youth team at an international level. He spent most of his days with football till his death on 1st March, 1995 at the age of 54²⁵. His legacy opens the minds of Mizos in football where a hope and chance was created by him in football at an international level.

2.9 Exceptional talent went unnoticed

Football was at its height during the late 1980s in Mizoram. Private clubs like El El and AFC were competing with departmental teams

²⁵ Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* p. 512-513

in Aizawl. Football was the most watched sport as televisions were owned by only few people at the time. Football posed a form of amusement in the society. Football players were highly regarded in the society. Excellent football players would attain popularity and a symbol of heroism in the society. One such football player was H. Ramthlengliana.

H. Ramthlengliana played for AFC and competed with other teams from 1984. He was an exceptional talent in sports where he held a record as the fastest runner in Mizoram from 1986 to 1992. Tragically, his football exceptional talent was highlighted by misfortunes and bad luck. The exceptional talent went unnoticed at the national level as well as international level. But in the local football in Mizoram, the generation at the time was familiar with his name when talking of football in Mizoram.

In 1986, after an impressive display at Subroto Cup which was school level football tournament, he and Zomuanthanga of Mizoram received a call up to represent Indian School football team at a tournament in Brunei. Unfortunately, due to a problem faced in his passport, he had to pull out of the team. While Zomuanthanga went on to play the football tournament outside India. Zomuanthanga became the first Mizo boy to play football outside India. This was a first setback for H. Ramthlengliana in his football career.

In 1988, H. Ramthlengliana with other four Mizo teenagers namely Lalrinsanga, Zonunthara, Zohminga and Chhakchhuakvunga were

selected for a football camp at Jawaharlal Nehru stadium in New Delhi. The camp was organised by Special Area Games (SAG) which was under the authority of Sports Authority of India (SAI). SAG was a programme designed for development of youths in north east region of India and Andaman and Nicobar Island. H. Ramthlengliana went on to lead the team of SAG during their camp in New Delhi where he was made the captain of the team. But he left the camp to pursue his educational career where he later became a police officer under MRP.

In 1992, H. Ramthlengliana received a call from the AIFF for the selection of India national football team. Selection was held in Bangalore (now Bengaluru). Preparation for Nehru Gold Cup was the main theme of the selection. He performed well in the selection but he did not find his name on the final list. Only few football players made it to the final selection while senior members of India football team who did not attend the selection camp made the final cut. Being disappointed on the system of selection, he gave up his dream to represent India in football. This was a huge setback for him and Mizos. He missed two opportunities in his football career in representing India as a school boy and in representing India national football team.

H. Ramthlengliana received an invitation from top football clubs in India like East Bengal of Kolkata, Mohammedan Sporting of Kolkata and Mahindra & Mahindra from Mumbai in 1992 but he declined them as

he has been serving in a police department²⁶. At present, he served the government as a member of Mizoram Police Service. His exceptional talent did not cross the state but his exceptional talent was always ahead of others during his football career where he gave up his football days after suffering a huge setback twice. His football dreams ended by nepotism.

2.10 Football turns professional

We have seen Mizo in the like of K. Kawla playing for top Indian club like Mohamedan Sporting Club but he went back to Mizoram to serve in Mizoram police. Football in the mid 1990s saw a change in national level where a push for full time football players saw an opening in professionalism. Football is taken up as a profession since then.

Multinational companies like TATA, National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) and Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) opened up football academies at various parts of India. TATA football academy (TFA) at Jamshedpur, Bihar and SAIL academy at Bokaro, Jharkhand were the most notable football academies in India. Talented football players all over India were recruited in these academies where professional football clubs sign up graduates from these institutions to become a professional football players. These created an opportunities for Mizo football players to pursue their careers where the likes of Jerry

²⁶ Interview with H. Ramthlengliana

Zirsanga and S. Malsawmtluanga represented India at an international level. Mizo football players who attended the institutions from 1995 to 2005 were:

- 1) TFA: Jerry Zirsanga, Malsawma, Vanlalrova, Vanlalnghaka, P.C Lalawmpuia, Robert Lalthlamuana.
- 2) SAIL: Vanlalmawia, H. Lalmalsawma, Lalchhuanmawia, P.C. Vanlalmuana, Lalramzauva Ralte, Lalhmangaihzuala, Nicky Malsawmtluanga, Lalbiaktluanga.

Apart from these, Mizos were playing as professional football players at teams such as East Bengal (Kolkata), Calcutta FC (Kolkata), George Telegraph (Kolkata), City Athletics FC (Kolkata), Army XI, Air Force (Kolkata), Signal Corps (Goa), Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB)²⁷.

Mizos who were playing outside Mizoram had shown the possibilities of football to take up as a profession in India. This had changed the scenario of football in the society where it creates a dream for many children and youth to take up football as a profession. This period from 1995 to 2005 was a new era of football in Mizoram where football players urged themselves to play football outside Mizoram. The same goes for a footballing nation of Brazil. In Brazil, there is a conception among the football players that playing football in Europe is a pride and achievement

²⁷ Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* pp. 519-520

for any Brazilians. They always come back home as a hero. Whether they play in a football country like England, Italy, Spain, Germany or less popular countries of Latvia, Iceland or Luxembourg, Brazilians always come back as heroes in their respective hometown. The same sense of pride and achievement goes for Mizos.

CHAPTER III

COMMERCIALIZATION

Football is a sport known for its simplicity. When a ball is present, people could kick about in any available space. Football is played as a part of filling a leisure time. Football is an activity. And when the mindsets of competitiveness arise, football requires support through others to reach a higher level of competition. Football can no longer be a means of leisure time, it becomes a battle with equipments. Football at a high level requires a ball to play with, a specially designed boots to kick the ball with, a custom made shirt and short to play with. These would be like an arsenal for battling out in a battle field in the form of a standard sized football field. The battle field requires a well indicated line drawn in it and a goal post with a cross bar attached to it. For cautious display of the well equipped football teams opposing each other, the officials are also required. The whole incident has to have a reason for battling out in the football field. There should be organizers for hosting the football match. For all these to function accordingly, we have to understand the importance of commercialization of football and the role it plays in the society.

Commercialization of football is crucial to study how the sport evolved within a period of time. We can also study how contacts with other societies exist in relation to football. We will further understand how the economic situation had paved a way for the popularity of football within the society. Lastly, we could also pay tribute to the front runners in promoting football within the society through their business intended activities.

Since football without any forms of commerce would not generate a progress within a society, it is important to learn how necessary it is for the existence of organizer and recipient side by side. The sociological aspect, the economical aspect and the sporting aspect are interconnected in the study.

3.1 The dual business

The pioneer traders and businessmen among Mizos were hard working and ambitious. The commercial goods they deal in were of a variety. They introduced new materials and commodities which they came in contact with and then brought to the people. Since they were in contact with a variety of people at different places, they deal in variety of goods which they believed to be profitable and which will profit the people and

the society. This is why the early traders and businessmen were dealing with more than one subject of business in the early days. They then continued with the most demanding subject of business in the market soon after. This is how early businessmen like Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala start to deal in sport goods after trying on different subject of business in their earlier days.

The first known business house in association with sport goods was established on 13th November, 1972 at Dawrpui in Aizawl. Lalhema started a business house dealing in sport goods along with other subject of business. Lalhema was a talented person who is also the first to associate with photography. Lalhema was believed to be the first photographer among Mizos²⁸. He started photography and photography processing along with dealing in sport goods which he then concentrated on sport goods alone as he found it more suitable for him and his family to continue for a longer period of time.

Thangridema, the son of Lalhema started his own business house close to the father's business house. He too started a dual business of sport goods dealer along with business of photography. He named his business as Photography and Sport Supply Agency (PASSA). He had begun to get in contact with sport goods in the 1960s during his time in

²⁸ Interview with Zawni

Shillong in Meghalaya. So, it was no wonder his business skills and technical skills were incorporated in PASSA.

Thangridema later became the first to deal in cosmetics where an Indian cosmetic brand Lakme entered Mizoram through him. Lakme was founded by JRD Tata under Tata Group in 1952. Later, he also deal in Swiss footwear makers Bata. Bata was founded in Switzerland by T&A Bata Shoe Company in 1894. He modernized the society at the time where cosmetics and footwears were part of a new dressing. He brought a change to the fashion of the society. These brands of Lakme and Bata continued till date in Mizoram but no longer by Thangridema²⁹. PASSA also run till date where the family of Thangridema carried on the business but as a dealer in sport goods alone.

Another pioneer in dealing with sport goods was Haudala. Haudala started his business in Dawrpui which is the main commercial area in Aizawl till date. He was also running his shop in sport goods along with a wider variety of commodities. He was the first to organize a kind of departmental store. He dealt with variety of daily basic necessities in his business from stationeries to edibles and different commodities of basic

²⁹ Interview with Dr. Lalrindiki Fanai

necessities. He too concentrated his business on sport goods alone later on³⁰.

Photography at the time was not affordable to masses where technical skill was required. In this, Lalhema and his son Thangridema excelled in photography and the processing of the photographs. Thangridema also introduced the cosmetics and footwear where he brought a change to the dressing sense of the society. They revolutionized the fashion of Mizos. Haudala also brought the idea of a wider business of setting up a departmental store which provides basic needs of the people. Apart from these, all the families of Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala run their business till date where they now only deal with sport goods.

3.2 Goods related to football

Ever since football was in contact with the society, the main item of the sport which was a leather ball was not readily available. A fruit called sertawk which was similar to the size and shape of ball was kicked about in many places where leather ball was not available. Aside from sertawk, papers stuffed in a sock shaped in a spherical object are also kicked about. The simplicity of football popularizes the sport to many. As

³⁰ Interview with Lalramthanga, IFS.

in Brazil, when slavery was abolished in 1888 which was the last place to do so in the Americas. Many newly liberated slaves moved into the cities, creating a large impoverished underclass. The game of football was found more interesting than cricket as it was simple to copy. All one needed was a ball. If one could not afford it, one could be improvised inexpensively with, for example, a bundle of socks, an orange or a cloth filled with paper. Children and youth in Africa also followed the similar trait. The simplicity of the sport makes it easy to adapt worldwide.

Since the 1970s, local business houses and shops were found in Dawrpui, the main commercial area in Aizawl. Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala dealt with Indian made sport goods. The introduction of a leather made ball was a new phase of football among Mizos. The early balls were mostly manufactured in Jalandhar, a town of Punjab in India. These balls come in different sizes. The variation of sizes was for the usage of different age groups playing football. Ball in those days came in five sizes where size 5 was an international standard size³¹. Ball for football was available for different ages in the society.

Lalhema, the first Mizo to deal in sport goods had a good contact with sport good manufacturers like Cosco, Nivia and Mitre. These are popular Indian manufacturers which has been running the company

³¹ Interview with Lalramthanga, IFS

since date. Whereas Mitre is an English company founded by Benjamin Crook in 1817. Nivia Sports launched its first full leather hand stitched ball in 1962 when the present chairman and managing director Vijay Kharabanda worked with his father. The name NIVIA is derived from the first letter of the founder Nihal Chand Kharabanada and his son Vijay Kharabanda. Cosco is also an Indian company which function since 1980 as a sister concern of Enkay Indian Rubber Company Private Limited. These were the balls which first entered the local markets in the 1970s and 1980s in Aizawl.

To kick about a ball, specially designed footwear called football boot is used at the highest level of competitions. Football boot became a requirement under the competitions organized by FIFA, the highest football governing body in the world. India as a nation qualified for the 1950 FIFA World Cup finals but AIFF, the Indian football governing body were against the participation as it did not met the requirement of the competition which include high traveling expenses and equipments such as football boots. The football boot entered the society when the pioneer businessmen like Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala dealt with football boots made in India. As Jalandhar in Punjab was the centre for manufacturing sport goods in India, distributors such as Freewill Sports Private Limited in Jalandhar in Punjab were suppliers of most of the sport

goods to Lalhema. Sahni Sports in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh was another suppliers of sport goods. Sandeep Oberoi, proprietor of Dual Trade Agency in Punjab has been supplying sport goods since the 1980s in Mizoram.

Football boots were of varieties in the 1980s. Indian made goods were the most popular worn by football players. It was around 1985 that football boots made in China entered Mizoram. These were of ankle length and they were in competition with Indian made football boots. These football boots were said to be cheaper in prices but for some reasons, foreign made football boots were forbidden to use in football competitions in Mizoram. For a short period of time, cheaper football boots from foreign countries like China were competing with Indian made goods.

For uniformity and unity of a team playing football, a football shirt and a short are usually worn by a team different to the opposition team. This suit of a shirt and a short is simply called jersey. It usually comes in a set containing a shirt, a short and sometimes a pair of long length socks. The popularity of a set of jersey came with the entry of television set in Mizoram. 1986 FIFA World Cup was first witnessed in masses in Mizoram. Jerseys worn by nationalities in the competition became an amusement of Mizos. Lalhema ordered a set of jerseys similar to the one worn during FIFA World Cup. Football from the 1990s was a new phase as football clubs in Europe like in England, Italy and Spain were

introduced in the society with the coming of television sets and video cassette players in homes. With the popularity of football clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool, AC Milan, Juventus, FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, the replica jersey of these clubs was on demand. These set of jerseys were Indian tailored goods which was brought from Calcutta (then Kolkata) in West Bengal. Mercantile Agency and Syndicate from Calcutta are still supplying set of jerseys to Lalhema till date³².

3.3 Proper channels of supply

The progress and development of transportation of goods have been enormous. In the present day, courier operating companies like Blue Dart and DHL which are international companies and other India services have been supplying goods inside India. In the 1970s and 1980s, the post offices of Indian Postal Service had played a crucial role in carrying of goods to Mizoram. Supplied sport goods from Calcutta, Jalandhar and other places entered through post offices. Transaction of money was also done through post offices until State Bank of India (SBI) and Apex Bank came into existence in Aizawl. In the late 1980s, Mizoram

³² Interview with Zawni

State Transport (MST) buses were in service where sport goods were carried through these bus services³³.

3.4 Supplying of sports goods

The early sport goods dealers and suppliers in the 1970s and 1980s were the business houses of Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala. Aside from the daily customers, they also supply sport goods to different areas across the state. The Sports & Youth Service Department under the state government followed a tender or quotation system where these business houses supplied goods for the government. These business houses helped the government in developing the sports facilities and infrastructures in the state with their supplies. The Education Department also supplied sport equipments to different schools and institutions with the help of the business houses through tender or quotation system.

The purchase of sport goods were also a mean of political campaign by politicians. Sport goods are being supplied by Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in their respective constituencies³⁴. As football is a popular sport for the enthusiastic youths across the state, balls and jerseys are being distributed by the MLAs and the politicians as a mean to win votes from their respective area of campaign.

³³ Interview with Zawni

³⁴ Interview with Lalruatkima

3.5 Benefits through football

Football is a team game where the team with best co-ordination between the participants dominate the sport. For this excellent co-ordination, the groups of players are supposed to be good in their own abilities. When football teams gather the best football players who were available and arranged in groups, then a football team is believed to be hopeful as well as successful. For the gathering, a team has to search and spot talented and gifted football players. This is essential for a team participating in a competition. The similar condition happened in the Mizo society.

