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# INDIAN ASPECTS OF GLOBALIZATION

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## **‘SUDANESE PLAY BENGALIS WATCH’: ETHNOGRAPHY OF GLOBALIZATION, SOCCER AND INDIGENOUS GAMES IN KERALA**

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*Globalization has been touching many aspects of human life in the contemporary world and the impacts of globalization often can be viewed from both global and local perspective. The present study focused on indigenous games and the practice of traditional sevens football, a specific local variation of soccer (in which instead of eleven players in the official format, only seven players play the game) largely found in South India, especially in Kerala. The transformations that have taken place in practicing the sevens football tournaments are the finest example of the effect produced by globalization on sport and entertainment culture. The ethnographic study conducted in three villages in Malabar region of Kerala in order to define in what way globalization has affected the daily life of people in these villages and consequently the indelible impression that it has left on local entertainment as well as the challenges faced by native games.*

**Keywords:** globalization of indigenous games, sevens football, North Kerala, multi-sited ethnography.

### **Introduction**

Human life has been witnessing rapid and enormous changes in the last two decades; the intensity of these changes is unparalleled to any other regimes passed by human beings so far. The primary cause of all these drastic socio-cultural changes which have taken place in every aspect of human life across the globe in this period is attributed to globalization a buzzword in currency. The word ‘globalization’ refers to a phenomenon having myriad meanings and the discourses on globalization according to Elliott (2009) have three distinctive approaches: the global skeptics who question an overall shift towards world integration; the radical globalists heralding new forms of social life based on free trade and open markets, and global transformationalists who speak more about a transformation of the previous structure than the dawn of an entirely new age.

The scholars of globalization argue that intensive flows of money, ideas, information, technologies, and people have led to shattering changes in human life across the globe (Appadurai 1996, 2002; Anderson 1983; Aleshkovski 2016; and Giddens 1990). There is no single perspective to describe the entire phenomenon of globalization rather it has been studied by different disciplines and in different perspectives and dimensions

while it has a very complex history as well (Grinin and Korotayev 2014). Like other disciplines in social science, an exclusive specialization has emerged in anthropology that aims at understanding the phenomenon of globalization with its cause and consequences along with socio-cultural changes triggered by the forces of globalization.

The present study focuses on indigenous games and the practice of traditional sevens football, a local variation of soccer in which instead of eleven players of the official format, only seven players play the game and this is one of the most popular sport in rural Kerala. The intensive forces of globalization (see, e.g., Lenger and Schumacher 2015) caused drastic changes in sport and entertainment culture in village scenario. The ethnographic study conducted in three villages in Malabar region of Kerala in order to trace how globalization has affected the daily life of people in these villages and consequently, the indelible impact that it has left in local entertainment practices and the challenges faced by village games.

### **Theoretical Frame**

Globalization itself offers a set of theories to understand the changing cultural scenario across the globe. Among various theories on globalization and culture the scape theory of Arjun Appadurai can help to understand the complexity of cultural changes and other cultural transitions in the period of hyper globalization. Appadurai (1996) argues that the intensive flows of finance, ideas, people, technology, and information are basic characteristics of globalization which connects people from every corner of the world. Subsequently it leads to large-scale and rapid changes in our daily life as well. He also points that we now live in such a globally imagined world and not simply in locally imagined communities and the world in which deterritorialisation and the breaking-down of existing territorial connections, is a major force.

When ideas, technologies, people, information and finance flow across the globe irrespectively of any territorial and social boundaries this must have certain consequences for almost every local culture. The emergence of popular cultures is a result of hybridity of cultures in contact in the normal course; yet, this may end up in elimination of local culture in exceptional cases. These trends are considered as one of the key concepts in globalization studies since the intermingling of people from different cultural groups becomes an apparent fact in the globalized society (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 1998). Hybridity simply means a creation of new trans-cultural forms via the contacts between different cultures through intensive flows of cultural phenomena, finance, people, ideas, and technologies. Although, the concept of hybridity is problematic as it suffers from inherent prejudice of distinguishing heterogeneous complex culture from the homogenous culture, while the anthropological and historical records show that all cultures are hybrid. In fact, contemporary accelerated globalization entails the hybridization of hybrid cultures (Elteran 2001). On the other hand, under the influence of a new culture or forces of globalization the local culture or some of its units may consciously or unconsciously respond in plausible ways in order to meet the challenge as a reflexive action.

In the context of the above described theoretical framework the present study is conducted with the following objectives: 1) to identify the indigenous games and their social significance in pre-globalized villages; 2) to find out the way globalization has

challenged the socio-cultural scenario in the villages that are entertaining indigenous games; and 3) to understand the reflexive action of 'sevens football' as a response to the forces of globalization.

