

ANNANYA AGARWAL

President, Vedanta Football

With a dream to see India progress as a footballing nation to be a name to reckon with at the sub-continent, Asian and subsequently world level, Annanya Agarwal is the driving force behind Vedanta Football, which is Vedanta Group's vision of developing Indian football from the grassroots. Vedanta Football is a CSR-led initiative, aiming to provide a platform to children for scripting a bright future for themselves through football while contributing to the overall development of Indian football.

The initiative currently has two programmes with world-class residential academies – Sesa Football Academy in Goa and Zinc Football in Rajasthan – and is working towards scouting grassroots talent and providing promising footballers with an opportunity to pursue the game.

Agarwal says, "At Vedanta, we want to take Indian football forward and have charted out a plan at two levels. One is grassroots development for the sport wherein every child who wants to play the sport has access to good facilities; second is a football excellence programme, where we want to set up state-of-the-art football academies like the ones we have in Goa and Rajasthan".

Agarwal is also the CEO of Runaya Refining, an affiliate of Runaya Metsource, a fast-growing startup set up in May 2016 in the field of resources and material sciences.

Having worked with globally-renowned companies such as Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey & Company and Standard Chartered Bank, Agarwal possesses rich and varied experience across fields.

Agarwal studied Economics and Sociology at Emory University, and is an alumnus of United World College South East Asia (UWCSEA), Singapore. His formative years were spent at Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai. He is extremely passionate about environment preservation, green technology and obviously football!

Vedanta Football:

The Vedanta Group shares the dream of millions of Indians who want to see India reclaim its past glory in football, and with the aim of uplifting football in the country, Vedanta has made considerable investments focusing firmly on the development of grassroots football. With a vision of transforming India into a global sporting powerhouse, Vedanta has introduced a goals-oriented bottoms-up development programme with special emphasis on cutting-edge technology to be a change driver. The state-of-the-art residential academies in Goa and Rajasthan embody Vedanta's commitment to the cause of Indian football.

The residential academies are part of Vedanta's CSR initiatives, and all the academy children are provided football training, education, and nutrition free of cost. The academy teams regularly take part in national and regional competitions to enable them to stay at the top of their game. In order to boost competitive exposure, Vedanta hosted the inaugural edition of the Vedanta Youth Cup in 2019, featuring the top 4 residential academies in the country – Vedanta, JSW, Reliance and Tata.

Aside from the residential academies, Vedanta also attempts to give every child an opportunity to play the beautiful game. The community football school initiative caters to around 2,500 passionate boys and girls across the country by providing them football training on a weekly basis. The best among these community center kids are also given an opportunity to trial at the prestigious residential academies.

Carrying forward the company's focus on women empowerment, Vedanta is committed to the development of women's football as well. The Vedanta Women's League was launched in Goa to provide a much-needed opportunity for girls and women football players of Goa to showcase their talent and develop further into the national team. Over 300 players have participated in the three editions, and the prodigal find of the first edition – Ms. Karishma Shirvoikar – went on to wear the national colors.

Vedanta's football initiative is a great example for other corporates on how to leverage football to not only engage with the communities that the company operates in, but also work towards a larger dream of the country – to see India on the world football map.