Since the introduction of club level football in the 1980s, the demands of football players increased. Football talents from all over the state as well as from outside the state came to Aizawl for showcasing their skills and abilities. It was the period when state governmental teams were also looking for football players to recruit in the departments. Competition was high and demand was high for recruitment of football players.

Departmental teams had the best chance of recruiting football players as they could promised these football players a job which would pay them during their football playing careers as well as after retirement

from playing as an employee. Since the football player thought about his playing days as well as after retiring from the sport, a football player found it difficult to reject the proposals of the departmental teams. No such contract system of signing football players were prevalent during these years, but a job orientation for the football players were offers difficult to decline.

Football at the highest level in 1980s was a competition between different football teams. Private football clubs such as El-EI and AFC competed with departmental teams. Since El-EI was a team comprising of college students, the owner K.Liantlinga would only pay salary for the services to section of football players. The section of football players were recruited from Myanmar and neighboring states like Manipur.

Aizawl Football Club (AFC) last longer than El-EI as a private football club. The club was managed by Dengchhuana. AFC was more of a organized team than El-EI as football players from different parts of Mizoram and outside the state participate. Football players like Gulab Chau Singh hailed from Manipur. Hrangzuala and Khualchungga were from Myanmar. Well performed players of AFC were not paid in cash but to divert them from the interest of departmental teams, they were given a personal loan through Apex Bank from the hierarchy in the football club.

Aside from giving personal loans, there were players who were given vehicles so that the player and his family could run a rental car or taxi³⁵.

It is understood that the demands for football players was high during the 1980s. It was a shifting period when state departments could provide employment to talented football players. At the same time, private football clubs compete with departmental teams in recruiting the best players available by giving away personal loans and giving away vehicles which would be utilized as taxis. The competition is at its peak during the 1980s as the offers of football clubs and teams were in regard of the lifetime for the football players. The offers were not only a contract bounded by a time period and with limits but it was a matter of lifetime through employment in the state government or through building a business career with the help of personal loans and taxis even after the end of playing career.

With the high intensity of competition in recruiting best football talents, there was an incident between AFC and PWD team in 1992. PWD team offered a job to Sanghmuna, a goalkeeper of AFC. As Sanghmuna was the best goalkeeper during the time, AFC were determined to keep hold of his service. On the other hand, PWD made a good offer which was difficult to refused. He then joined PWD where the members of

³⁵ Interview with H. Ramthlengliana

AFC and members of PWD violently acted out in public. Sanghmuna went on to join and play for PWD. He was one of the finest goalkeeper till date. He met a muscle injury while playing football and suffered with the aftermath of the muscle injury till his death. He was labeled as a mercenary in football for his dedication in the sport³⁶.

3.6. Modernising football

1980s coincided with the introduction of televisions at certain houses. Only a well to do persons could afford to get one. The packed house full of spectators was a talk of the town during the days. Television had brought an advancement and a change in the lives of the society. Witnessing of 1982 FIFA World Cup held in Spain through television inspired children and youth during the time. Especially by 1986 FIFA World Cup held in Mexico, the numbers of televisions increased within the society. The outlook of football changed since then.

K. Liantlinga bought a set of television with a video cassette player in 1984. The set which he recall was a brand of Panasonic which he managed to get from Myanmar. It cost him Rs 45,000/- at the time. He also got a video cassettes of football which was played in Europe³⁷. Visuals of

³⁶ Interview with Laltanpuia

³⁷ Interview with K. Liantlinga

Europeans playing football became a means of modernizing football. K. Liantlinga later ran for presidential election in MFA where he won the seat. He held the post from 1996 to 2002. During his time, he changed the format of football in Mizoram to a more pro-European system.

A step of advancement of football in Mizoram began with private clubs like El El and AFC. While other teams were wearing ordinary sportswear, El El and AFC wore an Umbro made sportswear in 1984 and 1986 respectively. Umbro is an English sportswear and football equipment supplier based in Manchester. El El got their Umbro sportswear for Rs 8000/- in 1984. El El and AFC were ahead of other teams especially departmental teams during the 1980s and 1990s in terms of advancement in the sportswear.

In 1986, a famous football player H. Ramthlengliana wore a Puma made football boot. Puma is a German based sportswear maker. This boot was borrowed from a close friend Remlala of Zarkawt³⁸. At the time, the football boots worn by football players were Indian made. Wearing Puma and being the best football player during the time was a great pride as recalled by H. Ramthlengliana.

The football position and scenario during the 1980s was interesting as it was a turning point in the evolution of football into a modern way.

³⁸ Interview with H. Ramthlengliana

Football in the society began to sway in the form of European format. The private clubs like El El and AFC were front runners in advancing football where the introduction of television in homes coincided with the progress. Football in the society is evolving since then.

CHAPTER IV

Video Gaming, eGaming & e Sports

When an alphabet ‘e’ is embedded to a word, it means a word related to an electronic technology. Technological innovations and inventions change the world as well as its outlook. In the case, Mizo society also swayed along with innovations and inventions happening around the world. Video game in its initial form is a contributing factor in the society.

A video game is an electronic game that involves human interaction that generates visual feedback on a video device. The video device called a video game console which means a device that outputs a video signal or visual image to display a video game. The term “video game console” is used to distinguish a console machine primarily designed for consumers to use for playing video games in contrast to arcade machines.

The third generation of game console (sometimes referred to as 8-bit era) entered the homes in Mizoram. This generation also marked a shift in the dominance of home video game console hardware and console game production from Japan. A Japanese company Nintendo successfully

launched its first video game console in 1983. The gaming console released in 1990 by Nintendo was more advanced 16-bit processor called Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES)³⁹. SNES entered the homes of Mizos by 1997. The gaming console was affordable to only a section of the society as it was expensive at the time. Although it was owned by a few, sharing of video game was in its initial stage where children hang out in groups at a friend's place for video gaming.

The gradual rising of a new subculture of video game culture was apparent by the late 1990s when more video game consoles entered the homes in Aizawl. Video game culture is a new media subculture that has been influenced by video games. As computer and video games have increased exponentially in popularity over time, they have had a significant influence upon popular culture. Popular culture is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images, memes, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture. Video game culture has evolved in time. Mayra suggests that gamers who gather together to play possess a shared language, engage in collective rituals and are often interested in cultural artifacts such as gaming paraphernalia⁴⁰. Cronin and McCarthy (2011) have also explored a luminal, hedonic food culture to be present among these socially connected actors. The commensally consumption of

³⁹ David Sheff, *Game Over: How Nintendo Zapped An American Industry, Captured Your Dollars, and Enslaved Your Children* (First edition), pp. 360-361

⁴⁰ F. Mayra, *An Introduction to Game Studies*

energy dense low nutrient foods is considered to be appropriated during long stretches of game play to contribute to the community and hedonistic aspects of social gaming⁴¹.

Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite to link several billion devices worldwide. It is a network of networks. Internet has revolutionized the world. Internet consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services. Information resources on football using internet began in Mizoram. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Indian telecommunication company has been providing internet facilities for Mizos. Through internet, Mizo daily newspaper has been running a news website which feature news on local football. Beside Vanglaini (a local newspaper), a football website called Zofooty has also raised the level of the quality of football in the society. The role of media has been crucial for raising the level of football in the society. The contribution of media through internet cannot be missed out in raising football in the society.

⁴¹ J. Cronin, M. McCarthy. Fast Food and Fast Games: An ethnographic exploration of food consumption complexity among the video games subculture

4.1. Video Games to Computer Games

When video game consoles entered the homes in the late 1990s in the form of SNES, only few people could afford to buy the console. At the same time, building a new subculture of video game culture is in its initial stage. Video gaming was popular among the school children where they hang out after school in groups playing video game. In the gathering, a game of football was one of the games played using the console.

For SNES console, *Goal!* was the first football game developed by Jaleco (established in 1974)⁴². The football game was also played among the children in the society. With the extensive owning of video game console at homes, the popularity of the game increases within a period of time. Video game began as a subject of interest and much talked about in schools for children. The interest in football games coincided with familiarity of football in the society.

It was in 1998 that an American multinational technology company Microsoft (founded in 1975) developed Windows 98 operating system of personal computer (PC)⁴³. Windows 98 powered PCs entered the homes in the society. In similar ways as video games, PCs were owned

⁴² Segaretro.org/Jaleco visited on 12th September 2014

⁴³ News.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/5085630.stm visited on 10th November 2014

only by few people in its initial stage. This time, not only children but teenagers were impressed and excited by the new technology. A game generated by PCs was impressive with its simplicity. In a video game console, one has to fix a box of console and connect the wires to a television set. But, in a PC, one does not have to fix and take the trouble of connecting the wire as the PC itself is fully equipped in itself. PC as the name itself signifies much of personal item and offers privacy, video game needed a requirement of larger member shared item in television which disrupt the chores of the household while PC does not.

Electronic Arts Incorporation (EA) also known as EA Games is an American game developer founded in 1982⁴⁴. The company was a pioneer of the PC games industry and was notable for promoting the designers and programmers responsible for its games. In 2011, Electronic Arts was the world's third-largest gaming company by revenue after Nintendo and Activision Blizzard. Their breakthrough was for developing a popular football games for PCs. These football games called EA FIFA runs in series which they have been designing football games every year till date since 1995. As EA is a partner of FIFA, licensing of FIFA registered players in its games offer an advantage over other football in PC games.

⁴⁴ www.sequoiacap.com/us/electronic-arts/info visited on 5th October 2014

In Mizoram, the wave of EA FIFA games began since 2002 where the wave was at its highest in 2010 when competitions were organized. EA FIFA game competitions were on demand as the game players increases annually. EA FIFA games become addictive since then. The addicted game players or gamers were mostly teenagers and youths. They form a new subculture where they gather through common interest. They then develop their own symbols and languages. In the present day, PCs are mostly owned in the society where EA FIFA game is the most played game.

4.2. Shared culture and language

An interesting feature of PC gamers is their shared culture and the language they developed through their interactions. With the events like EA FIFA game competition organized within the society, teenagers and youths from all corner of the society participated. The participant met new friends where certain participants with common interest began to hang out where a new subculture is formed.

A gamer with his friends spent eight hours a day in average playing EA FIFA game. There are also times where they keep on playing the game without much sleep and without rest. An interesting feature is sharing of food habit. Since they do not have proper diet or particular eating habit, they share instant noodles like Maggi noodles, an

international brand of readymade food and also Wai Wai noodles, a multinational readymade food producer's headquarters in Nepal. Cronin and McCarthy (2011) have also explored a luminal, hedonic food culture to be present among these socially connected actors. The commensally consumption of energy dense low nutrient foods is considered to be appropriated during long stretches of game-play to contribute to the community and hedonistic aspects of social gaming. In response to the central importance that food plays in the collective enjoyment of social gaming, various websites have been created which allow gamers to rate their favorite foods to accompany play. The presence of rituals, shared discourse, collective action and even a luminal food culture among gaming communities gives credence to the concept of these cohorts existing as self defining sub-units within mainstream culture. However due to the ephemeral and transient nature of their rituals, and also the possibility of virtual interaction through online participation, these cohorts should be considered postmodern subcultures. Gaming communities have social elements beyond physical interaction and have come to a stage where online and offline spaces can be seen as 'merged' rather than separate.

4.3 Attachment of virtual to reality

Playing a PC game of football is a virtual and addictive activity. A gamer does not spend his time kicking about a ball neither equipped with football boot or jersey. There is no physical contact with the sport. This does not mean that a gamer is completely detached from football. Virtual world is connected to reality in the case of gamers.

In an EA FIFA game, certain criteria and rating is given to a football player and a football team. A football player who performs well at the highest level of competition at international stage gets a high rating in the computer game. Having a regard on this, a gamer is always well informed with the performance of the football player in reality. When a gamer wants to control football player of high quality like Lionel Messi of Argentina or Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal, a gamer has to excel his skills in his games in accordance to the movement on such football players where he performs in real life. This is why a gamer has to watch a football match in television⁴⁵.

A gamer may not be regarded as a person who does not contribute to football in the society but a gamer is always aware of the happenings in the world in football especially at international level. As a gamer with his friends of common interest develops and forms a new subculture, it cannot

⁴⁵ Interaction with gamers

be disconnected from the society. One which does not get physical contact with the sport is also always aware of the sport because of the virtual interest. We can say that physically or virtually, football is always a part of the society.

4.4. eGames as fund raiser

Since EA FIFA games is demanding and popular among the teenagers and youths in the society, gamers are made to compete where tournaments are organized. The organization of the tournament is becoming a fruitful mean of fund raising for certain bodies. In Mizoram, EA FIFA tournament has become popular since 2010. This was the first tournament of the kind known within the society.

In 2010, YMA branch of Ramthar (an area in Aizawl) organized 'FIFA Tournament' as they were aware of the popularity of the computer game. Over 360 gamers registered themselves as participants in this well organized tournament. YMA branch of Ramthar had a good support from business houses like Fel Fel Digitals who supplied computers for playing the game during the tournament. The organizers also got a support from Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department of Mizoram government with a sponsorship of Rs 40,000/-. The

winner of the tournament walked away with Rs 10,000/- in cash⁴⁶. The tournament is the first biggest tournament for the gamers.

In the recent years, church youth groups like Kristian Thalai Pawl (KTP) and also YMA continued to organize FIFA tournaments as a fund raiser as they are aware of the popularity of the game. Through this tournament, gamers could link up with new friends where they continued to hang out for the purpose of their common interest in gaming. Gamers spend more than twelve hours daily throughout the week when they gather their momentum with the spirit of tournament. Gaming culture deeply rooted itself in the society with a period of time.

4.5. eSports

The role played by electronic media is crucial in the present scenario of football in the society. In the present day, how an issue is perceived greatly depend on how the media portray. Ever since electronic media offers updates and awareness through internet, the usage of mobile phones with internet facilities and computers with internet becomes handy for users. With the increase of users, the awareness increases.

⁴⁶ Interview with Joseph Zorammuana

In Mizoram, a football website named as 'zofooty' began in 2011. This was an indication of a step forward in eSports. With an ever increasing popularity of football, a challenge was met by a group of college graduates. Lalzarzova, the administrator of the website was a graduate with a degree in mathematics from Loyola College in Chennai. Being a football player himself and had represented his state at youth level, his unending interest in taking up of football as a website began when he and his friends from college started to run the website since 2011 till date⁴⁷. The initial stage of the website coincided with the usage of artificial grass in Mizoram. FieldTurf Tarkett India, the country's leader in next-generation artificial grass and sports surfaces has been awarded the project to install a first of its kind, world-class field turf football surface in Aizawl for the Government of Mizoram. Placing of the artificial grass by the state government was a progress for football in the society. The newly placed artificial grass and the newly updated football website was new and progress for the society.

eSports through media can be of different advantages for the society. Firstly, usage of internet itself can make the world smaller by instant updates and information could be make known all over the world within a matter of few minutes. By 2011, there are many Mizos who moved abroad even outside India and settled at various places. These people could

⁴⁷ Interview with Lalzarzova

keep in touch with the society through internet. In this, zofooty has regular visitors of the website from various places. Zofooty at an initial stage had visitors of 800 internet users daily. When popular tournaments are played in Aizawl, Mizos from all over India and abroad looked out for updates and information through the website. With zofooty functioning as a mean of internet updates and information, Mizos from various places remain attached to football in Mizoram. Media has been playing a crucial role for the society as football remains the most popular sport for Mizos.

