

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

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PREFACE

My interest in doing this research came out of a pure passion for sports. Being born into a well-known sports family and as a son of a renowned veteran first-class cricketer and a Life Time Achievement Award recipient, I always aspired for contributing something valuable to the world of sports. Despite being a deserving player and an awardee of university blue, my dream of becoming a professional player did not come true. This biggest regret in my life produced the hunger within me to work on sports in academia. There is little dispute that sports as a global cultural phenomenon is no longer limited to its traditional understanding. Sports has become intrinsically connected to the wider social milieu. Therefore, sports being a socially determined entity has never been segregated from the domain of politics. The growing nexus between sports and politics is widely evident in the contemporary scenario. The increasing political role of sports as an integral part of international relations has intrigued me to conduct my academic research on the politics of sports.

Given the broader background of politicisation of sports, my study also attempts to cast light on the political salience of cricket in shaping India-Pakistan relations. Cricket magnifies the socio-political reality of the subcontinent. Sometimes, cricketing ties between India and Pakistan seemed to have been negatively affected because of the strained relations between the two countries. Similarly, there are instances where cricket turned out to be an icebreaker in their bilateral relations paving the way for diplomatic negotiations and people-to-people exchanges between both sides of the border. Therefore, the political credibility of cricket in influencing India-Pakistan relations should be recognised as the most relevant research area of international politics. The scope of pursuing research on the political aspect of India-Pakistan cricket appears to be very much interesting. This research work may encourage the researchers

of inter-disciplinary studies in the future who want to work on the interrelationship between sports and politics and the political role of cricket in the subcontinent.

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INTRODUCTION

The sphere of “the politics of sports” is vast but fascinating. By having closer attention to the growing nexus between sports and politics, it is imperative to note that although sports and politics constitute separate and independent domains of their own, not belonging together, but the confluence between the two realms seems to be inevitable within the larger socio-political landscape. There is no doubt that sports has evolved as an extremely popular, global cultural element and institution in the contemporary world which is no longer confined to the simple calculation of winning and losing in a competitive contest. Rather, the reach of sports has gone far beyond its traditional understanding due to its transnational mobility and tremendous attraction to millions of people throughout the globe. In other words, over the years, sports has become a vital thread of human civilization which not only has enormous socio-political or economic significance but also has the unifying aura that integrates people across the world regardless of class, colour, sex, culture or religion. On the other hand, the arena of international politics is no longer limited to the areas of “high politics” pertaining to national and international security concerns. It is equally intertwined with the issues of “low politics” where social and cultural elements like sports plays a significant role in shaping the changing contours of global politics.

According to Garry Whannel, “sport offers a way of seeing the world”¹ and thereby, sporting spectacle has become inherently political by mirroring the dynamics of changing international affairs to a considerable degree. James Walvin arguably stated in his thought-provoking essay *Sport, Social History and the Historian* that “the history of a particular game had an importance

¹ Whannel, G. (1983). *Blowing the Whistle: The Politics of Sport*. London : Pluto Press, p. 27

which far transcended the game itself”² and that “ultimately, sport could (and perhaps ought to) provide a reflection of wider issues and relationships in society at large”³. Therefore, a broader understanding of international politics cannot be made possible until we explore the huge potential of sports as a key political actor.

Given this backdrop, it is noteworthy that although the multi-layered pluralistic aspect of sports as a global cultural phenomenon requires to be valued in a deeply interconnected world but the central role of states in the context of using sports as a malleable political resource cannot be discarded. Thus the subject matter concerning the politicisation of sports is very much relevant in international politics throughout the world which demands thorough academic investigation within the academic realm.

Sports as a socio-political phenomenon can be traced back to Ancient Greece where the Olympic Games turned into the symbolic political venue to assert city strength and gradually, the sporting spectrum has become a major attraction for the state leaders especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, who sought to utilise sporting spectacle for facilitating an array of political objectives from domestic policy to foreign policy ends. On several occasions, sporting events have largely impacted political events and the opposite. Needless to say, the political invasion of sports has become more prominent when sports has consistently been politically maneuvered under several political regimes around the world. Fascist, Nazis, or Communist governments took control of the sporting institutions to assert their ideological superiority. Especially with the outbreak of the Cold War, sporting events have become integrally connected with rising geopolitical tensions. For instance, sporting fields were dragged into the boycott politics in the Cold War era which was evident in the Moscow Olympics boycott in 1980 and the Los Angeles

² Walvin, J. (1984). Sport, social history and the historian. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 1 (1): 8. Retrieved from : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02649378408713534> (Accessed on: February, 15, 2020)

³ Ibid.

Olympic boycott in 1984. When Washington announced to boycott Moscow Olympics as a symbolic protest against the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Soviet Union and its allies followed a similar action as a retaliation measure by withdrawing from the Los Angeles Olympics four years after the US-led boycott. The international solidarity movement against the apartheid regime of South Africa which resulted in their suspension from the 1964 and 1968 Olympic Games was another historic moment which revealed how sports has repeatedly been politically exploited in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the USA and Communist China saw a rare upswing with the visit of the US team to China in 1972 to take part in the table tennis championship which was famously called "Ping Pong diplomacy". This landmark event distinctly showed the world that sports can be operationalised as an effective diplomatic element to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiation table. Most interestingly, the widespread use of sporting mega-events as a mechanism of projecting any country's soft power to gain international legitimacy in the new millennium has also largely drawn scholarly attention in the arena of international relations. Besides, sporting events have often been utilised as an effective cultural medium for reconciliation and trust-building between adversaries when the traditional art of political and diplomatic dialogues and negotiations seemed to be at stake. Thus, sports when combined with mainstream development strategies can be the panacea to many unresolved crises. Sports can effectively be channelised as a powerful means to enhance tolerance and peace by deepening people-to-people contact, and intergroup harmony. Hence, it is not difficult to understand the reason why the governments, have been very active to operationalise sports-based strategies to maximise their abilities and ambitions keeping pace with the ever-changing needs of world politics. Following the above discussion, it appears to be unrealistic to keep sports out of the ambit of international politics in the contemporary scenario.

Keeping this broader context of politicisation of sports in mind, it is imperative to highlight 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 in South Asia especially in India and Pakistan because of its tremendous appeal which won the hearts of the masses due to its electrifying aura that binds its people with a common cultural bond and collective identity. According to John Hargreaves, “While specialists in nationalism have paid a good deal of attention to central aspects of culture such as language and religion, they have paid remarkably little attention to that other aspect of culture around which nationalism so often coheres in the modern world, namely, sport”⁴. Similarly, 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. Considering the socio-political significance of cricket in the background of the history of the subcontinent, it can be argued that cricket substantially mirrored the political trajectories and developments between the two nuclear neighbours, India and Pakistan. Since the time of partition, cricket has adequately drawn political attention due to its irresistible engagement with the wider social milieu at that time. Consequently, the socio-political changes pertaining to colonialism, nationalism and communalism also affected cricket during the tumultuous period of undivided India. Most importantly, even after the 75 years of long-sought independence from the British Empire which coincided with the birth of two separate nations India and Pakistan, cricket continues to be a major stimulator in India-Pakistan relations. Needless to say, massive media coverage (print and digital) has played a pivotal role in creating additional hype over the India-Pakistan cricket match. There has been a new tide of hyper-nationalism centering around the India-Pak face-off due to the thriving social media which drastically changed the

⁴ Hargreaves, J. (2000) *Freedom for Catalonia?: Catalan Nationalism, Spanish Identity, and the Barcelona Olympic Games*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.3

way sports based national sentiment has previously been articulated. Thus, the increasing influence of digital streaming and social media have hugely boosted fans' engagement with the highly intense India-Pak rivalry. Further, India-Pakistan cricketing fights has become a contested terrain which have frequently been judged as the litmus test for the minorities from both sides in reaffirming the degree of their national loyalty. In addition, India-Pakistan cricketing encounters often transform into a ground of proxy war as defined by George Orwell -“a war minus shooting”- as the age-old political tensions between them get translated into highly intense cricketing rivalries. As Shashi Tharoor remarks:

These are two countries whose soldiers have frequently shot at each other, where border tensions have erupted into war, and where the result of a cricket match can prompt a soldier to unleash a volley of celebratory or intimidatory fire on the Line of Control. Above all, this is a region where the fomenting of terrorism in India by Pakistan and (in Pakistani eyes) the 'sufferings' of Muslims in India creates in each side a 'moral obligation' to teach the perpetrators a lesson on the cricket field. No other cricketing rivalry in the world has to contend with such a perverse mixture of elements sharpening the keen edge of competition between them.⁵

Cricket has also been manipulated as a boycott tool to give a strong political message to the opponent. It has been witnessed that India has stopped playing bilateral series with Pakistan with a strategy of isolating the latter internationally for their alleged link with exporting terrorism to India. Cricket also possesses an integrative role by acting as a catalyst in transforming the geo-political hostilities into sustainable dialogues between these conflicting neighbours. In this essence, the political credibility of “cricket diplomacy” can be taken into consideration. It is mention-worthy that this phenomenon can be singled out back to the years in February 1987 when the extreme tensions between India and Pakistan created a war-like