### **Research Methodology**

In the present study we have employed the multi-site ethnographic research tools. George E. Marcus, the stalwart of multi-sited ethnographic research method, argued that multi-sited ethnography defines as its objective the study of social phenomenon which cannot be accounted for by focusing on a single site. The essence of multi-sited research is to follow people, connection, association and relationship across space (Marcus 1995). To get the data for different periods the interview techniques have been used here along with case studies. The interview mainly focused on three categories of people, namely: the age group of above 40, people from 25 to below 40 years old and young people below 25 years of age. The first group has probably grown up in the later 1970s and early 1980s, the second age group has witnessed the transition period triggered by globalization while the third group is the new generation, also new to the traditional village games.

### **Study Area**

The present study has been conducted in three villages: *Pottassery*, a village in Calicut district located 30 km away from Calicut city, *Therattammal*, in Malappuram district which is 4 km away from *Areacode* Township and *Pathiriyal* which is 10 km away from *Manjeri* town in Malappuram district. The fieldwork in *Pottassery* has mainly focused on the changing landscape of village games and the impact of globalization as well. Similarly, the fieldworks in *Therattammal* and *Pathiriyal* are largely intended to understand the impact of globalization on the 'sevens football'. The villages *Pottassery* and *Pathiriyal* are taken to examine how the number of indigenous games are extinct from these two villages in the same period. Similarly, these two villages have unique socio-political and economic similarities though these villages are located in two neighboring districts in North Kerala. The village *Therattammal* is selected for this study because the village is known for soccer culture and successful organization of annual 'sevens football' tournaments, thus, contributing talented players to the national leading clubs and teams as well.

### **Ethnography of Village Games**

Games have an inevitable and constructive socio-cultural role in village life. The first village with numerous traditional games – *Pottassery* – mainly subsists on wage labor and agriculture but from the early 1990s it suddenly turned into a gulf money-centered village. People from different age groups used to find entertainment and fun in games suiting their age, and more profoundly, games used to play a vital role in their collective social life as an institution of socialization, civil society groupings and forming friends circle.

*Therattammal*, the second village which marked its name known in Indian sports history by contributing five leading football players to the Indian team so far and dozens of players to the state team and other leading soccer clubs in the country and abroad as well. Football lives in their blood, everyone in the village if they do not fit for playing in the ground, at least talk about football. The soccer they play in their everyday life

is not recommended as standard in FIFA rules, rather they play a different version of soccer which is known as 'sevens', and it is played nowhere in the world except for Kerala and some parts of central Tamil Nadu. *Pathiriyal*, the third village located in the same *Earanadu thaluk* in Malppuaram district also has similar characteristics and a long history of practicing and organizing 'sevens football' tournaments along with sound existence of numerous traditional indigenous games.

The intensive flows of finance, ideas, ethnicity and information in the age of globalization have launched drastic changes in social relations in the villages and affected indigenous games and entertainment culture as well. The changes in social relations can be perceived through the changes that have taken place in various social institutions such as neighborhood, social groupings, friendship, entertainment, the way of subsistence and so on. Drastic changes have taken place in the functioning of these institutions in the three villages under study.

During the pre-globalization period, agriculture and wage labor works were the major means of subsistence in these three villages. They had vast areas of paddy fields, local land owners cultivated paddy and there were farmers, agricultural and other labors in the village. The labors worked for daily wages. Similarly there were carpenters who usually found job in the same village and sometimes went to neighboring villages. There were drivers who found job in local bus or taxi stand and a few of them worked as truck drivers. They were a few in numbers in the villages who have experienced the world far outside. Kunjahamed, a veteran driver from *Pottassery* told that he enjoyed prestige in those times and he said he was the first lorry driver in the village to go to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka with his truck.

Until the early 1990s other wide-spread jobs were gathering jack fruit leaf around the village and selling in to nearby cities. A large number of people were engaged in that work. Timber business also flourished then and gave a considerable number of job opportunities for the villagers. An average income in this village was below Rs.100 per day per working individual but among the people there was apparent social and economic solidarity to meet their ends. They ran their own indigenous banking system which was locally called *Kuri*. The local *Kuri* systems were spread in many places in the villages across North Kerala. Similarly, there were indigenous forms of banking system called *Kurikkalivanam* in some places and *Pannapayattu* in some other areas. It helped to get money for urgent needs as a loan from people. Both have lost their popularity though it is still in practice in a few villages in North Kerala, like *Vadakara*, *Kuttyadi*, and *Mniyoor*, etc. The coming of new commercial and credit banks in the villages in the recent time has negatively affected this indigenous banking system (Yasir 2004). Before that the villagers did not approach modern bank for their financial needs, instead of that they organized *Kurikkalivanam* which enabled them to generate money. *Kurikalvanamis* a native banking system run by the collective effort of village people. When any one needs money to build a house or a marriage they usually organize a *Kurikkalivanam*. It normally happens in the evening, in local tea shops, where people come and remit their financial contributions by registering their name and the amount they give. One has to return the amount whenever they conduct their *Kurikkalivanam* (Yasir 2004). All male members in the village used to conduct *Kurikkalivanam* at least once in five years while some people conducted their *Kurikkalivanam* every year and sometimes from 15 to 20 *Kurikkalivanam* were conducted in a year.