With an increasing technology and advancement in the world, the society also sways with the progress. The ever increasing gamers who are attached to the virtual section of football stays connected to the happenings in the world of football. The virtual and reality go hand in hand in the society as football is the most popular sport among the society. The role of electronic media such as zofooty provides information of football in Mizoram to Mizos all over India and outside India. This shows the continuous interest and awareness of football in the society. For Mizo, one cannot live without football even if one moves out from Mizoram. The hunger for information is made aware by website such as zofooty.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to analyze how football as a sport is embraced by Mizo society within a period of time and how it deeply rooted within a time frame. It is fascinating to know that football is related to Mizos as a social sport in the present scenario. Mizos, in their culture and society has always integrated dancing as a part of the ritual where movement of feet is a significant feature.

We can analyze the background of football in Mizo society from the soldiers who fought during the First World War as a part of Indian labour corps under the British army. The colonial period offer a new taste to Mizos where they continue to kick about a fruit which is spherical in shape in the absence of a leather ball after coming to know about the sport. Football began as an activity and a mean of leisure in its early phase. Football was a symbol of masculinity as only male in the society was engaged in the sport. At its early phase, football goes hand in hand along with other sport as male athletes were seen as an all rounder in sports. A

good athlete was regarded as the one who could excel in many sports, not only in football.

The study highlighted the contributions of the pioneers in the sport in the Mizo society. If the pioneers namely L.H. Liana, Chuauthuama, Hrawva and Kailuia would had not requested Pachhunga for sponsoring a trophy for a football tournament, football might have been started at a later stage in the society. It was the determination of these football enthusiasts that football reached its new height which offers a competitive feeling among the football players. Football with its simplicity did not require much of equipments during the period. Its simplicity calls for participation of more youth within the society to participate in the tournament. The study had highlighted football as a sport which help in earning a place in the army at the time as the physicality and determination of Mizos was shown during Chhotelal Seth Shield match between Mizos and AR. This was an important era for the society as services for the country was opened up with the help of a football match.

By 1945, the cries for a governing body in sports and the promotion of sports were significant. It was met by the formation of ASA. It was under the guidance of the association that a football team went outside Aizawl for the first time. It became an exposure and a cultural exchange for Mizos. The exposure generated by football was immense

during the time. When Mizo district was raised as an UT in 1972, the demand for a better organization was met with the establishment of MSA. As football was more popular than other sports by the time, MFA instantly became an autonomous body from MSA. The establishment of MFA shows the superiority of football as other sports as MFA an independent body was required to monitor the growing popular sport. An independent guidance was required.

MFA, as a governing body for football in Mizoram, it has been an integrating force and placed different sections of football associations under its watch. Football is now placed under an organized set up under the supervision of MFA. Football has been growing through tournaments organized by MFA and also through teams sent for exposure by MFA.

YMA with its main prospect to integrate its branches all over the state, it has been organizing YMA football tournament till date. As YMA is a guiding force of the society, it has seen football as a mean of most loved sport among the society. So far, YMA has been successful in organizing its annual tournament as the number of teams participating increases annually. Aside from its perspective to integrate its members all over the state, YMA tournament has been very prestigious in popularizing football to different areas. Gradually, football played in the tournament

becomes a symbol of dominance of a branch over other branches. The dominance becomes a pride for a particular branch. Football became a sense of pride and a symbol of superiority. Once a branch won YMA tournament, the winning branch instantly become a symbol of football excellence among the society.

By the early 1980s, the study highlighted the job generation of the newly set up departments of the state government. It was a period when job opening was at large for talented football players. At the same time, competition aroused between these newly set up teams as talented football players were in demand. The dominance of a department over other departments was significant. MRP was by miles way ahead in recruiting talented football players at the time. It was a dream for a football player to get into MRP because being a policeman and a popular football player was an achievement. MFA would normally pick MRP football players to represent the state in tournaments outside Mizoram.

It was during the job generation through departmental teams that a section of the society who play football would take up a challenge. The younger generations who were hungry to compete with popular departmental teams arises in the form of private teams. Teams were set up by philanthropist such as K. Liantlinga who would portray a football club through the system inspired by football clubs across Europe. The formation

of the private football would lay the foundation in the road to semi-professionalism in football. Earning wages for the services in a private club and supply of equipments through the private clubs were early signs of semi-professionalism in football.

An interesting feature of the study is how football becomes a symbol of pride in the community within the society. With the unfavorable geographical condition of the landscape, every area in Mizoram could not afford a football field. Certain areas which have a football field or the areas who are close by the football field are regarded as an area with football talents. Among these areas of football talents, competitions exist. These areas produce fine generations of football talents. This would later be a pride for the communities. In Aizawl, an area called Armed Veng where MRP had constructed a football field has been dominating football among Mizos for many years. Armed Veng has an edge over other areas as talented football players recruited by MRP would settle in the area. The community in the area would benefit as younger generations would learn from the MRP football team.

Chaltlang, an area in the northern part of Aizawl is another community of football talents. The case differs to that of Armed Veng. Chaltlang does not have any big sized football field but only a small sized football field. But still they could dominate football areas for a period of

time. In this, a fine generation of football talents inspired the whole community. As Chaltlang was previously a village under a chief, the spirit of oneness and unity still exist within the community. Chaltlang is an unique area with football talents which dominate with their football talent for a period of time. Armed Veng and Chaltlang, as a community dominated football for decades.

The study features the distinctive football players who participated at a national level and at an international level. These distinctive football players had left a mark and inspired the younger generations in the society to build a career and pursue a dream. They have been paving a way for many children and youths in taking up of football as a means of earnings and livelihood. Football turns semi-professional for some as they could play football along with working as an employee in a working institution. For some, football would be used as a professional career where livelihood was through playing football. In these cases, a section of the society are being inspired by the achievements of the semi-professional as well as professional football players.

While football players are given importance in influencing football in the society, the study could not missed out on the contribution of the pioneers in supplying football goods and equipments in the society. Without their contribution, football as a sport would not have been

developed and progressed. The growth of football in the society is being contributed by the availability of the latest products.

The study highlights the supply of different goods and commodities from other places like Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Jalandhar. The advancement of football is due to the availability of goods and equipments where Mizos are in contact with other society. The supplies continue till date.

The popularity of football in the society is portrayed as a means of political tool inside Mizoram. Football has been playing an important role as politicians know how the sport has rooted itself in the society. At certain times, a politician would either distribute football goods in the form of balls or jerseys. Politician would sometime organize a local football competition for the community. A politician knows that votes could be earned through these activities as football is deeply rooted in the society. In reverse to these, even the youths of certain area would request a politician for sponsorship of a football team or ask a sum of money for contributions. Football would be utilized as a two way process for the politician as well as the voters. This is possible only because of the popularity of the sport in the society.

Another section of the society who utilize football in day to day lives are the generation of teenagers and youths who spend a greater

time of their day in front of their computers. A new sub-culture of gamers which arise with PC games like EA FIFA have contributed to a section of virtual participants in the society. A new feature with an advancement highlight a new interest in the society. The new sub-culture may disrupt the lives of many individual with a change of moods or a change of routines in comparison to earlier lives. A gamer may start to spend less time along with the family. But at the same time, the virtual attachment of football continues with the attachment of football in reality as a gamer has to update oneself with the happenings of football around the world. It may seem that with the attachment to virtuosity, one may lose every reality of one's life, but in regard to football, the virtual aspect and reality go hand in hand. Football is almost as impossible to detach from the society.

The advancement of the society always adapts itself with the advancement of football. The society always tries to gather pace with technologies and innovations. With the coming of internet facilities in the society, the level of football is also raised. As media is crucial for awareness and information in the present day, the progress of football also depends on it. As mobile phones with internet facility as well as computers with internet facility increases, Mizos tend to utilize more of electronic media rather than print media. Websites arise as a print media for coverage

of happenings in and around the society. Website such as zofooty would provide information on football in the society.

Today, a growing interest through internet is the introduction of fantasy games. A football governing body of England, the Football Association (FA) had designed a fantasy league for interested internet users. Fantasy league offers a chance to internet users to function as football managers managing English football teams⁴⁸. This virtual game had oriented within the society as virtual managers have been growing in recent years till date.

As technologies and innovations increase, the format of football and its related functionaries also widens its views and perspectives. Therefore, advancement and football could go hand in hand till date.

The study has been tracing different sections of the society within a period of time. It is important to understand that Mizos are quick to adjust with the changing environment within a period of time. Mizos and its football adapt itself to the changing nature of advancement prevalent.

During the time period when colonial powers existed, Mizos had been kicking an object where the format of football was in its initial phase. Gradually, football began to attain competitive activity with the

⁴⁸ Fantasy.premierleague.com visited on 3rd December 2014

introduction of tournaments to entertain the youths during the time. Football becomes a symbol of masculinity and males in the society were engaged in football and other sports during the time. This was the early phase.

The establishments of sporting bodies and associations shaped an organized structure in the society for sports. The growth of sports was witnessed as football and other sports were played outside the state for exposure and cultural exchange. This new phase was a period of exposure and a new level of football and other sports.

By the middle of 1980s, Mizoram became a state under the government of India. The newly acquired state was shaping with different departments. Job generation and employment was open for sportsmen. In this, setting up of football teams by departments and playing a football tournament was opening a new phase of football in the society. As football players were recruited, demands increased and the level of football competitions increased.

Football in the form of private clubs pushed the demand for change in the format of football in Mizoram. This was an initial stage of semi-professionalism in football. Question was raised against MFA as to change the existing format of football competitions. The system of competitions existing in Europe was the aim of some people related to

football. Soon, the format of the competition and the scenes of football in Mizoram changed. Invitational tournaments like Laldenga Gold Cup started where football teams outside the state would come and participate. This was a new step and change in the football of Mizos.

By the year 2000, talented football players would start joining football schools and academies to pursue the road to professionalism. At the same time, some would later join teams owned by Oil India Limited (OIL) where they were made to play football during their playing days and then function as employee of the company after retiring from playing football⁴⁹. Semi-professional football players also existed. Football in the society is regarded as a means of livelihood and trustworthy. In the present day, there are more children and youths who dreamt of pursuing their careers in professional football. Within short span of time, the scenario of football differs in the society. At the same time, football is always present in the society. Football changes as the environment changes but it always keep in pace with the happenings of the surroundings.

Football is termed as a beautiful game in the present day after Pele, a football legend wrote in his book, “I dedicate this book to all the people who have made this great game the Beautiful Game”⁵⁰. Football does not hold any boundary or makes any distinction in the society.

⁴⁹ Interview with Malsawmdawngliana

⁵⁰ Pele, Robert L.Fish, Shep Messing; *My Life and the Beautiful Game*; *The Autobiography of Pele*

Football fits itself in societies all over the world. Nike, a popular sport goods brand uses a Portuguese phrase *Joga Bonito* meaning ‘play beautifully’ as one of its slogans for football products. Nike began using the slogan in a campaign preceding the 2006 FIFA World Cup in an attempt to curb player’s behavior on the football field⁵¹. It is no wonder that the world football’s governing body FIFA has more countries than the United Nations Organizations (UNO). FIFA has 208 countries while UNO has 192 countries⁵². Football is loved by societies including Mizo society.

The study deals with the questions posed in the early part of the thesis on how football has been making an impact in the society and inside Mizoram. The Mizo football culture had an impact from the colonial period as Mizos came across the sport during the First World War through Mizos who fought for the British as part of the labour corps. As football is popular in Europe, the influence of the society in Europe on the Mizos was significant in the introduction of the knowledge on the sport. If colonialism would not had been existed in India, Mizos would not come across football which was popular in Europe.

As football is influential in the society, Mizos grasped football in its culture as a means of leisure. A fruit called *sertawk* was kick

⁵¹ www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jul/18/letfootballeatitself visited on 16th August 2014

⁵² www.bbc.com/news/magazine-13616328 visited on 11th June 2014

about when leather ball used in football was not available. A stuffed sock or clothe with a piece of paper was also made as a ball where Mizos would kick about in any available space. The simplicity of the sport was easy to receive in the society.

Gradually, as Mizo became popular and attain a designation within the society, football became a symbol of masculinity within the society. A male in the society was regarded to know the sport as football posed a sport which every male must play during their childhood. It was a time where no such activities prevailed which posed a diversion from the sport. Football was a male activity within the society.

There was a period of time when Mizos associated with sports were regarded as to excel in different sports other than football. Hockey and athletics were going hand in hand with the society. But, the requirements of the sports like hockey and athletics were not readily available as the supplies were limited for a period of time. The simplicity of football offered the dominance of it over other sports. Moreover, football does not posed a problem as a sport as it could be played under any weather condition. Football is a popular sport which is played under a sunny condition or under a rainy condition. This gave an edge over other sports as it does not disrupt any settings of routine for playing. Football could be played at any time of the day while other sports do not offer the condition.

Football with its unending popularity attains a position in edging over other sports like hockey and athletics within a period of time.

Football as a criteria and qualification in getting employment in the state government is very important in the study. By 1987, the newly formed state of Mizoram was opening up certain posts in its departments. Some departments of the government would open up post for talented football players by making offerings. When recruitment was done for football players, the popularity of football was at its peak. MFA, the governing football body in the state would organize football competitions which included departmental football teams. A new age of semi-professionalism was reached in the society. It was a dream for football players to get employment in the departments and earn their livelihood. At the same time, recruited football players could continue to play the sport they love. Football provides a lifeline for the society and it also promotes the ongoing popular sport to a new level of semi-professionalism. With these, the dominance of football arose in the society.

Tracing back to the culture and society of Mizos, Mizos do not possessed much of format of sports. But kick about of an object and the footwork in dancing existed in the society. Structure for the grasping of football in the society had been laid in the traditional times. It is not surprising to know that football had been integrated in the society as certain

structure had been laid beforehand. Mizos have been kicking a spherical shaped fruit or a spherical object before the availability of a leather ball used in football. We can understand from the study that certain foundation and structure had been laid for the entry of football in the society where Mizos had excelled in football within a period of time.

Football gradually attains a position in the society where it is regarded as a sport for Mizos in the present day. The qualities offered by football clicked so well with the society. Every person in the society would have a connection to the sport in reality or in virtual stage. Within a society, a male individual would have kicked a ball or play football within his lifetime. A female individual would have witnessed a football match within her lifetime. While only a few sections of females play football in the society, football has been always a part of the society. Football as a match played in a competition or football as a mean of activities for activities of communities like a group of friends or a church youth group, the sport always exist as a mean of activity.

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**A SOCIAL HISTORY OF SPORTS : MIZOS AND
FOOTBALL SINCE COLONIAL PERIOD**

Submitted By

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DECLARATION

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July, 2015

I, Michael Hmingthanpuia, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any other University or Institute.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that ‘A Social History of Sports : Mizos and Football since Colonial Period’ written by Michael Hmingthanpuia has been written under my supervision.