⁵ Tharoor, S. (2017) Cricket's burden on diplomacy. In S. Menon (5th ed., Epub Version) *Wisden India Almanack*. New Delhi: Bloomsbury, p.65

situation. The then president of Pakistan General Zia-Ul-Haq visited India to witness the Test match in Jaipur where General Zia coined the phrase 'cricket diplomacy' embracing cricket for peace initiative with the Rajiv Gandhi led government. Since then, state premiers of India & Pakistan have dealt with the card of cricket diplomacy intending to use cricket as an icebreaker when political tension ran high. For instance, when the dramatic escalation of the Kashmir conflict in the 1990s rattled India's bonhomie with Pakistan and both nuclear powers were on the verge of nuclear war just the aftermath of the Pokhran nuclear blasts in 1998, both countries were signaling meaningful negotiations as a deterrence measure. Consequently, the Pakistan cricket team toured India for two match Test series in 1999 which brought fresh momentum to the efforts of their diplomatic settlement. Undoubtedly, the historic Test Match in Chennai which ended up in a standing ovation for the victorious Pakistan side became the harbinger of a new dawn in India-Pak ties backed by the goodwill of common people setting aside their long mutual animosity after persistent conflict. India's friendship tour of Pakistan in 2004 can be considered as a landmark moment in the history of India-Pakistan cricket as both the Vajpayee and Musharraf government attempted to use cricket in breaking the ice in their bilateral relations. India-Pakistan cricket match was further revived as a glimmer of hope when Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raja Gilani met his Indian counterpart Dr. Manmohan Singh on the sideline of the 2011 World Cup Semi Final in India to facilitate high-level diplomatic dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad. In this case, the cricket ground has prepared the conversational space for the state premiers of both sides of the borders to resume diplomatic talks when political relations between them deteriorated after the Mumbai attacks in 2008. Hence, it can be argued that cricket as the most everlasting frenzy in sub-continental culture has been strategised several times as a diplomatic instrument in restoring the channels of communication between the two hostile nations beyond enduring conflict and mutual suspicion. Further, cricket also solidified the ground for India-Pakistan solidarity as both the

countries worked together on various cricketing issues ranging from jointly hosting World Cups to collectively supporting Asian stakeholders.

It can also be argued that India-Pakistan relations have never been stable and predictable. Sometimes their relations suffered major blow due to the enduring political stalemate and military stand-offs between them which had sparked a series of cross-border skirmishes and wars. Similarly, several impressive agreements and negotiations have also been observed between India and Pakistan to resume peace talks and cooperation as a ray of hope. Thus, India-Pakistan relations have always passed through high and low phases. The cricketing tussle between India and Pakistan also followed similar trends. To put it in a different way, cricket being the most significant politicised entity in the subcontinent has never liberated itself from the ever-changing equation of India-Pakistan relations in the wider socio-political setting. The India-Pakistan bilateral cricket series has been halted due to severe political constraints. Simultaneously, cricket matches have also been instrumentalised as Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to settle differences and maintain a ceasefire between them when the traditional door of diplomacy lost its credibility.

Following the above discussion, it is important to note that few academic writings previously worked on the political potential of sports as well as the political viability of cricket in international politics. But much work is left to be done in this particular area. According to the specific framework and research plan, this research intends to focus on two major areas. In the first part, it tries to investigate the symbiosis between sports and politics and how far the platform of sports has been politicised by the states or political regimes to achieve various political goals tied to their respective ambitions and ideologies. In the next part, my thesis also highlights how cricket has consolidated its presence as one of the crucial factors in influencing India-Pakistan relations and vice versa. Accordingly, my thesis endeavours to investigate why and by what means cricket has been integrally connected to India-Pakistan relations. In this

section, my thesis not only pays attention to the political root of cricket and its political development within the background of partition which culminates in the creation of two independent nations India and Pakistan but also assesses the credibility of cricket as a diplomatic and Confidence Building Measure (CBM) in bridging the gap between the two countries in the post-colonial period.

SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport (2014) is one of the best cricket books of all time written by internationally acclaimed author Ramchandra Guha. This pioneering work wonderfully uncovers the growth of cricket in India from an English invention to the country's national obsession foregrounding the socio-political history of India from colonial to post-colonial time. The book not only gives the reader a long-run narrative about the dissemination of cricket under the exclusive preserve of Englishmen in different parts of India like Bombay, Madras or Calcutta but also provides an account of how the game was domesticated in India through the involvement of natives. In addition, the fascinating anecdotes of forgotten cricketing heroes like C. K. Nayudu, Palwankar Baloo has made the cricket history of India most enriching. It also discussed how the encouragement from colonial administrators like Lord Harris or Lord Hawk promoted cricket in India. Most interestingly, one of the later chapters magnifies the communal aspect of the game in pre-independence times when one of the most influential domestic cricket tournaments called the Quadrangular and Pentangular tournament, which used to pull a massive crowd in the 1930s and 1940s, was pushed to death for being established on religious lines and how Gandhi was dragged into this scenario. In this part, the book traces the subsequent partition of India through the lens of cricket. One of the most interesting sub-chapters of this book is 'Kashmir Comes to the Pennines' and 'The March of Commerce'. These chapters not only reveal how India-Pakistan cricket matches often get divided into religious lines and by what means their rivalries had previously been affected by

the wave of social intolerance and Hindu-Muslim communal strife followed by the Ayodhya and Kashmir crisis but also described how India-Pakistan cricket tours had often been called off by getting fed into nationalistic hysteria. The later chapters thoughtfully traced the ever-growing commercialization of cricket and the rise of India as a strong cricketing nation in the new millennium. Despite tracing the recent developments in Indian cricket this book lacked sound recommendations regarding how cricket as a diplomatic mechanism can be cultivated to legitimise cricket as a beacon of hope among youth populations of both India and Pakistan as an alternative to continuous tensions, insurgency and other crises which suffocate the friendly relation between the two nuclear nations.

One of the excellent books in contemporary time concerning the history of Indian sports is Ronojoy Sen's *Nation at Play: A History of Sport in India* (2015). This book thoroughly brings out a well-researched, informative and anecdotal socio-political history of sports in India like football, hockey, wrestling, boxing, and cricket in the last two centuries. While proceeding to the chronological evolution of these sports which enjoy mass popularity in India, Sen tries to portray the cultural and political development of sports in India in the successive stages of human history from ancient, medieval and colonial to the post-colonial periods. In consideration of the political nature of cricket, Sen not only captures the chronological growth of cricket as an object of colonial exports which was introduced in India with the initiatives of colonial administrators, missionaries or Indian princely patrons but also thoroughly investigates the multiple involvements of cricket in the changing socio-political context being tied to nationalism, communalism, commercialisation and liberalisation. Most interestingly, the author flawlessly describes how the cricket ground has often been politically manipulated in the background of India-Pakistan hostilities. To that effect, he also interestingly brought the context of 'cricket diplomacy' which seemed to act as a diplomatic bridge between these two nuclear powers. This book also throws light on the Indian Premier League (IPL) effect in the

case of revolutionising Indian cricket. However, this book failed to generate a critical understanding of the media's massive role in the case of popularising the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry. Further, this book is also unable to address how India and Pakistan worked together on several grounds overcoming their differences which expanded the ground of South Asian solidarity.

Boria Majumdar's *Twenty-Two Yards to Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket* (2004) is another must-read classic book concerning the cricket history of India. This well-researched book brings out some interesting facets of imperial and post-imperial cricketing history in India which aptly recounts the diverse trajectories of cricket by drawing its link with various socio-political themes like nationalism, communalism or commercialism. It tries to trace how cricket is suited to the socio-cultural reality of India's life. At the outset, it elucidates how the English game was adopted by Indians under colonial structure and how cricket was weaponised for nationalist purposes. Further, this book also dragged the communal context of the Bombay Pentangular (1842-1947), one of the most competitive and prestigious tournaments in pre-independence time. Following this context, the book also brought into focus Mahatma Gandhi's apprehensive approach towards the communal basis of the tournament which could have been threatening to the Hindu-Muslim harmony during the Civil Disobedience movement. This book also focuses on the emergence of cricket as a national passion in India in the post-independence period. It also illustrates how cricket as the opiate of the masses opened the market economy in the 90s and the factors that led to the commercialisation of Indian cricket following the impact of the television-broadcasting coup. It also tracks down the shift of cricket from an English game to a market-driven global game controlled by India in the era of economic liberalisation. However, this book can be more enriching if the author critically examines how far India has wielded cricket as an arsenal of soft power.

Kausik Bandyopadhyay's *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspectives from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket* (2015) interestingly unravels how cricket and football in the South Asia region are enmeshed in a wider historical process and thereby, linked to several themes such as power politics, nationalism, decolonization, partition, diplomacy and inter-state cooperation and so on. Tracing the evolution of cricket in the subcontinent, the author highlights the political sensitiveness of cricket in India-Pakistan bilateral relations. In this context, the author took the reference to India's friendship tour to Pakistan in 2004 to investigate how far the confidence building process had been generated in the name of the 'goodwill series'. Further, the economic viability of these series has also been addressed in this context where the historic tour of 37 days ensured huge spending in advertisement and sponsorships which gave the Government of Pakistan a huge financial boost. The author also highlights how Pakistan cricket has suffered huge losses due to the cancellation of a number of cricket series on their home soil because of security related disruptions. The extreme deterioration of India-Pakistan cricketing relations due to the latter's alleged link with global terrorism has also been discussed in this regard. In this respect, the author also addresses why it becomes the biggest challenge for Pakistan to arrange international cricket matches amidst the existing danger of domestic instabilities and insecurities. However, this book can be more interesting if it explores why cricket has overshadowed the other sports in South Asia and whether the epicentre of cricket has moved to South Asia.

