

ABSTRACT

THE POLITICS OF SPORTS: CRICKET AS A FACTOR IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ARTS)**

OF

JADAVPUR UNIVERS

BY

SUVASISH CHAKRABORTY

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

REGISTRATION NO: A00IR0100615

DATE OF REGISTRAION: 28/07/2015

SESSION: 2015-16

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

DR. KAKOLI SENGUPTA

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

KOLKATA-700032

2022

ABSTRACT

The massive influence of sports as a major social phenomenon cannot be denied as it creates scopes for enormous social interactions in multifaceted ways. On the other hand, politics fundamentally governs social relations. Politics resides in the socio-cultural arena within which sports is practiced. Hence, the correlation between the sphere of sports and politics cannot be overlooked. Throughout history, the arena of sports has repeatedly been politicised by different political regimes to serve various political and diplomatic goals. Thus, the area concerning the politics of sports is very much relevant in contemporary international politics and thus, requires a thorough academic investigation. Given this backdrop, my research study aims to explore how sports acts as a significant political tool in the area of statecraft, diplomacy and foreign policy. Considering the broader context of politicisation of sports, it is imperative to note that cricket as the most captivating global game also matured a robust association with the geopolitical reality of the subcontinent due to the political sensitivity of the game. Cricket has become hugely popular among the common people in India and Pakistan due to its electrifying aura that binds its people with a common cultural bond and collective identity. Cricket is considered more than just a game both in India and Pakistan as the game turned into the most powerful tool for asserting post-colonial national pride and solidarity. India Pakistan cricketing rivalry has often been viewed as mimic warfare due to hyper-nationalistic aspect of the game. However, the opposite scenario has also been evident when cricket got utilised as a Track II and Track III diplomatic tool in fostering ties between the two conflicting countries. In this context, my study also throws light on the political credibility of cricket in the background of India-Pakistan relations. Finally, it is also interesting to note that media has a significant role in shaping the public perception of India-Pakistan cricketing relations. It can either instigate conflicts with its sensationalised jingoistic reporting or it can improve relations between the

conflicting groups moulding the public perception of both countries. Following this point, my study also explores the role of media in influencing India-Pakistan cricketing relations.