He has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the M. Phil. Regulations of Mizoram University. The dissertation is the result of his own investigation. Neither the dissertation as a whole nor any part of it was ever submitted by any other University for any research degree.

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Michael Hmingthanpuia

ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	Aizawl Football Club
AIFF	All India Football Federation
AR	Assam Rifles
ASEB	Assam State Electricity Board
EA	Electronic Art Incorporation
FIFA	Federation Internationale de Football Association
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
MFA	Mizoram Football Association
MFF	Mizoram Football Federation
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNF	Mizo National Front
MRP	Mizoram Police
MSA	Mizoram Sports Association
MZP	Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Union)

NALCO	National Alluminium Company Limited
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PASSA	Photography and Sports Supply Agency
PC	Personal Computer
PHE	Public Health Engineer
PWD	Public Works Department
SAIL	Steel Authority of India Limited
SNES	Super Nintendo Entertainment System
TFA	TATA Football Academy
YLA	Young Lushai Association
YMA	Young Mizo Association

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society is created and maintained through social interaction. It occurs when the individual associates objects and actions with meanings for themselves. Alix (1995) describe symbolic interaction among the variations on his interactionist theory. Symbolic interactionism proposes that prior to engaging in an interaction, human beings size up the other party to determine the value of the interaction in symbolic ways.¹ Since the colonial period, the existence of written works and sources in form of records encouraged the study of society. The works of English officers such as T.H. Lewin, J.W. Shakespeare and early missionaries like J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge left a mark of the evidences on Mizo society. Without any form of evidences, a study would be vague. But the evidences are subjects relating to interest of governance which is one sided. The voices of the participants are lacking in the records. The study could open up the society from different views generated by the participants.

The British had direct or indirect control of India before the middle of the 19th century. After the Revolt of 1857, the English East India

¹ Ernest K. Alix, *Sociology: An Everyday Life Approach*

Company lost its power of government and British India formally came under the British Crown after 1858.² The Mizo Hills formally became part of British India in 1895. North and south Mizo hills became part of the Assam province in 1898 as the Lushai Hills District, with Aijal (now Aizawl) as headquarters.³ During the First World War, Mizos went to Paris as part of Indian Labour Corps. The Mizos who fought during the war came on contact with football during their stay in France. This was the first interaction between the sport of football and Mizos which encouraged in the study of football in Mizo society.

The study is a challenge as written records on sports in relation with Mizo society is not readily apparent. Fortunately, this challenge is met with the existence of concerned person or families of associated study where the interaction would let to a symbol which would construct a evidence on the topic of the study.

1.1. The background of football

Football is a discipline in sports and games believed to be originated in China in 2500 BCE. A Chinese game *Tsu* (to kick with the feet) *chu* (a stuffed leather ball) was played ceremonially. The influence of

² Ved Prakash, *Encyclopedia of North East India, Vol-I*

³ Mizoram History, National Informatics Centre, Government of India

Chinese customs, art and culture was apparent in the Japanese game of *Kemari* with its exquisite skill⁴. *Epyskiros* had a more striking resemblance to football, confirmed by Antiphanes, the Greek dramatist. Greek life and culture cast a spell on the conquering Romans, who adapted it to the game they called *harpastum*. And as the Roman empire stretched and spread, so did *harpastum*. Rival teams defended the end lines of a rectangular field, which also had a centre line. The aim was to get the ball over the opponents' end line by throwing it forward from one player to another. In Roman occupied Brittany and Normandy (or France) the game of *soule* or *choule* was played on Sundays after evening prayers at church and usually at carnival time. Introduced in England after the Norman conquest of 1066, it was more of battle with no holds barred between two whole villages, rather than a game⁵.

Richard Mulcaster, like many Englishmen on their visits to Italy, had been impressed with the orderly, skilful game of calcio (calciare means to kick) and saw in the adaptation of some of its methods to football played in England a means to eliminate or at least reduce roughness and violence and to promote in the young, the virtues of health, strength and character. He sought to have a stipulated number of players on either side and a schoolmaster to supervise training and settle disputes in matches.

⁴ K. Bhaskaran, *Wills Book of Excellence: Football*, p 11.

⁵ *Ibid.* p-15

These ideas were too revolutionary for his time. They were accepted nearly three hundred years later, in the nineteenth century⁶.

1.2 Mizos and football

Looking into the nature of Mizo society, one can understand how crucial it is to perform a dance. A dance *khual lam* is performed as a traditional welcoming dance and a victory dance *sarlankai* is also performed at times of successful raid or at victory in war or successful harvesting. Performing a dance is a part of Mizo culture in various occasions. It is no wonder Mizos welcome football in the society within a period of time as dancing is strongly embedded in the culture and the society. The passion of performing a dance can be related to a factor of having a love for football in the society as a 'miracle of dancing feet'. Mizos play football in different way in comparison to other parts of India as Mizos have the ability and capability to grasped and learn from Europeans and South Americans. Mizos have an exquisite skills and great control of a ball when playing in comparison with other parts of India.

Mizoram made history by winning the 68th Santosh Trophy for the first time in 2014 which was the highest competition for state level football competition in India. Mizoram also won gold medal in 2015

⁶ Ibid. p-18

National Games football held in Kerala. Mizoram team was termed as little men who are attractive, quick and so witty that nobody has been able to stop them during the tournament⁷. Mizos could learn football from the smaller sized Spaniards in European and highly skilled Brazilians in South America. Mizos with physical structure could excel on the game without physicality but purely on skills which could be defined by a ‘miracle of dancing feet’ where the trait starts with the passion for dance in the culture and society.

Football in other parts of India will not be highlighted as the Indian influence or inspiration are not found to football in Mizoram. Mizos came in contact with the sports during the First World War as Mizo soldiers participated in the sports in Paris. The sport itself seem to be localized and regionalized in Mizoram itself after knowledge of the sport through early Mizo soldiers fighting in the First World War.

Football in Mizoram can be traced back from the photograph of the five soldiers during the First World War who went to Paris in 1917. These five soldiers were Lianhlira, Lianthuama, Chawngthanga, Zawngauva and Zaliana. Zohnuaia, another soldier who went to Paris narrated football in Paris was played in thousands on one side and thousands on the opposing

⁷ *National Games: A tiny State taking giant strides in football*
Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/sport/football/national-games-a-tiny-state-taking-giant-strides-in-football/article6871445.ece>

side⁸. Ball used in football was not spherical in shape and it was more likely to a rugby ball.

With the introduction of football in the society, certain phases have been passing within a period of time. There was a time when football was played alongside hockey and when popular football players were good in athletics. There was a period of time when a talented person was not known as a only football player because of his engagement to different sports other than football. As time passed on, Mizos concentrated more on a single discipline of sport in their road to semi-professionalism in football. Thus, we can understand in the research that from which time Mizo starts to concentrate on football alone. This is a road to semi-professionalism starting from the period of a hobby or a mean of leisure. Mizos till date could not consider football as a fully professional sport since most of the society depend on government jobs for livelihood. While only a section of the society started to earn their living through football in the present day, football has always been in the society from a period of time. Football as a mean of leisure or at a semi-professional level, the sport has always been welcomed in the society. The study would highlight the reason why football is integrated and regarded as a state sport in the present day.

⁸ Zoliana Royte, *Mizoram Sports Chanchin*, p. 494.

1.3 Significance of the study

Football has always been an integral sport in Mizo society despite the unfavorable geographical shape and condition of its landscape. Whenever an open size is met or a small sized field is available, the availability of a spherical object would entertain one or more person to kick about the ball. Kicking of an object has always been a part of Mizos. In spite of the interest of football in Mizo society, keeping and maintaining records and statistics is not given much of an importance. Football is formerly a topic of leisure and a hobby where gatherings of a community would take up football to stir up the enthusiasts as a part of an activity.

Football in the 1980s and 1990s is crucial as it embedded itself in the society as a tool for integration of Mizos by Young Mizo Association (YMA) , one of the largest non-governmental organization in Mizoram. Football also posed a position as a recruitment of services in a government jobs. More than these, football in these periods was a time when football became a mean of pride for every locality or area in and around Aizawl. Every youth would like to make a name for self and attain a symbol of heroism through football. Football is booming since then.

The proof for all the above phases of football in Mizoram is not available before the present study as no certain records in regard to football is kept for further studies. And no statistics is maintained for further

works. It is a challenge for the researcher to organize the available sources and construct for further studies.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Football when perceived by a community or society, it is played and watched as an extra-curriculum and an activity or mean of leisure. Witnessing (watching) alone ends with the game but maintaining or keeping records is not given importance. Without records and written works, it is difficult to trace the impact it has been having in the society that regards highly of the sport. This is the present scenario of Mizoram. This lacuna could be solved only through the help of proper research work.

We can understand that the awareness of records especially in football is very little as the governing body Mizoram Football Association (MFA) started giving importance in maintaining records and statistics only in the early 1990s while the association started in 1973, where Mizos have started writing and maintaining records and literatures as early as the first half of the twentieth century. Yet still we witness the growth and influence of football in the society. We have war veterans among the Mizos who narrated their experience where they come in contact with football and early sportsmen and pioneers of the sports in Mizoram through oral history.

As we have given much importance to the works of the early missionaries, the growth and development of different churches, the development of political parties, the nationalist movement of the Mizo National Front (MNF), football may have been the impact present during all these years where not much written sources are available. But the community and society of every generation have been witnessing the influence and impact of football in our environment, in our day to day lives.

Sports history is not just a matter of looking at how sport reflects society. Sport itself is an active agent in the world we live in and thus the relationship between sport and society is a complex two-way process. In this scholarship the researcher would try to get the answer of following questions:

1. Is there any impact of colonialism in Mizo football culture?
2. Why or how does the behavior of Mizos changed after the influence of football in the society?
3. Why football has dominated over other sports in Mizoram?
4. Is there any connectivity between traditional and modern sports or games of Mizos?
5. Why Mizo loves football?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the origin and growth of modern sports and games primarily focused on football in Mizoram.
2. To analyze the social responses on football and the fan culture in Mizoram at micro level.
3. To examine the contribution of Mizo football pioneers and the development of Mizo football culture.
4. To analyze the influence of business houses, media and new technologies in the Mizo culture in terms of football and its commercialization

1.6 Review of literature

There are works done on football and other discipline in sports and games which attracted the attention of scholars and writers across the globe. The influence and impact of a discipline in sports and games in a society has caught the attention of writers in general and scholars can relate the sports to a culture or a society. Sport was an integral element of urban life across Britain. History must strive to capture what was important to the people who lived it. Sport, of course, has not mattered

to everyone in society, either today or in the past. But the fact that it has been an important part of many people's lives is reason alone to justify its historical study.

Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies by Jay Coakley, deals with the history of global sport and also examine the approaches on how its history can help students to understand sport today is examined.

Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sport by John Horne, Alan Tomlinson and Gary Whannel, in this edited work, the different scholars, based on series of case studies, tried to explain the growth of modern sports together with an examination of some different theoretical explanations.

Sport, Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1914 by Neil Tranter highlighted the influence of economy in developing the British sport culture in the second half of 18th century and early 20th century. This work is an excellent introduction to sports history. Written as a teaching resource, it introduces the relevant debates and literature for its period such as the leisure revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, gender and the motives and benefits of the patronage and supply of sport.

Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain by Jeffrey Hill is a perceptive overview of select areas of sport and leisure in

the twentieth century. The first section is on 'commercial leisure' which incorporates chapters on the economics of sport, sport and the media, the cinema and holidays. The second section looks at home-based leisure and voluntary activity. The final section examines the role of state in recreation with chapters on central government and the role of the municipality.

Pay up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914 by Wray Vamplew is a very detailed and important examination of the financial aspects of sport. The author argues that although professional sport was organised on a commercial basis, it was not profit orientated.

In *Moving the Goalposts: A History of Sport and Society since 1945*, Martin Polley expresses his scholarly view that sport is an integral part of society so it needs to be considered in the widest possible context. It should not be viewed in a vacuum, and *Moving the Goalposts* certainly provides an excellent example of how to integrate sport history into general historical studies. Author examines the historical development of popular sports in England, including football, rugby, tennis, cricket, athletics and even elite sports such as polo.

The Football World: A Contemporary Social History, by Stephen Wagg deals with the development of professionalism in British football. He tries to draw the attention of his readers with his scholarly

views that the game did not develop in isolation, in fact, has reflected the changing political, economic and social conditions of Britain.

The Picador Book of Cricket by Ramachandra Guha is a tribute to the finest writers on the game of cricket and an acknowledgement that the great days of cricket literature are behind us. There was a time when major English writers took time off to write about cricket, whereas the cricket book market today is dominated by ghosted autobiographies and statistical compendiums. "*The Picador Book of Cricket*" celebrates the best writing on the game and includes many pieces that have been out of print, or difficult to get hold of, for years.

Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life by Alex Bellos, talks about the arts of performance - in music and dance, ecstatic religion, soap opera, plastic surgery, transvestism and football - Brazilian style tends to both sublimity and excess. In the case of football, the sublime and the excessive go hand in hand. Brazil has the most brilliant and graceful players, and the most extravagantly dedicated fans. He also wrote the other face that it also has the most corrupt professional organizations, subject to recurrent accusations of match-fixing, nepotism and drug-smuggling. Mismanagement at the professional level condemns young footballers to penury.

Playing the Enemy, John Carlin, he describes Mandela's methodical, improbable and brilliant campaign to reconcile resentful blacks and fearful whites around a sporting event, a game of rugby.

CHAPTER II

SPHERE OF FOOTBALL

As a ball in football is stitched to form a shape, there are different area of study which are gathered to form a shape. There are different factors and consequences which lead to the formation of football as a part of Mizo society at different level of study. The early phase of football in the society which highlight the pioneers in introducing football, a body of association which made an attempt in developing football in the society, the nongovernmental organizations who believed football as a source of integrating the society, job generation through football, the emergence of football clubs, football at a local and micro level, a step forward outside the society through football shaped the sphere of football.

The study deals with different persons who are associated with football in different ways. Some may directly participate in the sport while others may indirectly involve with the sport. The study also deals with different associations who are directly and indirectly involve in the sport. The contributions of all may seem to differ at different stages but it cannot be ignored in the development of football in the society.

Football develops in the society within a period of time and gradually forms the most loved sport in the society. To understand this, the study is crucial to shape the different incidents at a particular time period. It is a challenge of the research to integrate the different levels of football and highlight how these levels are inter-connected and inter-linked for the gradual development of football as a sport of Mizo society.

2.1 The Early Phase

The First World War (1914-1917) had made an impact in various ways. An important impact could be the contact of football by Mizo soldiers who went to Paris, France in 1917. These soldiers namely Lianhlira, Lianthuama, Chawngthanga, Zawngauva and Zaliana were members of the labour corps who fought in the war. They were pictured in a photograph holding a ball outside Paris. As narrated by Zohnuaia who also went to France, football at the time was like a sport of rugby where the ball was not spherical in shape. The game was played with unlimited number of participants. It was played as a village against another village⁹. The format of the sport was more like choule or la soule, a popular game in Europe. This sport was an amateur sport as a part of social activity in Europe.