Shadows Across the Playing Field: 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket (2009), written by Shashi Tharoor and Shaharyar Khan is considered to be one of the greatest books on the ever-changing dynamics of India-Pakistan cricketing relations. This book tries to investigate how cricketing ties between India and Pakistan have always been shaped by their complicated political relations through the valuable insights shared by Shashi Tharoor and Shaharyar M. Khan. This book thoroughly brings out why cricket in India and Pakistan is seen as a significant

platform for cultivating unity and achieving national aspirations. It also provided an in-depth discussion about how India-Pakistan cricketing engagement often leads to proxy war giving references to some memorable encounters between them. It also explains how the ground of cricket has been politically manipulated by the state leaders as a diplomatic tool between India and Pakistan. In this context, path-breaking tours like Pakistan's tour of India in 1999 or India's tour in Pakistan in 2004 have also been brought to the light where cricket helped both the countries to come close and to solidify the links of people-to-people contacts among the general people. However, this book lacks sound recommendations in the end regarding why the policy shift is the urgent need of the time from both sides of the border so that cricket can be revived with the long-term policy objectives.

Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent Politics of Sport in Pakistan (2013) written by Shaharyar M. Khan and Ali Khan is considered a groundbreaking, insightful work on the inner account of Pakistan cricket. This book interestingly scrutinises the volatile social, political and cultural scenario of Pakistan through the prism of cricket. It subtly explores the most intriguing question: how did partition politics deeply influence the character of Pakistan cricket? Besides, it concentrates upon the huge capacity of cricket in terms of manifesting the country's national ethos and the collective psyche of the Pakistani people. The book also devotes considerable attention to the political dynamics of India-Pakistan cricketing relations where the context of bilateral cricket diplomacy is brought into focus. In this regard, Khan shared his unparalleled experience on the tour as a diplomat. This book also illuminates how several obstacles and controversies like incompetent administration, unending corruption, the acquisitions of sports fixing and betting scandals, suspicious death of their coach Bob Woolmer, the over religiosity of the Pakistan team and terrorism have plagued Pakistan cricket for longer years which largely have drawn global media attention. Sound recommendations and the future line of action are also being suggested in the concluding section aiming at upgrading the structure of the Pakistan

Cricket Board (PCB) so that it can get out of the controversial image of a troubled nation and follow the right direction to ensure success in the arena of international cricket. However, this book still falls short in addressing why cricket as a diplomatic measure lacked its consistency in India-Pakistan relations.

Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan (1998) written by Omar Noman was one of the finest cricket book which brilliantly magnifies the thrilling fifty years of history of Pakistan cricket. This book has left no stone unturned in tracing the chronological growth of Pakistan cricket starting from its birth to its golden era. The author unravels the significant factors such as family structure, youth policy, strong incentives, geographical advantages and many more which paved the way for the steady rise of Pakistan cricket. It also showcased how cricket has become a national obsession in Pakistan. This book also recollects memorable moments regarding the world famous and most compelling India-Pakistan rivalry. The book illuminates different turning points of Pakistan cricket based on a thorough assessment of its performance graph in the home and away series and World Cup matches. In addition, the golden years under the captaincy of Mushtaq Mohammad, the emergence of Javed Miandad and Imran Khan as national heroes, the phenomenon of Pakistan's remarkable World Cup win in 1992, India's return to Sharjah after two years of boycott, the controversies created over the issue of biased umpiring and match-fixing and many vibrant moments have kept cricket enthusiastic readers actively engaged throughout this classic book. However, this book can be more engrossing if it pays attention to the historical background of Pakistan cricket since the pre-independence time to trace the evolution of Pakistan cricket within the changing socio-political circumstances. This book also lacks a thorough understanding of the viability of cricket in solidifying trust and cooperation between India and Pakistan during the time of thawing relations.

One of the greatest books of all time written on the roses-and-thorns history of Pakistan cricket is Peter Osborne's *Wounded Tiger: The History of Cricket in Pakistan* (2014). The author begins with the narratives of rich domestic cricket tournaments in undivided India such as the North Indian Ranji Trophy team, the Karachi Quadrangular tournament, and the Bombay Pentangular to address the root of Pakistan cricket before the creation of Pakistan as an independent nation. It also carefully chronicled the marvellous journey of Pakistan cricket from asserting its national identity in the aftermath of exhaustive partition to the present era. In the beginning, the inspirational anecdotes about the architects of Pakistan cricket like the Oxonian Abdul Hafeez Kardar and Hanif Mohammed, Fazal Mahmood etc. showed how their remarkable contributions have pushed Pakistan national cricket team to become a major reckoning force in the international cricket emerged from the chaos and trauma of partition. From marking its first historic victory on Indian soil in 1952 to the greatest Oval win in England being accomplished by Abdul Kardar's effective leadership, Pakistan cricket has marked a strong presence as a cricketing nation in the international arena. The author also observes that while there was little growth in Pakistan cricket in the 1960s due to political and financial stagnation, the emergence of new generations of cricketers was evident in the 1970s. From Imran Khan to Javed Miandad, a bunch of new talented players came into the team like a breath of new fresh air who revolutionised the team by their aura of cricketing excellence. Further, the political manipulation of cricket has also drawn attention in this book. The exciting narratives concerning the political utilisation of cricket under General Ayub Khan's regime during the Bangladesh crisis or the encouragement of cricket diplomacy during General Zia's visit to India in the 1986-87 India-Pakistan series have made this book more interesting. Besides, Pakistan's team's isolation period followed by the match-fixing scandals, the crisis arouse over the "war on terror" and domestic political instabilities have also been elaborated on this book. This book

lacks to address how Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has been restructuring Pakistan cricket with the changing needs of the contemporary time.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following research questions are taken up in my study:

1. What is the relationship between sports and politics?
2. What is the political significance of sports in the case of statecraft, diplomacy and inter-state relations?
3. How has the locus of cricket as a global game shifted from an imperial cultural institution to a dominant game in South Asia?
4. How has cricket developed a political connection in the colonial period under British Raj in undivided India?
5. How has cricket become a national obsession in both India and Pakistan in the post-colonial period?
6. Has cricketing loyalty proved to be an important parameter in judging national loyalty in case of the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry?
7. How far has cricket been successful to act as a diplomatic instrument and Confidence Building Measure (CBM) in India-Pakistan relations?
8. Does Media play any role in politicising India-Pakistan cricket?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of my study are as follows:

First, my study endeavours to explore the political implications of sports in the wider context of international politics.

Second, it wishes to trace the phenomenon of South Asianisation of cricket.

Third, it attempts to highlight the political root of cricket contextualising the historical background of pre-independent India.

Fourth, my study wishes to examine the role of cricket in creating contested identities based on competing allegiance towards the national cricket team in the context of India-Pakistan cricketing encounters.

Fifth, my study examines the influence of cricket as a diplomatic tool in curbing tensions between India and Pakistan.

Sixth, it also tries to highlight the impact of media on the politicisation of India-Pakistan cricket.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Historical and Analytical research approaches have been adopted in the proposed research study which is essentially premised upon the qualitative genre of research as a whole. My study endeavours to develop a systematic, coherent and chronological understanding of the past record of events in different historical stages by identifying, synthesizing and assessing the data to arrive at a defensible conclusion. In this case, historical research approach is effective. In addition, analytical research is also suitable for my research study as it provides scopes for critical thinking and causal explanations to bring out small details in order to make the research findings more reliable. A systematic collection of primary sources such as government reports, parliamentary speeches, government press releases, souvenirs, autobiographies, biographies and memoirs, scorecards, interview documents as well as secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers and other web-based resources have been collected to have an appropriate and holistic understanding while generating relevant observations on my research issue.

The Narrative Analysis research method has also been adopted in my research aiming at interpreting the personal experiences of my respondents. Since my research is mainly

constructed upon subjective experiences, several interviews have been taken with unstructured and open-ended questions to have an in-depth understanding of my selected research area. For this, personal experiences and narrations from different respondents such as cricketers, academicians, journalists, and Board administrators have been considered most valuable to gather detailed information about my research topic.

It was also a fundamental requirement for me to visit some libraries and archives, clubs for my data collection. The primary and secondary research materials are collected from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (New Delhi), National Archives of India, Jawaharlal Neheru University Library, New Delhi, National Library, Kolkata, MAKAIAS Library, Kolkata, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Cultural Library, Kolkata, Cricket Association of Bengal Library, Kolkata, Town Club Archival Collection, Kolkata, Fanatic Sports Museum, Kolkata, Mohun Bagan Club, Kolkata, Anandabazar Library, Kolkata, Scottish Church College Library, Kolkata, Presidency University Library, Kolkata, British Council, Kolkata, Bangiya Sahitya Parishat Library, Kolkata, Central Library, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Departmental Library of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Tarak Nath Das Research Centre, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

Research materials are also collected from different government and intuitional websites: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Debates and Parliamentary speeches and Joint Statements, Parliament Digital Library, Ministry of Home Affairs, the Government of India, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Pakistan. I have also met sports collectors to collect souvenirs and other historical documents. Personal Blogs, Twitter Statements, Advertisements, Web Based documentaries have also been followed for my research.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Needless to say, the existing set of literature has enlightened me to recognise how sports influences politics and the opposite. These previous meticulously researched academic writings also helped me to understand the political significance of cricket as a global game and by what means it plays a significant role in conditioning India-Pakistan relations. However, they lack a coherent and comprehensive understanding of addressing a few fundamental questions concerning my research area. First, when the increasing significance of transnational and non-state actors in the global society has arguably blurred the traditional role of states, how far sports has been channelised by the state mechanism in case of inter-state politics and diplomacy? Second, whether there has been a shift of the epicentre of cricket from West to South Asia. Third, what are the fundamental factors which made cricket the national obsession in India and Pakistan? Besides, contextualising the partition history, it is also imperative to address whether India-Pakistan cricketing tussle often proved to be a parameter in case of reaffirming national loyalty for the minorities. Fourth, how far cricket as a political and diplomatic element has been effective in persuading both the nuclear neighbours to facilitate composite dialogues in the time of thawing relations? My study strives to answer these questions which are mostly left unanswered in the previous writings within an organised, integrated and systematic framework.