This indigenous rural banking system obviously shows that in pre-globalization period the village was comparatively sufficient in socio-economic terms. The whole system of social, economic and political life in villages was so close to the spirit of village. Everyone loves the village. Moreover, people are known not by their real name but the name of the village which they hail when they go out. Say for instance there is a well-known artist known as RK Pottassery in *Pottassery*. Only a few people know his real name as Radha Krishnan. Older people say that people generally had a high local territorial intimacy in those days.

Local cultural and sport clubs have always been the center of an immense feeling of social solidarity and age group ties in the village. Cultural clubs and sports clubs organized people and encouraged cultural and sports activities. One of the respondents from *Therattammal* recalled an event that had happened in the 1980s when they were running a football team in collaboration with club in nearby town *Areacode*. They were a bit unhappy since their village name was not highlighted. Finally, they established another team which is known as Sevens Brothers *Therattammal*. Football teams were the symbol of villages' pride and dignity.

To live in a village one needs to get socialized in their socio-cultural settings. People who come from outside were always treated with secondary status in villages particularly in those days. And people always intended to be a part of collective groups. Apart from family and school, collective engagements involve games, festivals, and wedding celebration. The harvesting and monsoon fishing also played remarkable role in collective socialization of generations in both genders in these three villages.

### **Globalization in the Village Context**

Drastic changes have taken place across the socio-economic and cultural boundaries of the world with compelling political cohesion across the nation-states, ultimately emerging into a global village in the last two decades. This was further enhanced by fast advancing communication network and better opportunities for global human resources sharing. Thus, the trans-national and trans-local migration flows have become a noticeable contributor for transforming life in Kerala. As a result, many changes have taken place not only in economic conditions of the people but almost in every aspect including sphere of entertainment. These kinds of changes in villages in contemporary era are often defined as the dynamics of globalization. According to Anthony Giddens (1990), globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe. It has become an important agency of change and to understand the intensity it has made, the flow of local culture needs to be analyzed at a micro level. In that direction the present study makes an attempt to document ethnography on the village games in Kerala which would throw light on the changes that have taken place in the whole range of social life including games.

The respondents from *Pottassery* and *Pathiriyal* have stated that they used to play various forms of games till around ten years ago, but at present they have not seen any one who plays those games in the village. Almost dozens of such games had disappeared from these villages. Similarly, *Therattammal*, the soccer village of Kerala, has witnessed numerous transitions of their traditionally practiced and entertaining soccer. Now they watch live football at their own temporarily made flood light stadium and show much enthusiasm about watching professional soccer played by their own local

players with many talented players imported from the African countries like Sudan, Nigeria, and so on. Globalization has produced a drastic relocation of ethnic communities through intensive migrations across the globe through myriad forms (Aleshkovski 2016).

The study in *Pottassery* mainly focused on the indigenous games whereas the other two villages have given more importance to soccer culture, particularly, the local version of soccer called 'sevens football'. The factors of globalization such as liberalization and migration have played a major role in changing the scenario of indigenous games. There are some games which totally disappeared from the scene while a few games still prevail in these villages though many changes have taken place in the mode of play.

### Village Games

Like elsewhere in India, Kerala villages have a number of games which are very specifically localized or have regional occurrence providing the ways and means of entertainment and also reflective of native culture. However, it may turn impossible to account for all the traditional games most of which have disappeared, while a few of them still have traces of existence. A recollection effort has been of help to list out few of them. Subrahmaniyan, a 35-year-old shop-keeper from *Pottassery* and Murali, a 47-year-old goldsmith from *Pathiriyal* village, both live in their villages where they born and they have never left the village for more than a month. They both speak about more than a dozen of indigenous games which they used to play or watch the kids playing till approximately a decade ago. The indigenous games they recall *Thottukaly*, *Sattukali*, *Valapottukali*, *Kothangallu*, *kakku kali*, *King*, *Raksha*, *Rajyam*, *Pokkeru*, *ChattiyumPanthum*, *Kabadi*, *Kottikalliand Pambaratheru*, used to be played apparently by different age groups. The games like *Valappottu*, *kothankallu*, *Kakku kali*, *sattu kali* and *valappottu kali* used to be played by girls and boys of around 15 years old (adolescents) while *Pambaram*, *kabadi* and *kotti kali* used to be played by boys until their early twenties. 'Sevens football' is an indigenous version of soccer in Kerala, played by men belonging to all ages. All these games except the 'sevens football' are observed to have disappeared from these three villages. And the respondents say that they used to play these games when they were kids and young while the today's' children of school age do not know any of those games. The villagers are of the view that with the advent of television and other electronic media people are exposed to new forms of games and entertainments that people like in the whole world, mainly cricket and other electronic games.