⁹ Ibid. p. 494

In 1926, the sports pioneers namely L.H. Liana of Mission Veng, Chuauthuama of Mission Veng, Hrawva of Venghlui, Kailuia of Dawrpui (all from Aizawl) who were early educated outside Aizawl requested a wealthy businessman Pachhunga of Dawrpui to sponsor a trophy for youth in Aizawl. Pachhunga Football Trophy became the first official tournament known among Mizos. The tournament went on for three decades till it ended with the demise of Pachhunga in 1958¹⁰. At the time, Assam Rifles (AR) were dominant in this tournament and they were no match for Mizos. But, the defeat of AR by Aijal Dawrpui Blue (Aijal was the previous name for Aizawl) in 1946 and by Aizawl School team the following year in 1947 were remarkable for Mizos in the record of the tournament.

Chhotelal Seth, a Marwari businessman in Aizawl presented a shield to the AR where Chhotelal Seth Football Shield was to be won in 1933. This football match was important as it paved the way for the recruitment of Mizos in AR. With this tournament, a speech made by Commandant W.B. Shakespear who termed Mizos as unsuitable for recruitment in an army was challenged¹¹. The tournament was a test of bravery and determination of Mizos. The venue Lammual, the playground of Assam Rifles was occupied fully by spectators. The matches were played

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 495

¹¹ Ibid. p. 10

by 8 teams under a heavy rain and playground was filled with dirt. The IGP who handed the shield made a speech saying that Mizos were as brave as Gorkhas who are known for their bravery in the service. After the tournament, over 50 new Mizo soldiers were recruited and sent to Sadya (present Arunachal Pradesh) and Naga Hill (present Nagaland)¹².

The first Charity Football match was held in 1948. The charity was to aid the students' union Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) which was established in 1935. The charity football match was played between the students who studied outside Aijal and students who studied within Aizawl. The sum of money received from gate entry was rupees forty one in total which was given to aid MZP¹³.

The early tournaments and attraction of spectators were initiated by the early educated Mizos who received education with the help of early missionaries. These shows that the awareness of promoting football among Mizos was in the minds of educated elites in the society where they could get the assistance of businessmen like Pachhunga and Chhotelal Seth. The fully packed spectators at Lammual shows how much football is welcomed and integrated as well as how much football is starting to drive the spectators more .

¹² Ibid. p. 11

¹³ Ibid. p. 11

Football at an early phase went side by side with hockey. The known athletes in a community were known to excel both in football and hockey. However, a game of football with its simplicity and its high tempo has been driving more spectators to witness a match. Football in its early phase goes along with hockey as a team sport. So, we cannot say that football is more popular than hockey in the society.

2.2 Sports Associations

The idea of promoting sports in Aizawl was in the minds of western educated Mizos where Aijal Sports Association (ASA) was established in 1945. The association was revived in 1952 after few years of not progressing. Sports lovers namely Lalhmingthanga of Dawrpui and his friends made an effort to revive sports. The aim of reviving the association was to promote football and hockey through tournaments¹⁴.

The first football team which played outside Mizoram was sent by ASA on 30th September, 1957 at Silchar in the state of Assam. Later, teams were sent by the association at Inter-district football tournament R. K. Jain Memorial Shield, played at Karimganj, Assam in 1962 where Mizos won the shield. This was a new step in football for Mizos as a tournament was won outside Mizo district for the first time.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 19

Chhotelal Seth Football Shield was also revived by the association in 1959¹⁵.

In 1972, Mizoram was put into a status of Union Territory under the government of India. ASA was changed as Mizoram Sports Association (MSA). The following year in 1973, football association became an autonomous body where Mizoram Football Association (MFA) was established. Lal Thanhawla (the present Chief Minister of Mizoram) became the first president of MFA¹⁶.

MFA, the first organized sports association in Mizoram was affiliated to the All India Football Federation (AIFF), the highest football governing body in India in 1987. It was in this year itself Mizoram participated in the Senior National Football Championship. From 1987, the members of MFA held important posts in AIFF. Zothangliana became a member of technical committee in 1992. J. Lalhmachhuana became a member of camp and tour committee from 1994 to 1995. K. Liantlinga held the post of chairman of youth competition in 1996 and he was also a match commissioner in 1997.

From 1993, MFA initially divided Mizoram into 15 zones and further to 25 zones with a view to promote football all over Mizoram. It encouraged children and youth from all over the state to represent their

¹⁵ Minute of Aijal Sports Association (1956-1970)

¹⁶ Zoliana Royte, opcit. p. 495

localities, villages, districts, state. Club registration in the format of advanced countries began in Mizoram where registered clubs were categorized into Division I, Division II and Division III in 1994. In 1998, district football associations was organized in 8 districts namely Aizawl, Lunglei, Lawngtlai, Champhai, Kolasib, Saiha, Serchhip, Mamit¹⁷. The categorizing of district football associations under MFA was aimed at promoting talents as well as spotting talented children for a bright future of football in Mizoram. Football began to reach every corner of the state since then. Till date, football associations at different districts of Mizoram would expose children with talented football skills where MFA would spot these talents and select them to represent the state at different age level competitions. MFA would acquire the talents all over the state with the co-ordination of football bodies all over the state guided by MFA.

2.3 YMA Football

Young Mizo Association (YMA) was organized as Young Lushai Association (YLA) on 15th June, 1935 as an organization integrating and uniting Mizos. It was renamed Young Mizo Association (YMA) on October, 1947¹⁸. Till date, YMA is a large non-government organization

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 496-497

¹⁸ R. Lalhmangaihsanga, *Mizo General Knowledge*, p. 44

(NGO) aside from the church organization in Mizoram. YMA did not mention sports in its original constitution as they did not foresee how sports and cultural activities would integrate in the society. It later included sports under 'extra curriculum' in the constitution. YMA began to organize football tournament for men and volleyball tournament for women from the later part of 1980s. The main aim of organizing sports was for integration of different YMA branches across the state.

Football tournament started for the first time as a part of YMA's Golden Jubilee celebration in 1985. This year, 32 teams from 32 YMA branches participated where Armed Veng defeated Vaivakawn to win the maiden YMA football tournament. The tournament continued in 1987 where 47 teams participated. Electric Veng defeated Ramthar in this final. A notable event was that Ramthar was previously a part of Electric Veng where the two YMA branches met in the finals. It was an interesting final. The 1988 final was won by the newly formed branch of Armed Veng North (Armed Veng was divided into Armed Veng North and Armed Veng South) by defeating Chaltlang in the final. 47 teams participated on this year. YMA football tournament was a crowd puller as the tournament was a battle for superiority for branches in dominating football in Mizoram. Branches participating in the tournament increased to 53 in 1989. Electric Veng defeated Chanmari. 68 teams participated in 1990 where Dinthar defeated Chanmari.

YMA football continued in 1995 after a gap of almost four years. YMA Diamond Jubilee celebration was held on this year where 77 teams participated. Chaltlang won the grand tournament by defeating Armed Veng South¹⁹. YMA football tournament at the time was the most watched football tournament in Mizoram as YMA branches represent their respective localities where the winner of the tournament was a symbol of pride as a locality and it was a sign of dominance of football in Mizoram.

YMA football tournament continued till date but other MFA recognized football competitions arose with the busy calendar of football. To locate the areas in Mizoram who are performing well in football and who have good records in Mizoram, YMA football tournament winners' branches are the first which comes to mind till date. YMA have been integrating different branches through football as well as popularizing football among the communities.

2.4 Inter-Departmental Football

The football governing body MFA during 1984 to 1987 organized tournaments for 18 teams. This was the initial stage of shaping football into a modern stage. 15 teams from Aizawl along with government departmental teams played with each other²⁰. This paved a way

¹⁹ V.L. Sanga, *Central YMA Sports, YMA Chanchinbu*, June, 1998. pp. 19-25

²⁰ Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* p. 498

for a league system of football followed at the highest level of football competition under FIFA, world's football governing body.

Mizoram Police Sporting Club (MRP) dominated the tournament during these years. Other departmental teams were Public Work Department (PWD), Power Sporting Club and Public Health Engineering (PHE). There were few private owned clubs like El-El Sports Club and Aizawl Football Club (AFC).

The period from 1984 to 1987 was an important era for football in Mizoram as football talents all over Mizoram were starting to make their living by playing football. Football became a job generation. Departmental teams were recruiting talented football players in their departments. The football players represented their respective departments on tournaments and they were also made to work as a staff of the offices on those days when they did not have to play football. The period co-incided with the status of Mizoram shifting from Union Territory to State under the Government of India. There were employment openings on various departments under the state government. Ambitious and talented football players made an effort to get their chances offered by the departments. There are many former football players who are still working in the departments till date.

2.5 Emergence of a private football club

It was in the mid 1980s where generations of football players were getting employments in the department under the newly formed state government which gave the hunger and competitive feeling to the football players who were still attending colleges at the time. Witnessing the hunger, K. Liantlinga of Venghlui started the first private club in Mizoram. El-El Sports Club (El-El) was formed in 1983. The name of the club was in the memory of Lallui, the wife of Hrawva, chief of Venghlui. She was the mother of K. Liantlinga. The club competed with departmental teams at the highest level from 1983 till 1990. This was new in the face of football in Mizoram.

K. Liantlinga had learnt the structure and management of football clubs in Europe. Based on their structure, El-El Sports Club was started. Recruitment of football players began among the college students of Aizawl College and Pachhunga University College, the two big colleges in Mizoram. The club started following western traits by learning from the video cassettes played in a Panasonic video player which was bought from Myanmar for Rs 45,000/-. The cassettes during the time cost Rs 1000/- per cassette which was an astronomical figure. The football players watched the football played by Europeans during the early parts of the day and they tried to practice those skills in the afternoon at the practice sessions.

The football players were between the ages of 20 to 22 where they competed with top teams in the state comprising of players who were older to them. Football equipments were also provided to the players. The players were the first team to wear a European branded sportswear made by Umbro. It was an expensive sportswear which cost Rs 8000/- in 1984. The club also paid their players for their services²¹.

Private clubs like El-El and Aizawl Football Club (AFC) which was later formed paved the way for professionalism in football. The structure and management of the football was copied from European clubs in those days. Recruiting football talents from all over the state and also from neighboring state of Manipur and neighboring country of Burma as well as paying these players in salaries and equipments are all part of modern football clubs in the world. This had opened up a new phase of football in Mizoram in the road to professionalism.

2.6 Changes in football

In the mid 1980s, there was a demand for change in the format of football tournaments in Mizoram. The governing football body MFA organizes tournaments with no such kind of individual prizes. And also teams participating in the tournaments did not get any shares from the revenue of gate entry. With the increase in demand and cries for

²¹ Interview with K. Liantlinga

‘professionalism’, Mizoram Football Federation (MFF) was formed in 1986. It seems that there was a clash of ideas between MFA and MFF. While MFA was willing to go on with amateur set up of football in Mizoram, MFF wanted ‘professionalism’ in the format of football tournaments²².

Lalthangvunga Memorial Football Tournament for men and women was first organized by MFF in 1986. In this tournament, aside from the cash prize and trophy for the winner and runners-up, individual prizes were given by the organizer. 25% of revenue from gate entry was also given to teams as a match money. Another significant step initiated by MFF was an endorsement system of the clubs during the tournaments. Business houses, government offices and hotels around Aizawl were providing sponsorship for the clubs. All these were a new step in football in Mizoram. It was an initial step of organizing clubs and tournament as of other advanced countries in football.

The functioning of MFA and MFF created a competition between the two bodies where football tournaments were numerously held in Aizawl during 1987 and 1988. Laldenga Gold Cup and Federation Cup were held in 1987. Laldenga Gold Cup was an invitational tournament where best teams in the north eastern part of India were invited. The tournament became the first tournament in north east part of India

²² Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* p. 498

where teams from seven states called Seven Sisters participated²³. The competition between two bodies became the catalyst for the exposure of football beyond the boundary. Football in Mizoram began to expose and it became a step for improvement and ‘professionalism’.

2.7 Football at a local level

There is a saying in Mizo society that a locality which is having a playground excels in football. Since Mizoram is a hilly area, all localities are not favored to have a playground. The saying is true to some extent as localities that have good records in YMA football and localities that produce good football players are mostly from areas who have a playground. Localities like Armed Veng North and Armed Veng South who shared Armed Veng field, Electric Veng and Chanmari which are close by to Government High School field, Chaltlang who have their field dominated football in Mizoram for a long period. Among them, Chaltlang with their small sized playground dominating football is very interesting.

Chaltlang is one of the popular localities who have their chief in the early years. Once under a chieftainship, the locality is a closed knit community. A fine generation of youth are crucial for the dominance in football. It was around 1983 that a generation of youth spent most of the day in their small sized playground. They were joined by younger

²³ Interview with K. Liantlinga

generations after witnessing their elders playing most of the time in the playground. Chaltlang Sports Club was organized in 1983 along with junior teams. They dominated the northern part of Aizawl from 1985. They also reached semi finals in YMA tournament in 1987 and 1988. The success was an effort and contribution of a generation of youth.

Chaltlang Sports Club composed of a well setting up of teams within the community. There were age level teams such as team below 10 years of age, team below 12 years of age and team below 14 years of age aside from the men's team. Tournaments were held frequently within the community. An article related to football was a regular column in the community's weekly newsletter which created enthusiasm in the minds of the youths and children supported by the parents. These help in consistency of good performance for the community in football²⁴.

An interesting feature of football is being a factor for building up a friendship and relationship to group of friends. Mizo communities in the 1980s and 1990s saw the feature of group of friends hanging out in a single household. This household is mostly a widow's house. The guest of the house, a widow entertains group of friends where they spent most of their times drinking on liquor or singing together with a musical instruments. It was popularly called '*in leng*' where this word was connected to the guest's good name. In a locality, one group of friends used

²⁴ Interview with Laltanpuia

to play a friendly football match with another group of friends. At the end of the game, these participants would jointly share a supper at a common location. Football serves as a means of relationship and means of friendship during the years.

2.8 First Mizo to represent India

India, as a nation is still hardly regarded as a footballing nation. Mizoram, as a state hardly make a mark in the national championships where footballing states compete at the highest level. On the other hand, an extraordinary talent emerged among Mizos. Kawllianthanga, also known as K. Kawla was born on 17th November, 1941 at Churachanpur in Manipur to Rev. Dr. Lalthanliana and Rongengi. His father was a preacher. Due to his father's mission, he grew up in Burma (now Myanmar). In 1959, he represented Chin-State Football team as a goalkeeper. It was here where he got contacted and recruited by Post & Telecom department where Sports Authority of Burma had high regard of him. He then represented Burma Youth team at Asian Youth Football Tournament held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

K. Kawla went back to Mizoram from Myanmar in 1974 where he played for Mizoram Police team. In 1976, he represented Mizoram football team which went to Shillong. In 1977, he then represented Assam football team after accepting an invitation of Sports

Authority of Assam. He was noticed by AIFF, the highest football governing body in India while playing in the Santosh Trophy. AIFF selected him as a member of India national football team. He represented India at Afghanistan Republic Day at Kabul where India won third place. He also represented India at 1978 Aga Khan Gold Cup Football Tournament held in Dhaka where India won second place.