CHAPTER OUTLINES:

The first chapter of this research study entitled *The Politics of Sports: a Theoretical Understanding* throws light on the symbiosis between sports and politics in the larger socio-political scenario. It intends to explore how the platform of sports has increasingly been a politicised entity being subject to extensive political control by state leaders and governments to achieve various political objectives. Considering the tremendous political viability of sports

in global political affairs, my study undertakes a theoretical framework of “Realism”. Put it another way, despite acknowledging the fact that sports as a transnational and non-state actor itself plays a significant role in shaping the ever-changing contours of international politics explicitly when the state-centrism of global order seemed to be gradually blurring, the state intervention in the realm of sports has largely been evident throughout history. From this perspective, my study intends to follow the realist line of argument to analyse how sports has been instrumentalised by states ranging from bolstering nation-building processes to facilitating several diplomatic goals. Therefore, this chapter endeavours to highlight the role of sports as a political tool within the broader background of statecraft, inter-state relations and diplomacy.

The second chapter of this research study entitled *Cricket and Politics: Uncovering the Shift of Cricket from an Imperial Tool to South Asianization of Cricket* tracks down the political root of cricket by contextualising its fascinating historical background. This chapter throws light on the emergence of cricket as the most popular game in the world and the evolutionary growth of cricket from a traditionally rooted rural pastime to a modern global game. Following this backdrop, it critically analyses how cricket has politically been maneuvered as a cultural weapon of British rulers to solidify their hegemony in the colonies. In addition, this chapter also clarifies that although cricket came to the subcontinent through the colonial invaders, but the game has turned out to be the most watched sports in this region. Finally, my chapter points out the shift of the epicentre of the global game from West to South Asia arguably leading to the justification of the South-Asianization of cricket.

The third chapter of this research entitled *The Political Significance of Cricket under the Raj: A Historical Background (1721-1947)* traces the political development of cricket in India since the advent of colonial rule. In the first section, this chapter uncovers the dissemination of cricket across India as part of the conscious policy of Victorian imperialism. This chapter

further discussed the Indianisation of cricket where the game was no longer under the aegis of imperial authority. In this context, this chapter also highlights that although cricket was introduced by the white settlers as an imperial tool, but the game was gradually imbibed by the Indian masses who later appropriated the game as a nationalistic weapon. In this sense, cricket was used by the indigenous population as a platform for challenging the colonist's superiority. In the final section, my chapter also discussed how cricket became entangled in the turbulent partition politics of undivided India which led to the birth of two separate nations, India and Pakistan.

The fourth chapter of this research study entitled *Cricket as a National Obsession in India and Pakistan: India v Pakistan – A Litmus Test of National Loyalty in the Post-Colonial Period* intends to explain why cricket has evolved as a nationalistic obsession in both India and Pakistan. It also addresses the point that the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry often transforms into the ground for proving national loyalty for the country's people which often leads to the phenomenon of hyper-nationalism. This chapter throws light on the important factors that paved the way for the massive growth of cricket as the most popular culture in these two sub-continental nations. In the end, this chapter also illustrates how contested identities have been formed based on sporting loyalty during the time of India-Pakistan cricketing encounters.

My fifth chapter of this research study entitled *India-Pakistan Rivalry and the Role of Cricket in Easing Tensions Amidst Conflict* examines the role of cricket as a diplomatic tool and Confidence Building Measure (CBM) in India-Pakistan relations. In the first part, this chapter investigates whether sports contributes to the notion of positive peace building in a hostile environment aiming at rebuilding trust, people-to-people contact and rapprochement between the conflicting groups. The final section looks at the ability of cricket in bridging the gap between India and Pakistan to initiate diplomatic dialogues and negotiations amidst the atmosphere of prolonged mistrust between them due to their thorny political relations.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICS OF SPORTS: A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

INTRODUCTION

Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does...Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair...¹

Sports is quintessentially the most popular cultural element and global phenomenon in the contemporary scenario. There is an ongoing debate over the issue of the intersection between sports and politics. To be more specific, the fundamental question here regarding the discourse is whether the domain of sports and politics are separable or not and if not, then to what extent sports is politically significant is a matter of further discussion. This consideration brings to light two paradoxical narratives vis-à-vis the scope of intersection between sports and politics, in different socio-political landscapes. Taking this point further, it is imperative to note that according to the traditional understanding of a few intellectuals, the spirit of sports requires to be prevented from any trivial diversions. Considering the central tenet of this idealistic point of view being promoted by a section of social scientists and commentators, sports needs to be considered as a form of social practice which should be practiced for its own sake and not for any political mileage. In this sense, sports must be reckoned 'above' or 'below' the political considerations of society because of the noble spirits and ideals that sports upholds. As Zirin

¹ Mandela, N. R. (May 25, 2000). *Speech by Nelson Mandela at the Inaugural Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award*. Sporting Club Monte Carlo Monaco, France.
http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub_view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS1148 (Accessed on: March 20, 2019)

in his documentary, *Not Just a Game: Power, Politics & American Sports*, portrays: “Politics has come to be considered not only inappropriate in the arena of sports but actually antithetical to it”.² In this background, the vision of the most astute leader Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, needs to be reconsidered who wanted to make the world a better place through sports. On this point, one of the passages from Coubertin’s anonymous gold medal winning poem “Ode au Sport” for the 1912 Stockholm Olympics Arts Competition, can be quoted to understand his idea of relaunching the Olympic Games to promote worldwide peace: “O Sport, you are Peace! You promote happy relations between peoples, bringing them together in their shared devotion to a strength which is controlled, organised and self-disciplined. From you, the young worldwide learn self-respect, and thus the diversity of national qualities becomes the source of a generous and friendly rivalry”.³ Avery Brundage, who served as the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for twenty years, also repeatedly decried the political interference in sports. He strongly advocated the strict separation of sports and politics so that the former could not be feed into aggressive nationalism. In fact, there was a strong suggestion for aligning the noble agendas of the IOC (International Olympic Committee) with the vision of the League of Nations as ‘two institutions subscribed the same value system: pacifism and internationalism’.⁴ Abiding by this conviction, the modern Olympic Games was idealised to be promoted as a universal platform where different countries of different regions and cultures can share the beauty of their athletic spectacle. Unsurprisingly, when new countries and sports federations were about to take part

² Zirin, D and Earp, J. (Director). (2010). *Not Just a Game: Power, Politics & American Sports*. [Documentary Film] Media Education Foundation. Retrieved from <http://notjustagamemovie.org/> (Accessed on: January 5, 2019)

³ Hohrod, G. and Eschbach, M. (1912). *Ode au Sport*. The Olympic Games of Stockholm. (Trans.). Retrieved from https://olympic-museum.de/art/ode_au_sport.htm (Accessed on: July 15, 2018)

⁴ Bainvel, S. (2005). *Sport and Politics: A Study of the Relationship between International Politics and Football* (Master’s Thesis, Linköpings Universitet) pp. 25-26. Retrieved from <https://www.eusportdiplomacy.info/files/2-fulltext01.pdf> (Accessed on: March 20, 2020)

in this biggest multi-sports event in the world, Brundage was vocal about maintaining the political neutrality of sports to adhere to the foundational protocol of the Olympic Games: “The Olympic Games are an idealistic enterprise confined by their charter to amateurs. This is one of the fundamental principles governing the Olympic movement, that participants should be amateurs who take part for love of sport and not for any mercenary ends”.⁵ It can be further noted that during the historic event of the 1936 Olympics when six nations walked out from the Games as a symbol of protest against the armed intrusion of Hungary followed by the Suez crisis, he solemnly declared: “...by their decisions these countries show that they are unaware of one of our most important principles, namely that sport is completely free of politics.”⁶ For that very reason, Brundage wanted the pursuit of the Olympic Games, the greatest sporting event on the earth, must not be binding itself with the emerging tensions arising from the Cold War politics. Above all, fearing the threat of superpowers’ unwelcome political intervention in the Games for political and ideological advantage, he wrote a circular letter (12th April 1954) to the IOC members:

The Olympic Games are an idealistic enterprise confined by their character to amateurs. This is one of the fundamental principles governing the Olympic movement, that participants should be amateurs who take part for love of sport and not for any mercenary ends...

The world today is filled with queer ideas, strange political and philosophical doctrines, and curious aberrations. Words have been given distorted meanings, far from their real sense, and fundamental principles are being forgotten or ignored. This is so also in the world of sport...Amateurism is an inflexible, an absolute and universal thing... An athlete is an amateur only so long as he is

⁵ Senn, A. E. (1999). *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 112

⁶ Stadler, E. (December 6, 2020). *Can The Game Ever Just Be A Game?* The Oxford Student, Retrieved from, <https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2020/12/06/can-the-game-ever-just-be-a-game/> (Accessed on: October 10, 2021)

competing for the love of the sport. The minute that financial, commercial, or political considerations intrude he is no longer an amateur...