Similarly, certain socio-cultural changes have occurred in the villages after the implementation of the neoliberal policies. For instance, a rapid transformation of paddy fields to the plantain and areca nut orchards has negatively affected the soccer culture. Thus, from the beginning of early 1990s in *Pottassery*, *Pathiriyal* and *Thirttammal* the paddy fields have been gradually substituted with areca nut and other profitable crop fields. It is important to note the reasons why the village games have existed in the social milieu of these villages for long time before the pre-globalization era. There are lots of factors that helped them to sustain a long period in the past such as the availability of play field, leisure time, socio economic situations and so on.

Games start in one's early childhood. Boys and girls below ten years used to play numerous fun games. One respondent remembered a large number of such games including *Valapottukali*, a game played by broken bangles, *Kothankallu* (Pebble), *Thottukali*, *King*, *Sattu Kali*, etc. that children used to play. These games played a major role in the initial phase of socialization in one's life. It is important to note here that how *Thottu Kali*, *Sattu Kali*, *Kakku kali* and other games would contribute to the formation of certain skills and knowledge about the nearby place and people.

*Thottukali (run and touch game)*

*Thottu Kali* is a fun game played predominantly by kids below the age of ten. Boys and girls together played this game. To start the game kids assemble and line up to find an odd person who has to start the game. He needs to touch others one by one as they all run with in the court. Who so ever touches or goes out of the court is out and has to repeat the chase; otherwise, the one who is touched in the first has to do the chasing. Whoever remains untouched at the end of the game wins the game. Sajitha, a 30-year-old housewife said that she used to play this game during her child hood with about 15 to 20 friends within the dwelling place. She recalled that those games helped her to familiarize with many children of her age group and this contact has a long-lasting continuity even till today.

*Sattu kali*

*Sattu kali* is also a game played by kids below 12 years old including boys and girls. One among them has to start counting numbers loud hugging a tree or a pillar, while others have to hide in the meantime. If a person fails to find the hiding persons he/she has to repeat the same action. Otherwise, it is the duty of whom the person finds out first to repeat the game. Kids learn themselves and apply a lot of strategies in this game and moreover, they learn to count numbers. Sajid, a 30-year-old man who works as a driver in the village, said that his childhood was a lucky one because unlike the later generations he got the chance to play many games like *Sattu kali*, *Thotu kali* and others and he learned more skills from a playground than from school. He also recalled that he knew everyone in that place and he used to visit almost all houses in that locality to search for friends to play games. Unlike the present generation they were not much bothered about sending their children to English medium Kindergarten Schools. Those systems came to village in the early 1990s and in the initial period people showed less interest in sending their children to such English medium Kindergarten. But gradually it became prestigious to people to send their kids to such schools. Now there are about five such schools running in the village that encourage a variety of new games which are hitherto not known to the villagers.

Now in the village children grow up with new games. When they reach their teenage they probably turned to play much complex games earmarked for boys and girls being separated by this time. Girls, used to cling with their own age and gender groups to play games. Unlike girls, boys used to get much vast areas of entertainment and fun. They live in the world of more entertainment such as *Pokkeru*, *Chattiyum Panthum*, *Kuttiyum Kolum*, *Kabadi*, *Kottikaly*, *Pambaratheru* and so on. These games, especially *Pokkeru*, *Chattiyum Panthum*, and *Kuttiyum Kolum* need comparatively large space.

*Pokkeru Kali*

A group of teenage boys used to play *Pokkeru Kali* in the evenings. *Pokkeru Kali* required no investment to play, exact time, and any number of persons can play this game. This game played with a small ball made out of waste cloth and initially a boy throw the ball into air and all others will be after that ball to catch and throw it again, and ultimately they all should ensure that it would not fell to the ground. This game also used to be played in teams, in such a case there can be formed two or three teams and that ball will be passed on towards the team members before other team members snatch it away. This game enabled a physical fitness, competitive spirit, conflict resolution skills apart from social benefits such as friendship and group formation.

*Chattiyum Panthum*

*Chattiyum Panthum* is somewhat similar to *Pokkeru Kali*, but invariably it is played between two teams and the game requires the same kind of ball used in *Pokkeru Kali* and in addition to that it requires pieces of tiles or pot sheds. One group handles the ball while the other is engaged in piling up the tiles in the court. As team member of one of the teams hits the pile of tiles, all other members of the same team are scattered to pass on the ball and hit any one of the other team member, who is putting in place the disturbed tiles. The piling of the tiles must be ensured without any member being hit by the ball, so that the team wins the game, or otherwise it has to be repeated and the points are won by the team that is handling the ball. This game ensures shrewdness and the computational skills in situation of brisk activity.