K. Kawla was also the first Mizo to play for top Indian football club where he played for Mohamedan Sporting Club of Calcutta from 1978 to 1979. He came back to Mizoram and joined Mizoram Police as a rank of sub-inspector of police. He continued to play football and acted as a coach of Mizoram football team at Diphu, Meghalaya and Bhutan King's Cup 1991. He not only represented India at an international level but also represented Burma youth team at an international level. He spent most of his days with football till his death on 1st March, 1995 at the age of 54²⁵. His legacy opens the minds of Mizos in football where a hope and chance was created by him in football at an international level.

2.9 Exceptional talent went unnoticed

Football was at its height during the late 1980s in Mizoram. Private clubs like El El and AFC were competing with departmental teams

²⁵ Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* p. 512-513

in Aizawl. Football was the most watched sport as televisions were owned by only few people at the time. Football posed a form of amusement in the society. Football players were highly regarded in the society. Excellent football players would attain popularity and a symbol of heroism in the society. One such football player was H. Ramthlengliana.

H. Ramthlengliana played for AFC and competed with other teams from 1984. He was an exceptional talent in sports where he held a record as the fastest runner in Mizoram from 1986 to 1992. Tragically, his football exceptional talent was highlighted by misfortunes and bad luck. The exceptional talent went unnoticed at the national level as well as international level. But in the local football in Mizoram, the generation at the time was familiar with his name when talking of football in Mizoram.

In 1986, after an impressive display at Subroto Cup which was school level football tournament, he and Zomuanthanga of Mizoram received a call up to represent Indian School football team at a tournament in Brunei. Unfortunately, due to a problem faced in his passport, he had to pull out of the team. While Zomuanthanga went on to play the football tournament outside India. Zomuanthanga became the first Mizo boy to play football outside India. This was a first setback for H. Ramthlengliana in his football career.

In 1988, H. Ramthlengliana with other four Mizo teenagers namely Lalrinsanga, Zonunthara, Zohminga and Chhakchhuakvunga were

selected for a football camp at Jawaharlal Nehru stadium in New Delhi. The camp was organised by Special Area Games (SAG) which was under the authority of Sports Authority of India (SAI). SAG was a programme designed for development of youths in north east region of India and Andaman and Nicobar Island. H. Ramthlengliana went on to lead the team of SAG during their camp in New Delhi where he was made the captain of the team. But he left the camp to pursue his educational career where he later became a police officer under MRP.

In 1992, H. Ramthlengliana received a call from the AIFF for the selection of India national football team. Selection was held in Bangalore (now Bengaluru). Preparation for Nehru Gold Cup was the main theme of the selection. He performed well in the selection but he did not find his name on the final list. Only few football players made it to the final selection while senior members of India football team who did not attend the selection camp made the final cut. Being disappointed on the system of selection, he gave up his dream to represent India in football. This was a huge setback for him and Mizos. He missed two opportunities in his football career in representing India as a school boy and in representing India national football team.

H. Ramthlengliana received an invitation from top football clubs in India like East Bengal of Kolkata, Mohammedan Sporting of Kolkata and Mahindra & Mahindra from Mumbai in 1992 but he declined them as

he has been serving in a police department²⁶. At present, he served the government as a member of Mizoram Police Service. His exceptional talent did not cross the state but his exceptional talent was always ahead of others during his football career where he gave up his football days after suffering a huge setback twice. His football dreams ended by nepotism.

2.10 Football turns professional

We have seen Mizo in the like of K. Kawla playing for top Indian club like Mohamedan Sporting Club but he went back to Mizoram to serve in Mizoram police. Football in the mid 1990s saw a change in national level where a push for full time football players saw an opening in professionalism. Football is taken up as a profession since then.

Multinational companies like TATA, National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) and Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) opened up football academies at various parts of India. TATA football academy (TFA) at Jamshedpur, Bihar and SAIL academy at Bokaro, Jharkhand were the most notable football academies in India. Talented football players all over India were recruited in these academies where professional football clubs sign up graduates from these institutions to become a professional football players. These created an opportunities for Mizo football players to pursue their careers where the likes of Jerry

²⁶ Interview with H. Ramthlengliana

Zirsanga and S. Malsawmtluanga represented India at an international level. Mizo football players who attended the institutions from 1995 to 2005 were:

- 1) TFA: Jerry Zirsanga, Malsawma, Vanlalrova, Vanlalnghaka, P.C Lalawmpuia, Robert Lalthlamuana.
- 2) SAIL: Vanlalmawia, H. Lalmalsawma, Lalchhuanmawia, P.C. Vanlalmuana, Lalramzauva Ralte, Lalhmangaihzuala, Nicky Malsawmtluanga, Lalbiaktluanga.

Apart from these, Mizos were playing as professional football players at teams such as East Bengal (Kolkata), Calcutta FC (Kolkata), George Telegraph (Kolkata), City Athletics FC (Kolkata), Army XI, Air Force (Kolkata), Signal Corps (Goa), Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB)²⁷.

Mizos who were playing outside Mizoram had shown the possibilities of football to take up as a profession in India. This had changed the scenario of football in the society where it creates a dream for many children and youth to take up football as a profession. This period from 1995 to 2005 was a new era of football in Mizoram where football players urged themselves to play football outside Mizoram. The same goes for a footballing nation of Brazil. In Brazil, there is a conception among the football players that playing football in Europe is a pride and achievement

²⁷ Zoliana Royte, *opcit.* pp. 519-520

for any Brazilians. They always come back home as a hero. Whether they play in a football country like England, Italy, Spain, Germany or less popular countries of Latvia, Iceland or Luxembourg, Brazilians always come back as heroes in their respective hometown. The same sense of pride and achievement goes for Mizos.

CHAPTER III

COMMERCIALIZATION

Football is a sport known for its simplicity. When a ball is present, people could kick about in any available space. Football is played as a part of filling a leisure time. Football is an activity. And when the mindsets of competitiveness arise, football requires support through others to reach a higher level of competition. Football can no longer be a means of leisure time, it becomes a battle with equipments. Football at a high level requires a ball to play with, a specially designed boots to kick the ball with, a custom made shirt and short to play with. These would be like an arsenal for battling out in a battle field in the form of a standard sized football field. The battle field requires a well indicated line drawn in it and a goal post with a cross bar attached to it. For cautious display of the well equipped football teams opposing each other, the officials are also required. The whole incident has to have a reason for battling out in the football field. There should be organizers for hosting the football match. For all these to function accordingly, we have to understand the importance of commercialization of football and the role it plays in the society.

Commercialization of football is crucial to study how the sport evolved within a period of time. We can also study how contacts with other societies exist in relation to football. We will further understand how the economic situation had paved a way for the popularity of football within the society. Lastly, we could also pay tribute to the front runners in promoting football within the society through their business intended activities.

Since football without any forms of commerce would not generate a progress within a society, it is important to learn how necessary it is for the existence of organizer and recipient side by side. The sociological aspect, the economical aspect and the sporting aspect are interconnected in the study.

3.1 The dual business

The pioneer traders and businessmen among Mizos were hard working and ambitious. The commercial goods they deal in were of a variety. They introduced new materials and commodities which they came in contact with and then brought to the people. Since they were in contact with a variety of people at different places, they deal in variety of goods which they believed to be profitable and which will profit the people and

the society. This is why the early traders and businessmen were dealing with more than one subject of business in the early days. They then continued with the most demanding subject of business in the market soon after. This is how early businessmen like Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala start to deal in sport goods after trying on different subject of business in their earlier days.

The first known business house in association with sport goods was established on 13th November, 1972 at Dawrpui in Aizawl. Lalhema started a business house dealing in sport goods along with other subject of business. Lalhema was a talented person who is also the first to associate with photography. Lalhema was believed to be the first photographer among Mizos²⁸. He started photography and photography processing along with dealing in sport goods which he then concentrated on sport goods alone as he found it more suitable for him and his family to continue for a longer period of time.

Thangridema, the son of Lalhema started his own business house close to the father's business house. He too started a dual business of sport goods dealer along with business of photography. He named his business as Photography and Sport Supply Agency (PASSA). He had begun to get in contact with sport goods in the 1960s during his time in

²⁸ Interview with Zawni

Shillong in Meghalaya. So, it was no wonder his business skills and technical skills were incorporated in PASSA.

Thangridema later became the first to deal in cosmetics where an Indian cosmetic brand Lakme entered Mizoram through him. Lakme was founded by JRD Tata under Tata Group in 1952. Later, he also deal in Swiss footwear makers Bata. Bata was founded in Switzerland by T&A Bata Shoe Company in 1894. He modernized the society at the time where cosmetics and footwears were part of a new dressing. He brought a change to the fashion of the society. These brands of Lakme and Bata continued till date in Mizoram but no longer by Thangridema²⁹. PASSA also run till date where the family of Thangridema carried on the business but as a dealer in sport goods alone.

Another pioneer in dealing with sport goods was Haudala. Haudala started his business in Dawrpui which is the main commercial area in Aizawl till date. He was also running his shop in sport goods along with a wider variety of commodities. He was the first to organize a kind of departmental store. He dealt with variety of daily basic necessities in his business from stationeries to edibles and different commodities of basic

²⁹ Interview with Dr. Lalrindiki Fanai

necessities. He too concentrated his business on sport goods alone later on³⁰.

Photography at the time was not affordable to masses where technical skill was required. In this, Lalhema and his son Thangridema excelled in photography and the processing of the photographs. Thangridema also introduced the cosmetics and footwear where he brought a change to the dressing sense of the society. They revolutionized the fashion of Mizos. Haudala also brought the idea of a wider business of setting up a departmental store which provides basic needs of the people. Apart from these, all the families of Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala run their business till date where they now only deal with sport goods.

3.2 Goods related to football

Ever since football was in contact with the society, the main item of the sport which was a leather ball was not readily available. A fruit called sertawk which was similar to the size and shape of ball was kicked about in many places where leather ball was not available. Aside from sertawk, papers stuffed in a sock shaped in a spherical object are also kicked about. The simplicity of football popularizes the sport to many. As

³⁰ Interview with Lalramthanga, IFS.

in Brazil, when slavery was abolished in 1888 which was the last place to do so in the Americas. Many newly liberated slaves moved into the cities, creating a large impoverished underclass. The game of football was found more interesting than cricket as it was simple to copy. All one needed was a ball. If one could not afford it, one could be improvised inexpensively with, for example, a bundle of socks, an orange or a cloth filled with paper. Children and youth in Africa also followed the similar trait. The simplicity of the sport makes it easy to adapt worldwide.

Since the 1970s, local business houses and shops were found in Dawrpui, the main commercial area in Aizawl. Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala dealt with Indian made sport goods. The introduction of a leather made ball was a new phase of football among Mizos. The early balls were mostly manufactured in Jalandhar, a town of Punjab in India. These balls come in different sizes. The variation of sizes was for the usage of different age groups playing football. Ball in those days came in five sizes where size 5 was an international standard size³¹. Ball for football was available for different ages in the society.

Lalhema, the first Mizo to deal in sport goods had a good contact with sport good manufacturers like Cosco, Nivia and Mitre. These are popular Indian manufacturers which has been running the company

³¹ Interview with Lalramthanga, IFS

since date. Whereas Mitre is an English company founded by Benjamin Crook in 1817. Nivia Sports launched its first full leather hand stitched ball in 1962 when the present chairman and managing director Vijay Kharabanda worked with his father. The name NIVIA is derived from the first letter of the founder Nihal Chand Kharabanada and his son Vijay Kharabanda. Cosco is also an Indian company which function since 1980 as a sister concern of Enkay Indian Rubber Company Private Limited. These were the balls which first entered the local markets in the 1970s and 1980s in Aizawl.

To kick about a ball, specially designed footwear called football boot is used at the highest level of competitions. Football boot became a requirement under the competitions organized by FIFA, the highest football governing body in the world. India as a nation qualified for the 1950 FIFA World Cup finals but AIFF, the Indian football governing body were against the participation as it did not met the requirement of the competition which include high traveling expenses and equipments such as football boots. The football boot entered the society when the pioneer businessmen like Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala dealt with football boots made in India. As Jalandhar in Punjab was the centre for manufacturing sport goods in India, distributors such as Freewill Sports Private Limited in Jalandhar in Punjab were suppliers of most of the sport

goods to Lalhema. Sahni Sports in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh was another suppliers of sport goods. Sandeep Oberoi, proprietor of Dual Trade Agency in Punjab has been supplying sport goods since the 1980s in Mizoram.

Football boots were of varieties in the 1980s. Indian made goods were the most popular worn by football players. It was around 1985 that football boots made in China entered Mizoram. These were of ankle length and they were in competition with Indian made football boots. These football boots were said to be cheaper in prices but for some reasons, foreign made football boots were forbidden to use in football competitions in Mizoram. For a short period of time, cheaper football boots from foreign countries like China were competing with Indian made goods.

For uniformity and unity of a team playing football, a football shirt and a short are usually worn by a team different to the opposition team. This suit of a shirt and a short is simply called jersey. It usually comes in a set containing a shirt, a short and sometimes a pair of long length socks. The popularity of a set of jersey came with the entry of television set in Mizoram. 1986 FIFA World Cup was first witnessed in masses in Mizoram. Jerseys worn by nationalities in the competition became an amusement of Mizos. Lalhema ordered a set of jerseys similar to the one worn during FIFA World Cup. Football from the 1990s was a new phase as football clubs in Europe like in England, Italy and Spain were

introduced in the society with the coming of television sets and video cassette players in homes. With the popularity of football clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool, AC Milan, Juventus, FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, the replica jersey of these clubs was on demand. These set of jerseys were Indian tailored goods which was brought from Calcutta (then Kolkata) in West Bengal. Mercantile Agency and Syndicate from Calcutta are still supplying set of jerseys to Lalhema till date³².

3.3 Proper channels of supply

The progress and development of transportation of goods have been enormous. In the present day, courier operating companies like Blue Dart and DHL which are international companies and other India services have been supplying goods inside India. In the 1970s and 1980s, the post offices of Indian Postal Service had played a crucial role in carrying of goods to Mizoram. Supplied sport goods from Calcutta, Jalandhar and other places entered through post offices. Transaction of money was also done through post offices until State Bank of India (SBI) and Apex Bank came into existence in Aizawl. In the late 1980s, Mizoram

³² Interview with Zawni

State Transport (MST) buses were in service where sport goods were carried through these bus services³³.

3.4 Supplying of sports goods

The early sport goods dealers and suppliers in the 1970s and 1980s were the business houses of Lalhema, Thangridema and Haudala. Aside from the daily customers, they also supply sport goods to different areas across the state. The Sports & Youth Service Department under the state government followed a tender or quotation system where these business houses supplied goods for the government. These business houses helped the government in developing the sports facilities and infrastructures in the state with their supplies. The Education Department also supplied sport equipments to different schools and institutions with the help of the business houses through tender or quotation system.

The purchase of sport goods were also a mean of political campaign by politicians. Sport goods are being supplied by Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in their respective constituencies³⁴. As football is a popular sport for the enthusiastic youths across the state, balls and jerseys are being distributed by the MLAs and the politicians as a mean to win votes from their respective area of campaign.