If the creation of national prestige is to be made the main objective of our sport program, if athletes are to be considered as soldiers defending their countries' reputation, if special regulations are to be adopted so that "no one shall be prevented by financial reasons from representing his country", then we shall be abandoning amateurism.⁷

Moreover, this standpoint resonates strongly with the philosophy of "Olympism", which aimed at creating 'the consensus of the enlightened, likeminded people rather than the outcome of processes such as voting and lobbying'.⁸ It also reasserted the fundamental credo of the Olympic Charter, which categorically specifies that "No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas"⁹ since the grace and ideal of Olympics explicitly gives prominence to the spirit of international solidarity, friendship and peace.¹⁰ Lord Killanin, the successor of Mr. Brundage as the Olympic president, similarly opined that 'the international Olympic movement is not a political movement'¹¹. From this point of view, the fundamental idea of politicisation of sports undermines the true essence of sports. From this perspective, sporting encounters must be separated from any kind of political affiliations. As Kenan Malik comments:

Most fans would probably agree that politics should be kept out of sport. We want sporting prowess to be "pure", expressions of sublime skills or awe-

⁷ Senn, A. E. (1999). *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, p. 112

⁸ Taylor, T. (1986). Politics and the Olympic Spirit. In L. Allison. (ed.). *The Politics of Sport*. Manchester : Manchester University Press, p. 216

⁹ International Olympic Committee (2021). *Olympic Charter*. Lausanne, Switzerland: IOC, p.94. Retrieved from

https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/General/EN-Olympic-Charter.pdf?_ga=2.13372151.1725144796.1660915767-1289590198.1652979617

(Accessed on: December 25, 2021)

¹⁰ Ibid. p.8

¹¹ Taylor, T. (1986). Politics and the Olympic Spirit. In L. Allison. (ed.). *The Politics of Sport*. Manchester : Manchester University Press, p. 216

inspiring endurance that are intrinsic to the sport and capture the genius of human athleticism. When we watch Lionel Messi floating through a gaggle of defenders as if with the ball fixed to his boot, or a picture-perfect cover drive from Virat Kohli, or Simone Bile's triple-twisting double tuck in her floor routine, too fast for the eye to follow – each transfixes us by transforming our assumptions of what is humanly possible.¹²

On the other hand, considering the counter-arguments, it can be argued that politics cannot be explored without taking into consideration the socio-cultural sphere of the society in which sports like everything else plays an influential role in daily life as the most captivating socio-cultural component as well as an institution. Mass sports as the most prominent and pervasive social phenomenon largely reflects the social, cultural, political, and economical values of any society. According to Whannel, 'sport offers a way of life seeing the world'.¹³ From this perspective, "politics", when dealing with the power dynamics, state, and public affairs, cannot ignore the monumental impact of sports as a reflective agent of society at large. On this note, Horne et al. holds:

Whilst there may still be some people who consider sport and politics to be completely separate entities, it is our view that it is not possible to sustain this belief for long when the historical and contemporary evidence is consulted. Sport (and play) involves rules and regulations which are derived in some way from the 'real world'; sport provides politically usable resources; sport can promote nation building and international image making; in fact, modern sport has seldom been free of politics.¹⁴

¹² Malik, K. (June 13, 2021). We need to separate sport and politics. But also recognise that they're inseparable. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/13/impossible-to-keep-politics-out-of-sport-just-as-it-should-be> (Accessed on: November 15, 2021)

¹³ Whannel, G. (1983). *Blowing the Whistle: The Politics of Sport*. London : Pluto Press, p. 27

¹⁴ Horne, J., Tomlinson, A. and Whannel, G. (1999). *Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sport*. London : E & F N Spon, p. 194

Of course, the myth of sports' autonomy has so widely been promoted that it has invariably restricted the deeper understanding of human social intercourse between sports and politics from a wider perspective. As Hoberman observes, "The idea that sport is something an intrinsically political phenomenon has never been explained. In fact, sport is less known for its political character than for its legendary effects".¹⁵ In this context, it is imperative to note that throughout much of history the intersection between sports and politics has been apparent at the national and international levels. The bond between sports and politics has a long tradition since the time of ancient Roman and Greek society. The Greek ruling classes and their official delegates actively involved in athlete contests to exert their political influence. The Greek city-states, especially Athens, under the 'Greek miracle'¹⁶ were regarded as the most affluent communities in the era of pre-modernity. The Greek city-states encouraged investments in physical culture. It led to the rise of the ancient Greek Olympics where city-states projected their strength through the athletic success of their representatives. As renowned archaeologist and historian Stephen Miller holds: "The Greeks saw the Olympic victories as a sign of a winner's city power and a forecast of the city's victory in a war. A victor acquired a particular aura that reflected on his home town".¹⁷ In this regard, the famous speech of Alkibiades, the Olympic victor of Athens in the chariot race, is also mention-worthy:

*My deeds, which make me the object of public outcry, actually bring glory not only to my ancestors and myself but also to my country, and this glory is mixed with practical advantage as well. The Greeks who had been hoping that our city was exhausted by the war came to think of our power as even greater than it is because of my magnificent embassy at Olympia.*¹⁸

¹⁵ Hoberman, J. (1984). *Sport and Political Ideology*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, p.1

¹⁶ Allen, D. W. & Lantinova, V. (2013). The ancient Olympics as a signal of city-state strength. *Economics of Governance*, 14 (1) : 24

¹⁷ Miller, S. G. (2004). *Ancient Greek Athletics*. New Haven : Yale University Press, p. 271

¹⁸ Ibid p. 273

Over the course of history, the factors and events interlinking sports and politics seemed to have been mostly dominated by the political controversies encircling the Olympic Games because “almost super-nationalistic competitive nature of sports is, of course, best exemplified by the Olympic Games, an institution without parallel in kind...”¹⁹ The increasing political persuasion of sports especially in the 19th and 20th centuries onwards revealed that sports as a major stimulator in shaping every corner of political relations cannot be overlooked as mere peripheral developments in internal politics. For instance, after the end of the first modern Olympics in 1896, a war took place between Greece and Turkey which was incited by the pride of hosting the Games. It can also be remembered that after the fallout of the First World War (1914- 1918) and the Russian Revolution (1917), the “workers’ Olympics” was organised in the 1920s and 1930s as a counter-response to the official ‘nationalistic’ and ‘bourgeois’ Olympics. Further, the trend of sporting nationalism took a giant leap with the hosting of the 11th Olympics in 1936 by Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime. The geopolitical rivalries of the Cold War politics between the capitalist West and communist Soviet bloc had also been echoed in the subsequent Olympic boycotts during that period.²⁰ Without a doubt, the phenomenon of politicisation of sports has dominantly been manifested in the international arena with the growing rise of Olympic as the most effective diplomatic movement which invariably ‘serve as a reminder of the importance of sports diplomacy throughout the twentieth century (which saw unparalleled growth in global media and international sport) and increasingly so in the new millennium where ideas, politics, culture, and sport impact and influence international relations’.²¹ In this regard, Historian Allen Guttmann’s observation is noteworthy:

¹⁹ MacClancy, J. (1996). *Sport, Identity, and Ethnicity*. Oxford : Berg, p. 12

²⁰ Horne, J., Tomlinson, A. and Whannel, G. (1999). *Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sport*. London : E & F N Spon p. 194

²¹ Feizabadi, M. S., Delgado, F., Khabiri, M., Sajjadi, N., & Alidoust, E. (2015). Olympic Movement or Diplomatic Movement? The Role of Olympic Games on Development of International Relations. *Journal of Sports Science* (3):187. Retrieved from,

Although Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games as an instrument of international reconciliation, his successors as president of the International Olympic Committee have been tireless in their insistence that ‘politics’ should not interfere with sport and unsuccessful in their attempts to insulate the games from political controversy. ²²

Besides, there are a plethora of instances of past sporting events such as the famous “Ping Pong diplomacy” in 1971 which reopened the relationship between the USA and China during the Cold War tensions, the USA’s decision to boycott the Moscow Olympics in 1980 and the subsequent boycott of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles led by the Soviet Union, South Korea’s sporting exchange with North Korea in 2018 after eight and half years which brought normalcy between these two states, Japan’s approach towards its unofficial rehabilitation through the 2020 Tokyo Olympics or the most recent example of Qatar’s global soft power strategy behind the acquisition of 2022 FIFA World Cup, have all categorically indicated the ever-growing nexus between politics and sports which requires scrutinisation in light of critical scholarly discourse within the broader framework of political studies because every country has issues pertinent to the politics of sports in the larger socio-political setting.