*Kuttiyum Kolum (Boy and Cane)*

*Kutti* is the striker stick and the *kolu* is the ace. The game requires a wider space to play. Small horizontal hole is made to strike the *kutti*. The striker will ask *kaatho?* The opponent will say *aan* if he agrees his strike. The striker strikes the *kutti* as longer as he can. Once his ace gets caught he is out from the game and has to wait for the next turn. If the *kutti* falls on ground then the players throw the *kutti* towards the stick laying on the hole in a horizontal direction. If it touches the stick, the sticker loses the chance to continue the striker position. If he survived he can play with *kutti*, he can also it three times on the two sharpened edges and he can hit away the *kutti* while it jumps little up while hitting the edges. If he fails to hit way the *kutti* then he also loses the chance. If he hits away the *kutti* in any of three turns or all the turns then the distance of *kutti* from the hole will be measured. For that the striker will turn as yardstick and one stick will be considered as 5 or 10 meter units. And the distance will be credited to the striker's account. The game is somehow dangerous if one does not take the precaution of moving to a safer part of the ground. During the game the kids acquire prediction skills, caution managing skills, mathematical skills, leadership skills and analytical skills. This game can be played by individuals and also in team.

**Games and Social Relations**

More than an arena of entertainment or time passing fun, games have vivid roles in social relations. Games play an extraordinary social, cultural and economic function in village life which is very rarely studied by social scientists. How games play their role

in socialization process is imperative. Most of the respondents say that they learned a lot of things from games. As mentioned earlier, *Sattu kali*, helped them to be familiar with numbers, *Kuttiyum Kolum* helped them learn mathematical skills such as multiplication of numbers and the way of measuring distance between two points. Similarly, they collectively went to nearby jungles to find adequate wooden piece for making *Pambaram*. Perhaps, that must have helped them to know the place and people around through long walk in and around the village for a suitable wooden piece. Priyesh, a 31-year-old driver from *Pottassery* and Rahul, a 31-year-old businessman from *Pathiripalam* tells a similar story on how they learnt the names of different plants. Though they grew up in two different villages, after completing the tenth standard most of them have to pursue local coolie works in villages as carpenters, drivers, building workers and other odd jobs and still in the evenings they find time to play games like 'sevens football', volley ball and *Kabadi*. People from two villages such as *Pottassery* and *Pathiriyal* say that they were less interested in higher studies since getting jobs in government sector is very difficult. One of the key informants in *Pathiriyal* was a retired school teacher who had migrated to that village in the early 1960s from Kottayam, central Kerala. He said that in those days there were a lot of vacancies in teaching posts in North Kerala and many teachers like him came and settled there. North Kerala was backward in education as compared to other parts of Kerala, but things have changed later. The tendency to go to gulf countries had become apparent during the last two decades and this has created an educational imbalance between men and women. He said more girls pursue higher studies than boys in his school in *Pathiriyal*.

It is important to understand the social roles played by village games. As far as the people's memory goes, games and playground connected people from different age groups and helped to form friendship groups since people preferred collective social life in those days. The important events in the villages such as festivals, rituals and life cycle ceremonies like birth, marriage, death, *etc.* were managed by these collective groups. Rajen, a 43-year-old man from *Pottassery* recalled how marriage functions happened ten years ago in his village. He says it was a village function rather than a family affair as it happens at present. All activities and arrangements for the wedding ceremony were offered by friends without any financial motifs. This was a kind of a reciprocal service prevailing in the village.

A group of friends making voluntary participation and contribution would take care of arranging for *pandal/shamiana*, transportation and other services for any such life cycle eventualities and so the family members would not need to engage paid labor force. The involvement of friends circle, neighbors and kith and kin starts a week before the actual day of commencement and try to take various chores. Women from neighboring houses used to visit the wedding house to assist in cleaning the house and surroundings, preparing food stuffs *etc.*, apart from chitchatting, joking and sometimes gossiping and exaggerating stories about those who do not participate in the preparation.

The story is the same when someone is diseased or dies in the village. Men and women around the deceased person's house would come to help. Such collective responsibility is showcased by the villagers irrespective of religion, caste, *etc.* It does not mean that everything was fine there. There were many incidents like disputes over land, family violence and suicides but in all such instances a collective intervention among people could come up with amicable settlement with a sportive spirit.

### Globalization and the Changing Scenario

Globalization has changed these villages as well as it affected the social relations including games. The process of globalization started in these three villages around the same period in the late 1980s and its impact became obviously visible in the later part of the 1990s in the social-cultural milieu of these three villages. Globalization by definition is an intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by the events occurring many miles away (Giddens 1990). This can be perceived through intensive flows of finance, information, ethnicity and ideas (Appadurai 1996). The intensity of ethnicity can be understood by the intensity of migration that has taken place in the village. I. K. Kader was the first person who went to Qatar in 1982 from *Pottassery*, and brought a Television set in 1985 when he came back to the village for a vacation. It was the first television in the village. During the period from 1985 to 1990 there were around ten people who went to gulf countries to find a job. Gradually, it has increased to 150 people in 2009. The gulf migration has played a definite role in social changes in the village apparently in the last two decades. It has created a new middle class in the village, and television inevitably became a part of many households. This gulf-migrated middle class bring comparatively huge finance capital to the village since the early 1990s and it brought a rapid transformation in infrastructural facilities. New concrete buildings of modern amenities replaced the traditional tile roof houses and other buildings. Subsequently, the land price has increased in rocket speed, in the 1990s one cent of land was sold in *Pottassery* for Rs. 10,000 and the same land was bought in 2012 for Rs. 120,000. This number shows the intensive flow of finance. Similarly, the electric and electronic home appliances appeared in every house reducing the people-to-people interactions.