³³ Interview with Zawni

³⁴ Interview with Lalruatkima

3.5 Benefits through football

Football is a team game where the team with best co-ordination between the participants dominate the sport. For this excellent co-ordination, the groups of players are supposed to be good in their own abilities. When football teams gather the best football players who were available and arranged in groups, then a football team is believed to be hopeful as well as successful. For the gathering, a team has to search and spot talented and gifted football players. This is essential for a team participating in a competition. The similar condition happened in the Mizo society.

Since the introduction of club level football in the 1980s, the demands of football players increased. Football talents from all over the state as well as from outside the state came to Aizawl for showcasing their skills and abilities. It was the period when state governmental teams were also looking for football players to recruit in the departments. Competition was high and demand was high for recruitment of football players.

Departmental teams had the best chance of recruiting football players as they could promised these football players a job which would pay them during their football playing careers as well as after retirement

from playing as an employee. Since the football player thought about his playing days as well as after retiring from the sport, a football player found it difficult to reject the proposals of the departmental teams. No such contract system of signing football players were prevalent during these years, but a job orientation for the football players were offers difficult to decline.

Football at the highest level in 1980s was a competition between different football teams. Private football clubs such as El-EI and AFC competed with departmental teams. Since El-EI was a team comprising of college students, the owner K.Liantlinga would only pay salary for the services to section of football players. The section of football players were recruited from Myanmar and neighboring states like Manipur.

Aizawl Football Club (AFC) last longer than El-EI as a private football club. The club was managed by Dengchhuana. AFC was more of a organized team than El-EI as football players from different parts of Mizoram and outside the state participate. Football players like Gulab Chau Singh hailed from Manipur. Hrangzuala and Khualchungga were from Myanmar. Well performed players of AFC were not paid in cash but to divert them from the interest of departmental teams, they were given a personal loan through Apex Bank from the hierarchy in the football club.

Aside from giving personal loans, there were players who were given vehicles so that the player and his family could run a rental car or taxi³⁵.

It is understood that the demands for football players was high during the 1980s. It was a shifting period when state departments could provide employment to talented football players. At the same time, private football clubs compete with departmental teams in recruiting the best players available by giving away personal loans and giving away vehicles which would be utilized as taxis. The competition is at its peak during the 1980s as the offers of football clubs and teams were in regard of the lifetime for the football players. The offers were not only a contract bounded by a time period and with limits but it was a matter of lifetime through employment in the state government or through building a business career with the help of personal loans and taxis even after the end of playing career.

With the high intensity of competition in recruiting best football talents, there was an incident between AFC and PWD team in 1992. PWD team offered a job to Sanghmuna, a goalkeeper of AFC. As Sanghmuna was the best goalkeeper during the time, AFC were determined to keep hold of his service. On the other hand, PWD made a good offer which was difficult to refused. He then joined PWD where the members of

³⁵ Interview with H. Ramthlengliana

AFC and members of PWD violently acted out in public. Sanghmuna went on to join and play for PWD. He was one of the finest goalkeeper till date. He met a muscle injury while playing football and suffered with the aftermath of the muscle injury till his death. He was labeled as a mercenary in football for his dedication in the sport³⁶.

3.6. Modernising football

1980s coincided with the introduction of televisions at certain houses. Only a well to do persons could afford to get one. The packed house full of spectators was a talk of the town during the days. Television had brought an advancement and a change in the lives of the society. Witnessing of 1982 FIFA World Cup held in Spain through television inspired children and youth during the time. Especially by 1986 FIFA World Cup held in Mexico, the numbers of televisions increased within the society. The outlook of football changed since then.

K. Liantlinga bought a set of television with a video cassette player in 1984. The set which he recall was a brand of Panasonic which he managed to get from Myanmar. It cost him Rs 45,000/- at the time. He also got a video cassettes of football which was played in Europe³⁷. Visuals of

³⁶ Interview with Laltanpuia

³⁷ Interview with K. Liantlinga

Europeans playing football became a means of modernizing football. K. Liantlinga later ran for presidential election in MFA where he won the seat. He held the post from 1996 to 2002. During his time, he changed the format of football in Mizoram to a more pro-European system.

A step of advancement of football in Mizoram began with private clubs like El El and AFC. While other teams were wearing ordinary sportswear, El El and AFC wore an Umbro made sportswear in 1984 and 1986 respectively. Umbro is an English sportswear and football equipment supplier based in Manchester. El El got their Umbro sportswear for Rs 8000/- in 1984. El El and AFC were ahead of other teams especially departmental teams during the 1980s and 1990s in terms of advancement in the sportswear.

In 1986, a famous football player H. Ramthlengliana wore a Puma made football boot. Puma is a German based sportswear maker. This boot was borrowed from a close friend Remlala of Zarkawt³⁸. At the time, the football boots worn by football players were Indian made. Wearing Puma and being the best football player during the time was a great pride as recalled by H. Ramthlengliana.

The football position and scenario during the 1980s was interesting as it was a turning point in the evolution of football into a modern way.

³⁸ Interview with H. Ramthlengliana

Football in the society began to sway in the form of European format. The private clubs like El El and AFC were front runners in advancing football where the introduction of television in homes coincided with the progress. Football in the society is evolving since then.

CHAPTER IV

Video Gaming, eGaming & e Sports

When an alphabet ‘e’ is embedded to a word, it means a word related to an electronic technology. Technological innovations and inventions change the world as well as its outlook. In the case, Mizo society also swayed along with innovations and inventions happening around the world. Video game in its initial form is a contributing factor in the society.

A video game is an electronic game that involves human interaction that generates visual feedback on a video device. The video device called a video game console which means a device that outputs a video signal or visual image to display a video game. The term “video game console” is used to distinguish a console machine primarily designed for consumers to use for playing video games in contrast to arcade machines.

The third generation of game console (sometimes referred to as 8-bit era) entered the homes in Mizoram. This generation also marked a shift in the dominance of home video game console hardware and console game production from Japan. A Japanese company Nintendo successfully

launched its first video game console in 1983. The gaming console released in 1990 by Nintendo was more advanced 16-bit processor called Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES)³⁹. SNES entered the homes of Mizos by 1997. The gaming console was affordable to only a section of the society as it was expensive at the time. Although it was owned by a few, sharing of video game was in its initial stage where children hang out in groups at a friend's place for video gaming.

The gradual rising of a new subculture of video game culture was apparent by the late 1990s when more video game consoles entered the homes in Aizawl. Video game culture is a new media subculture that has been influenced by video games. As computer and video games have increased exponentially in popularity over time, they have had a significant influence upon popular culture. Popular culture is the entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images, memes, and other phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture. Video game culture has evolved in time. Mayra suggests that gamers who gather together to play possess a shared language, engage in collective rituals and are often interested in cultural artifacts such as gaming paraphernalia⁴⁰. Cronin and McCarthy (2011) have also explored a luminal, hedonic food culture to be present among these socially connected actors. The commensally consumption of

³⁹ David Sheff, *Game Over: How Nintendo Zapped An American Industry, Captured Your Dollars, and Enslaved Your Children* (First edition), pp. 360-361

⁴⁰ F. Mayra, *An Introduction to Game Studies*

energy dense low nutrient foods is considered to be appropriated during long stretches of game play to contribute to the community and hedonistic aspects of social gaming⁴¹.

Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite to link several billion devices worldwide. It is a network of networks. Internet has revolutionized the world. Internet consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services. Information resources on football using internet began in Mizoram. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Indian telecommunication company has been providing internet facilities for Mizos. Through internet, Mizo daily newspaper has been running a news website which feature news on local football. Beside Vanglaini (a local newspaper), a football website called Zofooty has also raised the level of the quality of football in the society. The role of media has been crucial for raising the level of football in the society. The contribution of media through internet cannot be missed out in raising football in the society.

⁴¹ J. Cronin, M. McCarthy. Fast Food and Fast Games: An ethnographic exploration of food consumption complexity among the video games subculture

4.1. Video Games to Computer Games

When video game consoles entered the homes in the late 1990s in the form of SNES, only few people could afford to buy the console. At the same time, building a new subculture of video game culture is in its initial stage. Video gaming was popular among the school children where they hang out after school in groups playing video game. In the gathering, a game of football was one of the games played using the console.

For SNES console, *Goal!* was the first football game developed by Jaleco (established in 1974)⁴². The football game was also played among the children in the society. With the extensive owning of video game console at homes, the popularity of the game increases within a period of time. Video game began as a subject of interest and much talked about in schools for children. The interest in football games coincided with familiarity of football in the society.

It was in 1998 that an American multinational technology company Microsoft (founded in 1975) developed Windows 98 operating system of personal computer (PC)⁴³. Windows 98 powered PCs entered the homes in the society. In similar ways as video games, PCs were owned

⁴² Segaretro.org/Jaleco visited on 12th September 2014

⁴³ News.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/5085630.stm visited on 10th November 2014

only by few people in its initial stage. This time, not only children but teenagers were impressed and excited by the new technology. A game generated by PCs was impressive with its simplicity. In a video game console, one has to fix a box of console and connect the wires to a television set. But, in a PC, one does not have to fix and take the trouble of connecting the wire as the PC itself is fully equipped in itself. PC as the name itself signifies much of personal item and offers privacy, video game needed a requirement of larger member shared item in television which disrupt the chores of the household while PC does not.

Electronic Arts Incorporation (EA) also known as EA Games is an American game developer founded in 1982⁴⁴. The company was a pioneer of the PC games industry and was notable for promoting the designers and programmers responsible for its games. In 2011, Electronic Arts was the world's third-largest gaming company by revenue after Nintendo and Activision Blizzard. Their breakthrough was for developing a popular football games for PCs. These football games called EA FIFA runs in series which they have been designing football games every year till date since 1995. As EA is a partner of FIFA, licensing of FIFA registered players in its games offer an advantage over other football in PC games.

⁴⁴ www.sequoiacap.com/us/electronic-arts/info visited on 5th October 2014

In Mizoram, the wave of EA FIFA games began since 2002 where the wave was at its highest in 2010 when competitions were organized. EA FIFA game competitions were on demand as the game players increases annually. EA FIFA games become addictive since then. The addicted game players or gamers were mostly teenagers and youths. They form a new subculture where they gather through common interest. They then develop their own symbols and languages. In the present day, PCs are mostly owned in the society where EA FIFA game is the most played game.

4.2. Shared culture and language

An interesting feature of PC gamers is their shared culture and the language they developed through their interactions. With the events like EA FIFA game competition organized within the society, teenagers and youths from all corner of the society participated. The participant met new friends where certain participants with common interest began to hang out where a new subculture is formed.

A gamer with his friends spent eight hours a day in average playing EA FIFA game. There are also times where they keep on playing the game without much sleep and without rest. An interesting feature is sharing of food habit. Since they do not have proper diet or particular eating habit, they share instant noodles like Maggi noodles, an

international brand of readymade food and also Wai Wai noodles, a multinational readymade food producer's headquarters in Nepal. Cronin and McCarthy (2011) have also explored a luminal, hedonic food culture to be present among these socially connected actors. The commensally consumption of energy dense low nutrient foods is considered to be appropriated during long stretches of game-play to contribute to the community and hedonistic aspects of social gaming. In response to the central importance that food plays in the collective enjoyment of social gaming, various websites have been created which allow gamers to rate their favorite foods to accompany play. The presence of rituals, shared discourse, collective action and even a luminal food culture among gaming communities gives credence to the concept of these cohorts existing as self defining sub-units within mainstream culture. However due to the ephemeral and transient nature of their rituals, and also the possibility of virtual interaction through online participation, these cohorts should be considered postmodern subcultures. Gaming communities have social elements beyond physical interaction and have come to a stage where online and offline spaces can be seen as 'merged' rather than separate.

4.3 Attachment of virtual to reality

Playing a PC game of football is a virtual and addictive activity. A gamer does not spend his time kicking about a ball neither equipped with football boot or jersey. There is no physical contact with the sport. This does not mean that a gamer is completely detached from football. Virtual world is connected to reality in the case of gamers.

In an EA FIFA game, certain criteria and rating is given to a football player and a football team. A football player who performs well at the highest level of competition at international stage gets a high rating in the computer game. Having a regard on this, a gamer is always well informed with the performance of the football player in reality. When a gamer wants to control football player of high quality like Lionel Messi of Argentina or Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal, a gamer has to excel his skills in his games in accordance to the movement on such football players where he performs in real life. This is why a gamer has to watch a football match in television⁴⁵.

A gamer may not be regarded as a person who does not contribute to football in the society but a gamer is always aware of the happenings in the world in football especially at international level. As a gamer with his friends of common interest develops and forms a new subculture, it cannot

⁴⁵ Interaction with gamers

be disconnected from the society. One which does not get physical contact with the sport is also always aware of the sport because of the virtual interest. We can say that physically or virtually, football is always a part of the society.

4.4. eGames as fund raiser

Since EA FIFA games is demanding and popular among the teenagers and youths in the society, gamers are made to compete where tournaments are organized. The organization of the tournament is becoming a fruitful mean of fund raising for certain bodies. In Mizoram, EA FIFA tournament has become popular since 2010. This was the first tournament of the kind known within the society.

In 2010, YMA branch of Ramthar (an area in Aizawl) organized 'FIFA Tournament' as they were aware of the popularity of the computer game. Over 360 gamers registered themselves as participants in this well organized tournament. YMA branch of Ramthar had a good support from business houses like Fel Fel Digitals who supplied computers for playing the game during the tournament. The organizers also got a support from Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department of Mizoram government with a sponsorship of Rs 40,000/-. The

winner of the tournament walked away with Rs 10,000/- in cash⁴⁶. The tournament is the first biggest tournament for the gamers.

In the recent years, church youth groups like Kristian Thalai Pawl (KTP) and also YMA continued to organize FIFA tournaments as a fund raiser as they are aware of the popularity of the game. Through this tournament, gamers could link up with new friends where they continued to hang out for the purpose of their common interest in gaming. Gamers spend more than twelve hours daily throughout the week when they gather their momentum with the spirit of tournament. Gaming culture deeply rooted itself in the society with a period of time.

4.5. eSports

The role played by electronic media is crucial in the present scenario of football in the society. In the present day, how an issue is perceived greatly depend on how the media portray. Ever since electronic media offers updates and awareness through internet, the usage of mobile phones with internet facilities and computers with internet becomes handy for users. With the increase of users, the awareness increases.

⁴⁶ Interview with Joseph Zorammuana

In Mizoram, a football website named as 'zofooty' began in 2011. This was an indication of a step forward in eSports. With an ever increasing popularity of football, a challenge was met by a group of college graduates. Lalzarzova, the administrator of the website was a graduate with a degree in mathematics from Loyola College in Chennai. Being a football player himself and had represented his state at youth level, his unending interest in taking up of football as a website began when he and his friends from college started to run the website since 2011 till date⁴⁷. The initial stage of the website coincided with the usage of artificial grass in Mizoram. FieldTurf Tarkett India, the country's leader in next-generation artificial grass and sports surfaces has been awarded the project to install a first of its kind, world-class field turf football surface in Aizawl for the Government of Mizoram. Placing of the artificial grass by the state government was a progress for football in the society. The newly placed artificial grass and the newly updated football website was new and progress for the society.

eSports through media can be of different advantages for the society. Firstly, usage of internet itself can make the world smaller by instant updates and information could be make known all over the world within a matter of few minutes. By 2011, there are many Mizos who moved abroad even outside India and settled at various places. These people could

⁴⁷ Interview with Lalzarzova

keep in touch with the society through internet. In this, zofooty has regular visitors of the website from various places. Zofooty at an initial stage had visitors of 800 internet users daily. When popular tournaments are played in Aizawl, Mizos from all over India and abroad looked out for updates and information through the website. With zofooty functioning as a mean of internet updates and information, Mizos from various places remain attached to football in Mizoram. Media has been playing a crucial role for the society as football remains the most popular sport for Mizos.