Nevertheless, following the above discussion, there is no denying the fact that sports is no longer considered as a segregated apolitical entity due to its growing relevance in the ever-changing matrix of world politics. Hence, sports cannot be perceived as a mere quasi-autonomous institution.²³ Apart from the Olympics, modern sports on many occasions often proved to be a ‘medium of ideology, prestige, status, nationalism, internationalism, diplomacy

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/62d2/416387867b6ef867e11344b1ec42783198fa.pdf> (Accessed on: September 25, 2020)

²² Guttman, A. (2003). Sport, Politics and the Engaged Historian. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38 (3): 371-372. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0022009403038003002> (Accessed on: February 5, 2021)

²³ Chatterjee, A. (2013). *People at Play: Sport, Culture and Nationalism* (ed.). Kolkata : Setu Prakashani, p. xi – xii

and war'²⁴. In this sense, the domain of sports is inherently political “because human creates sports, play sports, support sports, fund sports. To be human is, to quote Aristotle, to be “a political animal”²⁵. State elites and diplomatic leaders have always utilised the magnifying aura of sports to serve several political and diplomatic purposes. Therefore, sports cannot be considered as an end in itself, but as a means to various domestic and foreign policy ends in different political circumstances. In this context, Allison precisely addresses:

*All kinds of governments, representing every type of political ideology, have endorsed international sporting competition as a testing ground for the nation or for a 'political system'. German Nazis, Italian Fascists, Soviet and Cuban Communists, Chinese Maoists, Western capitalist democrats, Latin American juntas - all have played the game and believed in it.*²⁶

Following this backdrop, the following issues need to be investigated to have an in-depth understanding of the politicisation of sports. First, at the outset, my study concentrates on the conceptualisation of sports and clears out its differences from other overlapping terms such as physical activity, game or play. Second, it throws light on the concept of politics. Third, my study also dealt with the complicated interplay between sports and politics in the international scene. Illustrating this point further, my study adopts a theoretical approach for streamlining my study within the specific framework to understand the dynamics of international relations and politics through the lens of sports.

²⁴ Tatz, C. (1986). 'The corruption of sport', in Lawrence, G. and Rowe, D., *Power Play: Essays in the sociology of Australian sport*. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, p. 47

²⁵ Vaughn, D. (March 31, 2022). The Political Sport. *Protagonist Soccer*. Retrieved from <https://www.protagonistsoccer.com/coverage-blog/the-political-sport> (Accessed on: April 10, 2022)

²⁶ Allison, L. (ed.) (1993). *The Changing Politics of Sport*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.17

THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF SPORTS

It is mention-worthy that several commentators define sports differently with other interchangeable terms and interpretations like physical activity, play or games. Hence, the conceptualisation of sports often encounters some overlapping definitional challenges. These terms have long been associated with human civilization. These separate terms need to be examined thoroughly to clarify the ambiguities surrounding the concept of sports. The term ‘sports’ has various connotations. Sports can be viewed as a formal and rule-bound social practice and often of a competitive character. It involves a certain degree of physical ability and skills. Put simply, according to J. Coakley, sports can broadly be defined as ‘an institutionalised competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors’²⁷. Sports can also be conceptualised as a ‘part of leisure, a measurement of time free from the mundane routine of work and other obligations. It is an activity that usually, though not always, involves competition and the exercise of brain, muscle, or both’²⁸. On the other hand, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) ‘physical activity’ refers to the ‘bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity refers to all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person’s work’²⁹. Any bodily movement: walking, cycling, swimming, yoga or any active recreation or play can be regarded as physical activity. However, the core dissimilarity between sports and physical activity is that whereas sports is classified as a subset of physical exertion or activity being governed by an agreed set

²⁷ Coakley, J. (2001). *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies* (7th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill, p.8

²⁸ Gemmell, J. (2004). *The Politics of South African Cricket*. London and New York : Routledge, p. 20

²⁹ World Health Organization (November 26, 2020). *Physical activity*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity> (Accessed on: July 5, 2021)

of rules or laws with elements of competition for self-enjoyment or for a job, ‘exercise’ or ‘physical activity’ do not always adhere to such hard and fast rules. Although sports involves an element of competitiveness, but physical activity does not necessarily lead to competition. Besides, the idea of ‘play’ is also perceived differently from sports as the former is usually performed for recreation or entertainment without specific obligations or compulsions. Play is self-directed, spontaneous, unconstrained physical and mental activity and the discovery of one’s capabilities. To be more specific, J. Huizinga delineates play as follows:

Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside “ordinary” life as being “not serious”, but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner³⁰.

Play not being directed or commanded by externally imposed stringent rules is designed to be multilateral, voluntary, and free. It doesn’t emphasise fixed rules. Play is essentially a source of amusement and recreation. Instead, according to Schmitz, “...sport is primarily an extension of play, and ... it rests upon and derives its central values from play”³¹. Thus, sports is a structured form of activity and play is mostly unstructured. On this account, Joseph Schmitz notes:

...sport emerges from play as from an original and founding existential posture. Sport is free, self-conscious, tested play which moves in a transnatural dimension of human life, built upon a certain basis of leisure. Sport is in its origin and intention a movement into transcendence which carries over from the founding decision to play and which builds upon that decision an intensified

³⁰ J. Huizinga (1950) *Homo Ludens* (English Translation), New York: Roy Publishers, p.13

³¹ Hemphill, D. A. (1992). Sport, Political Ideology and Freedom. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 16 (1): 17

*thrust towards the values of self-consciousness tested through performance, competition and victory*³².

Another typological distinction can also be observed between sports and games. Although games and sports looked synonymous but they also seem to have different characteristics. To be more specific, ‘games’ include one or more players, who are always willing to obey the essential rules of the game to play it. Therefore, the importance of binding rules is very much important in transforming voluntary play into games. Games are considered as more structured than a play where two individuals or teams play against each other and each attempt to exceed the other. It can be friendly or competitive. John Roberts, Malcom Arth and Robert Bush, define games “as a recreational activity characterised by: (1) organized play, (2) competition (3) two or more sides (4) criteria for determining the winner, and (5) agreed upon rules”.³³ Considering the above discussion, sports is the larger category of games which pays much importance to physical skills. Thus, summarizing the entire discussion, sports can broadly be defined as ‘an embodied, structured, goal-oriented, competitive, contest-based, ludic, physical activity’³⁴.

THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF POLITICS

Aristotle in his classic work ‘Politics’ defined politics as a separate discipline. The term ‘politics’ is acquired from the Greek word ‘polis’ which indicates the ancient Greek city-state. The concept of politics, in general, amounts to ‘what concerns the state’. The meaning of politics is conceptualised in different ways: as the art of government, the expression of power, the exercise of allocating resources and so on. Politics, in a strict sense, is exclusively

³² Hemphill, D. A. (1992). Sport, Political Ideology and Freedom. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 16 (1): 17

³³ Blanchard, K. (1995). *The Anthropology of Sport*. (Revised ed.) London: Bergin and Garvey, p. 17

³⁴ Chick, G. (2015). ‘Games and Sports’, in C. R. Ember (ed). *Explaining Human Culture*. Human Area Files. Retrieved from <http://hraf.yale.edu/ehc/summaries/games-and-sports> (Accessed on: July 10, 2019)

concerned with the public goals that demand a solution at the public level. Traditionally, the meaning of ‘politics’ is conceptualised as the study of government within the institutional or authoritative structure of states which shall be binding upon its citizens. By this, the classical definition of politics refers to the machinery of government and its policies. In this sense, any matter becomes political when government machinery get involved in it under the laws of the states. According to J. D. B. Miller, politics refers to an activity which “is concerned with the use of government to resolve conflict in the direction of change or in the prevention of change. It is about policy and position.”³⁵ Political scientist Bernard Crick also advances a similar interpretation of politics in a classic study *In Defence of Politics*: He defined politics as “the activity by which conflicting interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and the survival of the whole community”.³⁶ Hence, politics implies ‘solution to the problem of order which chooses conciliation rather than violence and coercion’³⁷. In this sense, the idea of politics can also be viewed as a process which denotes a ‘political situation’ that involves disagreements and reconciliations of those disagreements through a legitimate authority (i.e. government). Accordingly, any political authority by having a legitimate power and right to rule is entitled to control the public order by enforcing ‘value allocation’ to satisfy the divergent and competing interests of the society. Here lies the famous dictum of David Easton which elucidates politics as ‘the authoritative allocation of values’ where a plan of actions is being undertaken from the part of government machinery for the welfare of the community³⁸. A system can be regarded as ‘authoritative’ because it ensures support from the society or ‘environment’ by reacting and adjusting to the pressure coming out of society. The word

³⁵ Miller, J. D. B (1962). *The Nature of Politics*. London : Duckworth, p. 16

³⁶ Crick, B. (1964). *In Defence of Politics*. Harmondsworth : Penguin, p. 21

³⁷ Ibid, p. 30

³⁸ Heywood, A. (2015). *Political Theory: An Introduction* (4th ed.). UK: Macmillan Education, p. 49

‘value’ means something desirable, acceptable and useful for society. ‘Values’ could be anything such as any principle or goal dealing with tangible (such as economic goods, property etc.) and intangible factors (which are symbolic, ideological or cultural) of the system. In this logic, ‘politics’ encompasses ‘policies’ being adopted by the government institutions to facilitate numerous socio-economic goals according to the allocations of resources. From this perspective, politics refers to a state-bound activity which affects people at large.

However, apart from the domain of government affairs, political activities can also be traced to the social institutions and other aspects of human life. On this note, it is pertinent to understand that the state system does not only refer to government affairs but also encompasses the wide role of semi-public regulatory commissions, councils or other social organizations as fundamental units of society. Thus, the comprehensive understanding of ‘state’ in politics needs to be conceptualised as ‘the state system’. Therefore, it is also worth mentioning that politics also takes place in the other components (sub-systems) of the social fabric being integrally connected to the daily affairs of human lives. In this sense, politics includes multifarious social interactions at different layers of society such as families, small social groups, sports clubs etc.

THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN SPORTS AND POLITICS

After clarifying the conceptual understanding of sports and politics, it is imperative explain how sports and politics are intrinsically connected and what made sports ‘political’? My study attempts to answer these essential questions below:

Some scholars argue that sports as a significant social institution is integrally connected to politics. For Jeffrey Hill, “sport is perceived as something reflecting or illustrating other historical processes. But what is lacking in this emphasis is any sense of sport being in itself something capable of exerting social and cultural influence; of being a process, a language, a

system of meaning through which we know the world'³⁹. Advancing this point further, Pierre Bourdieu also notes: “[It]is entirely justified to treat sporting practices as a relatively autonomous space, but one must not forget that this space is the site of forces that do not act on it alone’.⁴⁰Sports authorities, organizations and clubs coinciding with community values seem to have become part of larger socio-political phenomena. Politics extensively operates in the cultural strata of the society within which sports is practiced. Thereby, sports has never dissociated itself from being considered as inherently political. Reasoning in this way, it is obvious to say that sports institutions or organizations as a dominant subset of society have become a major stimulus in influencing the contours of domestic and international politics. On this account, Jon Gemmell’s observation is noteworthy:

Sport has been a feature of human existence for as long as that history has been recorded. It is not, therefore, a pursuit independent and remote from the rigours of political nature, an arena which the liberal would consider inappropriate for analysis by the political scientist? If we accept sport in its innocence as an independent variable offering simple enjoyment to the world’s population then, yes, scrutiny would be of little benefit to the student of politics. However we know that this is fallacy: sport is a reflection of the society in which it is practiced. Could we examine sport in the Soviet Union or the United States, for example, without recourse to the social and economic environment? Attitudes to participation, competition and even which sports are played, are determined - in the main - by factors outside of sport itself.⁴¹

SPORTS AS A POLITICAL RESOURCE FOR GOVERNMENTS

Keeping in view the above backdrop, there is no denying the fact that sports has undoubtedly evolved into a significant political resource. As previously analysed, central to Easton’s

³⁹ Hill, J. (2003). Introduction: Sport and Politics. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38 (3): 361. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009403038003001> (Accessed on: March 25, 2019)

⁴⁰ Bourdieu, P. (1988). Program for a sociology of sport. *Sociology of sport journal*, 5 (2): 155. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.5.2.153> (Accessed on: December 10, 2019)

⁴¹ Gemmell, J. (2004). *The Politics of South African Cricket*. London: Routledge, p. 20

conceptualization, politics is the study of government affairs. Sports has been the subject of the government's intervention as it acts as an important resource and functional agent of public policies. According to Spencer Harris and Mathew Dowling, "Sport represents a politically usable resource, including a character-building socializing agent, a vehicle for propaganda, the opportunity for prestige, a tool to deliver social change, and the opiate of the masses, diverting or distracting the energies of the population"⁴². Every government seeks to endorse a purposeful agenda behind the formulations of public policies to garner citizens' support in favour of the national leadership. Given this backdrop, it is interesting to know how sports based-policies (i.e., integrative, symbolic, instrumental sports policy)⁴³ are being promoted to meet the goals of several government agendas.

First, integrative sports policies are explicitly aligned with the motives of forging national unity through sports where sports act as an important agent of political socialization and national integration. As Jacques Ellul viewed sports as 'an indispensable constituent element of totalitarian regimes' in the development of 'mass man'⁴⁴. In this regard, Theodore Lowi further holds:

*Once it is recognized that sport does contribute something to the desirable moral qualities of the youth, sport inevitably becomes important to the regime in as much as it might be used as a device for the deliberate instilling of these virtues. Thus, from almost the point at which sport comes to be widely accessible it is also seized upon as a mechanism of deliberate civic training.*⁴⁵

⁴² Harris, S & Dowling, M. (2020). The influence of power and politics in sports. In A. Goslin, D. A. Kluka, R. L. D'Amico, K. Danylchuk (ed.) *Managing Sport Across Borders*. London & New York: Routledge, p. 102

⁴³ Johnson, A. T. (1982). Government Opposition and Sport: The Role of Domestic Sports Policy in Generating Political Support. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*. 6 (2): 23, Retrieved from, <https://doi.org/10.1177/019372358200600203> (Accessed on: December 18, 2017)

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 24

⁴⁵ Ibid, 23

For example, Benito Mussolini's totalitarian regime used sports as an integral part of the government to assert fascist supremacy through sporting achievements⁴⁶. The Fascist sports policy "aimed to restore the Italian people to health, both politically and physically, by means of sport and exercise".⁴⁷ Mussolini wanted to make a powerful new Italy by producing stronger youth through the means of sports education which could restore in them a sense of "virility, comradeship and discipline".⁴⁸ Mussolini's state had devoted itself to the development of sports facilities which could train the body and mind of Italian men into the service of the state. Giuseppe Prezolini wrote in the late 1930s: "It has been said before, but it bears repeating, that a sweeping revolution has taken place in the social life of the Italians – the home has given the young to the state. A new political and educational technique has been introduced, designed to mould not only the intelligence and memory, but the child's whole being, body and soul alike, and involving not merely his scholastic record but his entire character and future."⁴⁹ A new 'sports city' was built in Rome⁵⁰. The number of sporting instructors increased up to 14,000 in 1936. In the mid-1930s; a significant number of sports teachers were recruited to train young Italians. Around 150,000 militia officials were given the duty of taking care of more than 4 million young people. Further, the Fascist also took the control of gymnastics and sports associations affiliated to the national sports federation. For instance, The Italian National Committee (Italian: Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano, CONI) was turned into a Fascist organization. Sports federations under CONI were mostly controlled by military

⁴⁶ Murray, B. (1996). *The World's Game: A History of Soccer*. Chicago: University of Illinois, p.65

⁴⁷ Dogliani, P. (2000). Sport and Fascism, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 5 (3): 327. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2000.9728258> (Accessed on: August 24, 2017)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ SPORTS, EDUCATION, AND THE NEW ITALIANS. *Erenow*. Retrieved from <https://erenow.net/common/mussolinis-rome-rebuilding-the-eternal-city/4.php> (Accessed on: July 15, 2022)

⁵⁰ Ibid.

representatives and consuls.⁵¹ Furthermore, a popular monthly periodical called *Lo Sport Fascista* was started by the Fascist regime in 1928 as a mouthpiece of Italian sports achievement aimed at shaping the consensus of masses in favour of the new sporting aesthetic in the country.⁵²

Second, sports policies are also being designed to enhance the image of a country. This type of policy can be categorised as the symbolic policy of states. Athletic achievements by a national team provide a country and its citizens a sense of national superiority. Symbolic policies are generally supported by public subsidies. The predominant role of a state in hosting sporting mega-events not only boosts a country's image globally but also confidently projects the political willingness and economic competitiveness of the existing government. On this point, Arthur T. Johnson notes:

*This policy type commonly is recognized for its international objectives, but, in fact, its domestic consequences are much more durable. These policies allow the government to demonstrate technical competence and organizational ability and provide symbols of the nation's power and authority. The results in terms of citizen support are manifested in feelings of nationalism and pride. Thus, the political community receives increased levels of diffuse support.*⁵³

In this light, the example of the UK government's strategic policy of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 to enhance the country's positive image amongst international audiences can be taken into consideration. Based on the extensive research on UK's

⁵¹ Dogliani, P. (2000). Sport and Fascism, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 5(3): 328-329. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2000.9728258> (Accessed on: August 24, 2017)

⁵² Landoni, E. (2020). Propaganda and Information Serving the Italian Sports Movement: The Case of the Periodical *Lo Sport Fascista* (1928-43). *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 5 (1): 43-45. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.21825/jeps.v5i1.15754> (Accessed on: October 10, 2021)

⁵³ Johnson, A. T. (1982). Government, Opposition and Sport: The role of Domestic Sports Policy in Generating Political Support. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*. 6 (2): 26. Retrieved from, <https://doi.org/10.1177/019372358200600203> (Accessed on: December 18, 2017)

international reputation, the review of the public diplomacy group of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), a ministerial department of the UK government, concludes:

The UK was seen as fair, innovative, diverse, confident and stylish. However, negative images still persisted which painted Britain as arrogant, stuffy, old-fashioned and cold. We used these findings to identify the key themes about modern Britain we wanted to project overseas in order to overcome false impressions that acted upon our prosperity and political influence. We want to showcase modern Britain as the open (welcoming, diverse, tolerant), connected (through our involvement in the UN and G20, politically, geographically, in terms of trade and travel), creative and dynamic place it really is.⁵⁴

The London Olympics 2012 turned out to be the biggest platform for the UK government to utilise the global appeal of sports to refine its international reputation. FCO also considered that the London Olympics would ensure its national interest by stimulating its brand image “as a valuable bilateral partner and a vibrant, open and modern society, a global hub in a networked world”⁵⁵. It was also assumed that the catalyst effect of the games would increase the opportunity for the UK government to accelerate its economic growth by attracting foreign investments and commercial opportunities. David Camron, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom delivered a speech regarding the ambitious project of hosting this global sporting event: “It gives me great pride to welcome you all to London on this truly momentous day for our country. Seven years of waiting, planning, building and dreaming are almost over... We want this to be the Games that lifts up a city, that lifts up our country and that lifts