The flow of petrodollar to these three villages has accelerated the transformation of village at every level and it was even more facilitated by gulf migration after the 1990s. The scope of these changes was drastic, and it has affected various social and cultural institutions in the village. Say, for instance, new schools are established under private ownership, modern banking system has emerged and practicing of agriculture has declined. Modernity has taken place in all the spheres of life, giving rise to a new middle class that pursued after better education for their younger generations. Unlike the early period, the drivers and other specialized labours have lost their leading positions and status in the village; rather educated youth have taken the limelight. Saiful Ameen, a 30-years-old lecturer from *Pottassery*, said that during his childhood he had heard of lot of stories on drivers and carpenters, about their talents and some of them enjoyed much stardom in the village that has abruptly fallen with establishment of gulf links that facilitated the flow of capital into the village. It shows the changes in social relations from coolie workers oriented village to petrodollar and then the employed or service class. The formation of friendship and grouping has also changed over a time. Traditionally, the village games promoted cooperation and coordination among the members resulting in strong friendship, thus functioning as social agency which connected people in the village. But now, this has been changed and peers are brought together based on criteria like educational qualification, professional category, religious grouping and so on. As a result, the present generation is little aware of the people around them and rarely speaks with even their immediate neighbors. Arun, a 20-year-old college student

from *Pathiriyal* said he only had less than ten friends from his own village, and does not know the names of many of his villagers. Most of his friends are from his school and college and coaching classes.

Though there are available state-run schools which teach in local language, however, in the recent years as many as five new English medium schools have come up around *Pottassery* that have attracted the local folk as they found that these schools provide education more efficiently with exposure to not only national but also international curriculum. Unlike the state-run schools that have been centered around the indigenous persuasions, the English medium schools have focused on universal perspectives which in a way has curtailed the traditional practices including native games and instead have encouraged games of international recognition. Thus, the children were weaned away from the local games and got alienated from their initial training to these socially controlled local games that offer for greater social space. A shift in choice of crops from customary paddy cultivation to other varieties in agriculture had a significant effect on the social relation and games culture in the village.

*Pathiriyal* and *Pottassery* are known for abundant cultivation of paddy till quite recently. In both villages paddy usually harvested in the month of January or February and through the summer most part of the fields remained empty and villagers used to play different games and sometimes local clubs run tournaments in the paddy lands. Sadanandan, a respondent from *Pottassery*, says that until a few years ago he and his friends used to go to paddy fields in the evening to watch games played by the children in the village. It was the place where many such people come for sharing their business, and now there is no scope for all that, as they lost all the paddy fields which had been given up for massive cultivation of areca nut, and banana plantation that facilitated capital flow into these erstwhile sleepy villages.

This quantum shift in crop patterns has taken place due to the lack of labour force for paddy cultivation, while most of them seek greener pastures in the gulf. Hence the land owners shifted to areca nut, banana and other commercial crops which require less manpower. Most of the youth in the village now lament that they find no place for playing games.

The intrusion of cricket also played a key role in disappearing of various seasonal village games. Cricket, preferred by young people, appeared in *Pottassery* and *Pathiriyal* almost at the same time in the later part of the 1980s. Cricket has attracted much attention with the introduction of television in the villages. There were a small number of people who watched Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) world cup football matches in 1994 in *Pottassery* and *Pathiriyal* but soon after television got a wide reach in these two villages, the number of people who watched the 1998 world cup increased considerably. Similarly, cricket has become enthusiastic game among all age groups of the village. In the initial days there were lots of people who hated cricket. Shamsu from *Pathiriyal* remembered his cricket experience from the early 1990s when his interest turned to cricket and he started playing with his friends in the village. Most of the elders expressed their anger and disagreement and tried to forbid the youth to play cricket. But the situation has changed and now the same people have become great fans of cricket. They watch all cricket matches though they do not play it. Watching cricket has become one of the leading forms of entertainment in post-

globalization period. There are many instances that show a wide and rapid distribution of cricket among all age groups. Watching cricket is more than just an entertainment and cricket has become an effective agency of globalization in the village. The quick disappearances of numerous indigenous games in these villages show the power of cricket as a global game. The 'sevens football' is the only game which has survived the challenges of cricket in North Kerala. To survive the globalization scenario 'sevens football' has incorporated lot of elements brought by globalization and then it succeeded to survive.