With an increasing technology and advancement in the world, the society also sways with the progress. The ever increasing gamers who are attached to the virtual section of football stays connected to the happenings in the world of football. The virtual and reality go hand in hand in the society as football is the most popular sport among the society. The role of electronic media such as zofooty provides information of football in Mizoram to Mizos all over India and outside India. This shows the continuous interest and awareness of football in the society. For Mizo, one cannot live without football even if one moves out from Mizoram. The hunger for information is made aware by website such as zofooty.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to analyze how football as a sport is embraced by Mizo society within a period of time and how it deeply rooted within a time frame. It is fascinating to know that football is related to Mizos as a social sport in the present scenario. Mizos, in their culture and society has always integrated dancing as a part of the ritual where movement of feet is a significant feature.

We can analyze the background of football in Mizo society from the soldiers who fought during the First World War as a part of Indian labour corps under the British army. The colonial period offer a new taste to Mizos where they continue to kick about a fruit which is spherical in shape in the absence of a leather ball after coming to know about the sport. Football began as an activity and a mean of leisure in its early phase. Football was a symbol of masculinity as only male in the society was engaged in the sport. At its early phase, football goes hand in hand along with other sport as male athletes were seen as an all rounder in sports. A

good athlete was regarded as the one who could excel in many sports, not only in football.

The study highlighted the contributions of the pioneers in the sport in the Mizo society. If the pioneers namely L.H. Liana, Chuauthuama, Hrawva and Kailuia would had not requested Pachhunga for sponsoring a trophy for a football tournament, football might have been started at a later stage in the society. It was the determination of these football enthusiasts that football reached its new height which offers a competitive feeling among the football players. Football with its simplicity did not require much of equipments during the period. Its simplicity calls for participation of more youth within the society to participate in the tournament. The study had highlighted football as a sport which help in earning a place in the army at the time as the physicality and determination of Mizos was shown during Chhotelal Seth Shield match between Mizos and AR. This was an important era for the society as services for the country was opened up with the help of a football match.

By 1945, the cries for a governing body in sports and the promotion of sports were significant. It was met by the formation of ASA. It was under the guidance of the association that a football team went outside Aizawl for the first time. It became an exposure and a cultural exchange for Mizos. The exposure generated by football was immense

during the time. When Mizo district was raised as an UT in 1972, the demand for a better organization was met with the establishment of MSA. As football was more popular than other sports by the time, MFA instantly became an autonomous body from MSA. The establishment of MFA shows the superiority of football as other sports as MFA an independent body was required to monitor the growing popular sport. An independent guidance was required.

MFA, as a governing body for football in Mizoram, it has been an integrating force and placed different sections of football associations under its watch. Football is now placed under an organized set up under the supervision of MFA. Football has been growing through tournaments organized by MFA and also through teams sent for exposure by MFA.

YMA with its main prospect to integrate its branches all over the state, it has been organizing YMA football tournament till date. As YMA is a guiding force of the society, it has seen football as a mean of most loved sport among the society. So far, YMA has been successful in organizing its annual tournament as the number of teams participating increases annually. Aside from its perspective to integrate its members all over the state, YMA tournament has been very prestigious in popularizing football to different areas. Gradually, football played in the tournament

becomes a symbol of dominance of a branch over other branches. The dominance becomes a pride for a particular branch. Football became a sense of pride and a symbol of superiority. Once a branch won YMA tournament, the winning branch instantly become a symbol of football excellence among the society.

By the early 1980s, the study highlighted the job generation of the newly set up departments of the state government. It was a period when job opening was at large for talented football players. At the same time, competition aroused between these newly set up teams as talented football players were in demand. The dominance of a department over other departments was significant. MRP was by miles way ahead in recruiting talented football players at the time. It was a dream for a football player to get into MRP because being a policeman and a popular football player was an achievement. MFA would normally pick MRP football players to represent the state in tournaments outside Mizoram.

It was during the job generation through departmental teams that a section of the society who play football would take up a challenge. The younger generations who were hungry to compete with popular departmental teams arises in the form of private teams. Teams were set up by philanthropist such as K. Liantlinga who would portray a football club through the system inspired by football clubs across Europe. The formation

of the private football would lay the foundation in the road to semi-professionalism in football. Earning wages for the services in a private club and supply of equipments through the private clubs were early signs of semi-professionalism in football.

An interesting feature of the study is how football becomes a symbol of pride in the community within the society. With the unfavorable geographical condition of the landscape, every area in Mizoram could not afford a football field. Certain areas which have a football field or the areas who are close by the football field are regarded as an area with football talents. Among these areas of football talents, competitions exist. These areas produce fine generations of football talents. This would later be a pride for the communities. In Aizawl, an area called Armed Veng where MRP had constructed a football field has been dominating football among Mizos for many years. Armed Veng has an edge over other areas as talented football players recruited by MRP would settle in the area. The community in the area would benefit as younger generations would learn from the MRP football team.

Chaltlang, an area in the northern part of Aizawl is another community of football talents. The case differs to that of Armed Veng. Chaltlang does not have any big sized football field but only a small sized football field. But still they could dominate football areas for a period of

time. In this, a fine generation of football talents inspired the whole community. As Chaltlang was previously a village under a chief, the spirit of oneness and unity still exist within the community. Chaltlang is an unique area with football talents which dominate with their football talent for a period of time. Armed Veng and Chaltlang, as a community dominated football for decades.

The study features the distinctive football players who participated at a national level and at an international level. These distinctive football players had left a mark and inspired the younger generations in the society to build a career and pursue a dream. They have been paving a way for many children and youths in taking up of football as a means of earnings and livelihood. Football turns semi-professional for some as they could play football along with working as an employee in a working institution. For some, football would be used as a professional career where livelihood was through playing football. In these cases, a section of the society are being inspired by the achievements of the semi-professional as well as professional football players.

While football players are given importance in influencing football in the society, the study could not missed out on the contribution of the pioneers in supplying football goods and equipments in the society. Without their contribution, football as a sport would not have been

developed and progressed. The growth of football in the society is being contributed by the availability of the latest products.

The study highlights the supply of different goods and commodities from other places like Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Jalandhar. The advancement of football is due to the availability of goods and equipments where Mizos are in contact with other society. The supplies continue till date.

The popularity of football in the society is portrayed as a means of political tool inside Mizoram. Football has been playing an important role as politicians know how the sport has rooted itself in the society. At certain times, a politician would either distribute football goods in the form of balls or jerseys. Politician would sometime organize a local football competition for the community. A politician knows that votes could be earned through these activities as football is deeply rooted in the society. In reverse to these, even the youths of certain area would request a politician for sponsorship of a football team or ask a sum of money for contributions. Football would be utilized as a two way process for the politician as well as the voters. This is possible only because of the popularity of the sport in the society.

Another section of the society who utilize football in day to day lives are the generation of teenagers and youths who spend a greater

time of their day in front of their computers. A new sub-culture of gamers which arise with PC games like EA FIFA have contributed to a section of virtual participants in the society. A new feature with an advancement highlight a new interest in the society. The new sub-culture may disrupt the lives of many individual with a change of moods or a change of routines in comparison to earlier lives. A gamer may start to spend less time along with the family. But at the same time, the virtual attachment of football continues with the attachment of football in reality as a gamer has to update oneself with the happenings of football around the world. It may seem that with the attachment to virtuosity, one may lose every reality of one's life, but in regard to football, the virtual aspect and reality go hand in hand. Football is almost as impossible to detach from the society.

The advancement of the society always adapts itself with the advancement of football. The society always tries to gather pace with technologies and innovations. With the coming of internet facilities in the society, the level of football is also raised. As media is crucial for awareness and information in the present day, the progress of football also depends on it. As mobile phones with internet facility as well as computers with internet facility increases, Mizos tend to utilize more of electronic media rather than print media. Websites arise as a print media for coverage

of happenings in and around the society. Website such as zofooty would provide information on football in the society.

Today, a growing interest through internet is the introduction of fantasy games. A football governing body of England, the Football Association (FA) had designed a fantasy league for interested internet users. Fantasy league offers a chance to internet users to function as football managers managing English football teams⁴⁸. This virtual game had oriented within the society as virtual managers have been growing in recent years till date.

As technologies and innovations increase, the format of football and its related functionaries also widens its views and perspectives. Therefore, advancement and football could go hand in hand till date.

The study has been tracing different sections of the society within a period of time. It is important to understand that Mizos are quick to adjust with the changing environment within a period of time. Mizos and its football adapt itself to the changing nature of advancement prevalent.

During the time period when colonial powers existed, Mizos had been kicking an object where the format of football was in its initial phase. Gradually, football began to attain competitive activity with the

⁴⁸ Fantasy.premierleague.com visited on 3rd December 2014

introduction of tournaments to entertain the youths during the time. Football becomes a symbol of masculinity and males in the society were engaged in football and other sports during the time. This was the early phase.

The establishments of sporting bodies and associations shaped an organized structure in the society for sports. The growth of sports was witnessed as football and other sports were played outside the state for exposure and cultural exchange. This new phase was a period of exposure and a new level of football and other sports.

By the middle of 1980s, Mizoram became a state under the government of India. The newly acquired state was shaping with different departments. Job generation and employment was open for sportsmen. In this, setting up of football teams by departments and playing a football tournament was opening a new phase of football in the society. As football players were recruited, demands increased and the level of football competitions increased.

Football in the form of private clubs pushed the demand for change in the format of football in Mizoram. This was an initial stage of semi-professionalism in football. Question was raised against MFA as to change the existing format of football competitions. The system of competitions existing in Europe was the aim of some people related to

football. Soon, the format of the competition and the scenes of football in Mizoram changed. Invitational tournaments like Laldenga Gold Cup started where football teams outside the state would come and participate. This was a new step and change in the football of Mizos.

By the year 2000, talented football players would start joining football schools and academies to pursue the road to professionalism. At the same time, some would later join teams owned by Oil India Limited (OIL) where they were made to play football during their playing days and then function as employee of the company after retiring from playing football⁴⁹. Semi-professional football players also existed. Football in the society is regarded as a means of livelihood and trustworthy. In the present day, there are more children and youths who dreamt of pursuing their careers in professional football. Within short span of time, the scenario of football differs in the society. At the same time, football is always present in the society. Football changes as the environment changes but it always keep in pace with the happenings of the surroundings.

Football is termed as a beautiful game in the present day after Pele, a football legend wrote in his book, “I dedicate this book to all the people who have made this great game the Beautiful Game”⁵⁰. Football does not hold any boundary or makes any distinction in the society.

⁴⁹ Interview with Malsawmdawngliana

⁵⁰ Pele, Robert L.Fish, Shep Messing; *My Life and the Beautiful Game*; *The Autobiography of Pele*

Football fits itself in societies all over the world. Nike, a popular sport goods brand uses a Portuguese phrase *Joga Bonito* meaning ‘play beautifully’ as one of its slogans for football products. Nike began using the slogan in a campaign preceding the 2006 FIFA World Cup in an attempt to curb player’s behavior on the football field⁵¹. It is no wonder that the world football’s governing body FIFA has more countries than the United Nations Organizations (UNO). FIFA has 208 countries while UNO has 192 countries⁵². Football is loved by societies including Mizo society.

The study deals with the questions posed in the early part of the thesis on how football has been making an impact in the society and inside Mizoram. The Mizo football culture had an impact from the colonial period as Mizos came across the sport during the First World War through Mizos who fought for the British as part of the labour corps. As football is popular in Europe, the influence of the society in Europe on the Mizos was significant in the introduction of the knowledge on the sport. If colonialism would not had been existed in India, Mizos would not come across football which was popular in Europe.

As football is influential in the society, Mizos grasped football in its culture as a means of leisure. A fruit called *sertawk* was kick

⁵¹ www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jul/18/letfootballeatitself visited on 16th August 2014

⁵² www.bbc.com/news/magazine-13616328 visited on 11th June 2014

about when leather ball used in football was not available. A stuffed sock or clothe with a piece of paper was also made as a ball where Mizos would kick about in any available space. The simplicity of the sport was easy to receive in the society.

Gradually, as Mizo became popular and attain a designation within the society, football became a symbol of masculinity within the society. A male in the society was regarded to know the sport as football posed a sport which every male must play during their childhood. It was a time where no such activities prevailed which posed a diversion from the sport. Football was a male activity within the society.

There was a period of time when Mizos associated with sports were regarded as to excel in different sports other than football. Hockey and athletics were going hand in hand with the society. But, the requirements of the sports like hockey and athletics were not readily available as the supplies were limited for a period of time. The simplicity of football offered the dominance of it over other sports. Moreover, football does not posed a problem as a sport as it could be played under any weather condition. Football is a popular sport which is played under a sunny condition or under a rainy condition. This gave an edge over other sports as it does not disrupt any settings of routine for playing. Football could be played at any time of the day while other sports do not offer the condition.

Football with its unending popularity attains a position in edging over other sports like hockey and athletics within a period of time.

Football as a criteria and qualification in getting employment in the state government is very important in the study. By 1987, the newly formed state of Mizoram was opening up certain posts in its departments. Some departments of the government would open up post for talented football players by making offerings. When recruitment was done for football players, the popularity of football was at its peak. MFA, the governing football body in the state would organize football competitions which included departmental football teams. A new age of semi-professionalism was reached in the society. It was a dream for football players to get employment in the departments and earn their livelihood. At the same time, recruited football players could continue to play the sport they love. Football provides a lifeline for the society and it also promotes the ongoing popular sport to a new level of semi-professionalism. With these, the dominance of football arose in the society.

Tracing back to the culture and society of Mizos, Mizos do not possessed much of format of sports. But kick about of an object and the footwork in dancing existed in the society. Structure for the grasping of football in the society had been laid in the traditional times. It is not surprising to know that football had been integrated in the society as certain

structure had been laid beforehand. Mizos have been kicking a spherical shaped fruit or a spherical object before the availability of a leather ball used in football. We can understand from the study that certain foundation and structure had been laid for the entry of football in the society where Mizos had excelled in football within a period of time.

Football gradually attains a position in the society where it is regarded as a sport for Mizos in the present day. The qualities offered by football clicked so well with the society. Every person in the society would have a connection to the sport in reality or in virtual stage. Within a society, a male individual would have kicked a ball or play football within his lifetime. A female individual would have witnessed a football match within her lifetime. While only a few sections of females play football in the society, football has been always a part of the society. Football as a match played in a competition or football as a mean of activities for activities of communities like a group of friends or a church youth group, the sport always exist as a mean of activity.

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