### **'Sevens Football' and Globalization: Ethnography of a Football Village**

Football is a legacy North Kerala especially Malappuram and adjacent districts such as Calicut and Kannur where soccer has got an immense popularity more than any other games. How a colonial game like soccer which originated in Italy and institutionalized in England by Cambridge rules in 1848, penetrated into the culture of North Kerala from around the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an interesting part of history, because North Kerala had long history of anti-colonial resistance in India. The anti-colonial struggle was political as well as cultural resistance; in fact, they were more recessive towards the cultural colonialism of British raj (Pannikar 1986; Sathar 2012). Soccer, though it has spread in a different format, is a product of cultural diffusion of colonialism. Football reached most of the villages in North Kerala in the late 1930s, after the years of long anti-colonial resistance in this region which ended in 1921. Abdurasak (2008) has stated that football was the tool of British colonial authorities to communicate with local people who were totally against anything related to the British culture and even their language.

The ethnographic account on the village in Malappuram district called *Therattammal* can help clear the situation as to how soccer gained acceptance along the coast of North Kerala. The ethnographic enquiry mainly deals with the soccer culture and the changes that have taken place in recent times. These changes are not just the contemporary reality as many of us would think but have been taking place all the time though there were differences in terms of intensities and directions of changes. Hence, the ethnographic enquiry has started with a note on historical account of the village or more precisely, it deals with the history of football culture in the village.

The village *Therattammal* has been recognized as a synonym of soccer since the 1930s. Even today every morning the village wakes up for football, everyday play starts early in the morning; kids, youth and middle-age people line up on ground by 6 o'clock, they wear their own local club's jersey and they start practicing the game in different teams. They play football every morning till around 8 and in the evening from 5 to 6 as well. Everyone in the village loves football. Young people sit in the village reading room, curiously and aggressively talking about the recent football matches. Such talks vary from the issues of their own local games to the international club matches.

*Therattammal* village was a part of Malabar district of Madras presidency of British India during the colonial time and most part of the land including the vast areas of paddy fields and other agricultural land was owned by the local feudatory named *Koyappathody*. Most of the people living in the area were either the tenants or labors of *Koyappathodi* family. The local historian Hameed says that the British government had established special schools in various parts of Malabar to educate the locals. Similarly,

they would also establish police camps in different parts of Malabar which are known as Malabar Special Police. One such camp was established in *Areacode* nearly five kilometers away from *Therattammal* Village in those days. Muhammed Kareem, an elderly respondent, says the British officers in those camps used to play football in the evening and they introduced football to local people.

Football reached *Therattammal* in 1938 with Kanjirali Muhammed Ali who went to Malabar Special Police (MSP) high school at *Kottakkunnu* in Malappuram for higher studies and learned football there which he brought to his village and introduced it to his peers and started playing it in the village. Very soon football has attracted all people in the village.

Football ever since has become a major entertainment in the social life of the village. Unlike the cricket, which also spread in India especially in cities during the same period of British Raj, football is a game where body touch is inevitable and consequently, one needs good stamina. People from working class group performed well on the ground and some of them became popular players in the village. It was hard to get popularity and high status for a working class man in those days but football helped some of them to enjoy privilege in social life of the village.

There were some differences in how the soccer culture had spread in North Kerala. Instead of eleven players in the team they used to play with seven members in a team; hence, the game was called 'sevens football' in Kerala, which may be explained by the fact that large size ground was unavailable as well as they lacked an adequate number of players in the villages at that time. 'Sevens football' has become one of the major games in many villages and cities in North Kerala. Inevitably, as it had drawn the attraction of more and more people there were established football clubs and tournaments in the villages.

The first collection tournament was established in *Therattammal* in the 1960s, it was named as the first *Joly Trophy Akhila Kerala Sevens Football* tournament and around a dozen teams participated in the tournament. *Joly* is the name of a hotel in nearby town they sponsored these tournament. Pakarudheen, a member of tournament committee, stated that it required quite a small amount to run a tournament till the early 1990s, as they could manage a tournament with a sponsorship of Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 10,000, and they find other funds through ticket collection and donation and the cost of a ticket was just Rs. 5 in those days. The tournaments mostly held in the months of February to March, for a maximum of twenty days, every year three or four tournaments are conducted.

The successful running of 'sevens football' tournament has not only enhanced enthusiasm towards football but has institutionalized it in these villages. Meanwhile, some local players were invited to well-known clubs in Kerala and other states as well. It has prompted many of the parents in this football village to encourage their children to pursue football as their career. They send their children to the ground early in the morning to practice football. The parents felt happy when their child got a chance to play for local team in local *sevens* tournaments.

With the increasing popularity of 'sevens football' in Kerala a number of villages and townships in the region have organized their own teams while the matches would sometimes lead to inter-village rivalries, but in most cases it is limited to the play-ground. Many such tournaments were held in *Therattammal* village so they think that it

is a part of football. Pakarutheen says with a bit of emotion, 'football is not just players running behind a ball like many of us think, rather it integrated many things; everyone is part of the game.'

### Reinvigoration of 'Sevens Football'

Many of the respondents, including veteran players, team managers and tournament committee members say that drastic changes took place in practicing and entertaining of 'sevens football' in the villages since the later 1990s. It was the time when globalization had reached the villages of North Kerala through various ways which also coincided with gulf emigration. Thus, globalization in the form of gulf emigration, new technologies of audio and video communication have considerably affected social and cultural activities in *Therattammal*, ultimately resulting the dwindling enthusiasm from football. K. Karim, 63-year-old respondent from *Therattammal* remembered that during the late 1990s and early 2000s they even thought that the 'sevens football' would die soon from the village since people showed little interest in playing and watching football in the evenings as it used to be before. Even the football crazy people felt that watching international club football on television is more comfortable and entertaining than the local 'sevens'. Also the play timings of the 'sevens football' tournaments were not convenient for the people who would like to play or watch the game. In those days in *Therattammal* the local 'sevens football' was played from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm and it could hardly attract the audience from a wide part of society due to the time constraints which contributed to decreasing number of spectators. All these factors have adversely affected the tournament practice.

But the story of 'sevens football' does not end there; rather the game succeeded to overcome all these hurdles by making conscious adjustments. Unlike the other indigenous games mentioned in this paper, 'sevens football' has not disappeared but on the contrary it bounced back with a new vigour as could be seen in different places in North Kerala. Rahman, a member of Kerala Sevens Football Association (KSFA) says that flood light tournaments started in 1997 in *Valapattanam*, Kannur and it influenced the patronage of local audience and business groups. Instead of 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm the game is played in the early night from 8 pm to 10 pm so that people occupied in different spheres can find time to enjoy it. Consequently, the new local business firms and other institutions started sponsoring teams for such tournaments for their business promotion. Such tournaments have comparatively larger financial entities than the local 'sevens football' tournaments of the earlier days. A tournament committee member from *Therattammal* Shukoor says that about 4 lakhs rupees are required to complete one flood light tournament.

Instead of All Kerala Sevens tournaments (Aghila Kerala Sevens Tournaments), where local teams used to play in the evening with much local spirit, the All India Sevens Football has become much popular in expanding the geographical distribution of the game beyond the region and even Kerala. This shift has brought obvious benefits: the players get much financial benefits and imported players from Nigeria, Sudan, and other African countries make the game self-sustaining. With the introduction of flood lights the game timings could be changed conveniently thus raising the revenues from the ticket sales (Rs 30 to Rs 50 per ticket). This tradition of tournaments appeared in *Therattammal* village in 2004 by initiatives of the United Football Club *Therattammal* conducting the tournaments successfully every year since then.

The difference between the early 'sevans' and the contemporary 'sevans' (flood light tournament) is apparent in *Therattammal* village. Many people from the surrounding villages come to watch the flood light games, by private and public vehicles. Migrant workers from Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal also find their entertainment in watching the games. Shukoor, a member of *Therattammal* tournament committee, says that Bengali migrant labours often come to watch 'sevans football'. Moreover, the imported players, predominantly the Sudanese and Nigerians (a team can include two imported players as far as the KSA rule) become a big attraction of the games. This also shows the impact of globalization on the local entertainment culture in remote villages like *Therattammal*. The Sudanese become an attraction of the game and the migrant labours from the Bengal find their entertainment in watching the games.

### Conclusion

The present ethnographic study has addressed two issues. On the one hand, it raises the question how a large number of indigenous games have disappeared from the villages (like *Pottassery* and *Pathiriyal*) when the nation has opened its door to globalisation. On the other hand, it seeks to define how the local version of soccer culture, the 'sevans football' has survived the crisis triggered by globalization. The study finds that the disappeared games failed to survive in the changing context of globalization scenario while soccer, though it has been played in a different format in rural Kerala, has the characteristics of a global game and hence it succeeded to survive via some structural adjustments. KSA the institutionalised body of 'sevans football' has made use of the opportunities provided by globalisation to make the structural changes in managing tournaments in villages by means of importing players, using more technical assistance like flood lights, attracting large temporary gallery and engaging sponsorships from various business corporate and so on.

Unlike 'sevans football' the disappeared games predominantly were not institutionalised and had the inherent inability to cope with the changing trends. Rather it was a way kids and youth find entertainment in pre-globalization time, the time before TV has entered into village, when no one has mobile phone in the village, and the time villagers very rarely gone outside of the village to pursue jobs and education. When globalization brings new entertainment like cricket, television, social networking and other form of new games it led to the extinction of these local traditional games.

Moreover the study has identified the transformation of three villages by looking into the changes taken place in their entertainments. The flow of people, money, information and technology has played a major role in this transformation resulting in hybridity, the intermingling of different cultural groups.

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