⁵⁴ House of Commons (Prepared 6 Feb 2011) *FCO Public Diplomacy: The Olympic and Paralympic games 2012*, Written evidence from the Commonwealth Office, Foreign Affairs Committee. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmfaff/581/58106.htm> (Accessed on: August 15, 2021)

⁵⁵ House of Commons (Prepared 6 Feb 2011) *FCO Public Diplomacy: The Olympic and Paralympic games 2012*, Written evidence from the Commonwealth Office, Foreign Affairs Committee. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmfaff/581/58106.htm> (Accessed on: August 15, 2021)

up our world, bringing people together. So we are delighted to host you here in London...”⁵⁶

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, also accelerated the growth of the UK economy by generating a boost of more than £14 billion which had surpassed the expected four year ambition of £11 billion only in half the time⁵⁷. The potential spill over effect associated with this policy of hosting the 2012 games had also been addressed by the DCMS commissioned report:

*The Olympics creates a specific opportunity for London’s future competitiveness because it is a moment in time when London will be on show to the world. The experience of previous host cities suggests that the Olympics have the potential to create a lasting legacy for physical infrastructure, economic outcomes, sustainability, and/or the internal reputation of the host city...*⁵⁸

Third, another important area of sports policy is the instrumental policy which focuses on the regulatory aspects of sport policies. For instance, the credibility of regulatory sports policy was manifested in the role of the United States Congress to mediate the endless disputes between the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (AAA) by enacting the Amateur Athletic Act of 1978 which granted the U.S Olympic Committee (Corporation) the explicit control to Act as the single-purpose governing body, the National

⁵⁶ The Speech of the Honourable Prime Minister, David Cameron, (Delivered on July 26, 2012), Cabinet Office, Prime Minister’s Office. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-olympics-press-conference> (Accessed on: July 25, 2017)

⁵⁷ Press Release (July 23, 2014). Turning the Games into gold: economic boost from London 2012 has passed £14 billion. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/turning-the-games-into-gold-economic-boost-from-london-2012-has-passed-14-billion> (Accessed on: September 5, 2016)

⁵⁸ The Work Foundation (2010) A Lasting Legacy: How can London Fully exploit the opportunities created by the Olympic Games in the recovery and to 2030? London: The Work Foundation, p.4. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/77989/WF-impact_of_the_Olympics.pdf (Accessed on: August 2, 2018)

Governing Body (NGB)⁵⁹. The Act also “Authorizes the national governing body to represent the United States in international sports federations and coordinate amateur activity in the United States”⁶⁰. This historical Act proved to be a vital move from the part of the U.S government to overcome the organization mishaps within its amateur sports organizations which obstructed the performance of athletes of the U.S in the international athletic competition. The organizational clashes were one of the major reasons for its disappointing results in the 1972 Olympics. In this context, the remarkable statement by Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, with regard to the enactment of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 is mention worthy:

I have today signed S. 2727, the Amateur Sports Act of 1978.

The President’s Commission on Olympic Sports reported that the frequent disputes between some of our amateur sports organizations have hindered the grassroots development of amateur sports as well as the performance of United States athletes in international and Olympic competition. This legislation based on the recommendations of the President’s Commission on Olympic Sports, establishes procedures and guidelines to resolve disputes without placing the Federal Government in control of amateur sports. The act designates the United States Olympic Committee as the coordinating body for amateur sports, restructures the Olympic Committee and many of its constituent organizations, and gives the Olympic Committee a mandate to resolve disputes through arbitration.

*I hope that this legislation will strengthen United States participation in international sports competition and broaden opportunities for all Americans to enjoy amateur sports.*⁶¹

⁵⁹ Duncan, J. D. (2004). *Sport in American Culture: from Ali to X-games*. California: Santa Barbara, p.12

⁶⁰ S.2727- 95th Congress Act (1977-1978): Amateur Sports Act. *Congress.gov*. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/95th-congress/senate-bill/2727> (Accessed on: August 17, 2021)

⁶¹ Statement of Carter, J. (November 08, 1978). Amateur Sports Act of 1978: Statement on Signing S. 2727 into Law. *The American President Project*. Retrieved from

SPORTS AS A PART OF THE POLITICAL REGIME

The recognition of any sports bodies or federations of any state in the international community also justifies the approval or refusal of the existing political regime of that state system within which these sports bodies get affiliated. For a more clear understanding, the context of the Commonwealth Statement on Apartheid, better known as the Gleneagles Agreement, can be taken into consideration. This Agreement in 1977 committed Commonwealth countries and its nationals to withhold their participation in any kind of sporting competition with South Africa to combat unitedly against the harsh racial policy called Apartheid persuaded by the white-minority governed regime. This Agreement acknowledges a sporting ban on South Africa by Commonwealth member states. The commitment embodied in the Gleneagles Agreement can be reproduced below:

Heads of Government specially welcomed the belief, unanimously expressed at their Meeting, that in the light of their consultations and accord, there were unlikely to be future sporting contacts of any significance between Commonwealth countries or their nationals and South Africa while that country continues to pursue the detestable policy of apartheid...⁶²

THE POLITICAL CONNECTION OF SPORTS OUTSIDE THE DIRECT INFERENCE OF GOVERNMENT

One can go beyond the formal and orthodox classification of politics as well. The broader dimension of politics includes every level of human interaction involving various actors and activities. Viewing politics as a medium of managing social affairs, it can be argued that the

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/amateur-sports-act-1978-statement-signing-s-2727-into-law> (Accessed on: March 10, 2021)

⁶² The Gleneagles Agreement on Sporting Contacts with South Africa (1977). Retrieved from <https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/GleneaglesAgreement.pdf> (Accessed on: October 10, 2018)

scholars of politics must not fail to incorporate political activities in any sphere of human life starting from small social groups to the activities of international organizations. Following this argument, it is obvious that sports as part of the social system inevitably comes under the purview of politics due to its deep-rooted political nature. Hence, sports inevitably leads to ‘an access point, for it is an important part of that system, and, as such, is shaped by it while simultaneously influencing it’⁶³. Politics also manifests within the sphere of domestic and international sporting federations or bodies. In this regard, Horney et al. further observes:

*It would be wrong to conclude that the only place to analyse the politics of sport is in central and local government. As suggested already, power exists as much in ‘non-political’ bodies, such as ‘governing bodies’ of sport. The very title ‘governing body’ clearly identifies such an institution as being the context for decision making (or the exercise of power) that affects people connected with a sport.*⁶⁴

Therefore, a stark study concerning the political feasibility of sports not only recognises the value of sports within the aegis of government relations and public affairs but also acknowledges the political salience of sporting bodies, authorities, organizations or clubs. As Barrie Houlihan remarks:

Some sports bodies, such as the IOC and the Commonwealth Games Federation, have either explicit political goals as part of their charter, as has the IOC, or have an explicit political rationale in their origin as with the CGF. Other sports bodies, are an integral part of the state bureaucracy either because of the authoritarian nature of the regime or, more commonly, because of the

⁶³ Levermore, R & Budd, A. (2004). Sport and international relations: Continued neglect?. In R, Levermore & A. Budd (1st ed.) *Sport and International Relations: An Emerging Relationship*. London: Routledge, p. 9

⁶⁴ Horne, J., Tomlinson, A. and Whannel, G. (1999). *Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sport*. London: E & F N Spon, p. 195

*problems of establishing an independent organizational structure for sport without state financial support.*⁶⁵

In this aspect, another idea, as portrayed by Leftwich in *What is Politics? The Activity and its Study* makes it clear that politics resides in ‘the heart of all collective social activity, formal and informal, public and private, in all human groups, institutions and societies, not just some of them’⁶⁶. This implies a broader scope of politics which is ‘woven into the patterns of decision-making in a society, its ideologies and its distribution of power’⁶⁷. With this insight, it is pertinent to argue that the notion of ‘politics’ also incorporates the connotations of power and power relations and the way power is achieved. In other words, politics explains how power emerges and how it is bargained or negotiated. In this sense, politics, in the sporting sphere, also encompasses ‘the use of power within a range of non-governmental sports organizations ranging from the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and the major international federations (IFs) through the domestic governing body to the local sports club’⁶⁸. This consideration of power struggle is dominantly evident within the domestic and transnational sporting bodies or federations even if the government is not directly involved in it. For instance, in the 1970s, Kerry Packer’s World Series Cricket, a breakaway commercial professional cricket competition featuring the best players of the world turned out to be the biggest threat to the very existence of the Australian Cricket Board (ACB). It also challenged the monopoly of long-established governing body of world cricket, the International Cricket Conference (ICC).

⁶⁵ Houlihan, B. (2000). Politics and Sports. In J. Coakley & E. Dunning (ed.) *Handbook of Sports Studies*. London: Sage, p.220

⁶⁶ Leftwich, A. (1984). *What is Politics? The Activity and Its Study*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 63

⁶⁷ Houlihan, B. (1994). *Sport and International Politics*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester- Wheatsheaf, p.7

⁶⁸ Houlihan, B. (2000). Politics and Sports. In J. Coakley & E. Dunning (ed.) *Handbook of Sports Studies*. London: Sage, p.213

This historic case was a clear reflection of power struggles and negotiations between the sporting organizations within the larger sporting spectrum.

Following the above discussion, it must be admitted the growing complexities of world politics cannot be comprehensively understood without shedding light on the political feasibility of sports across borders and cultures. However, despite acknowledging the political dynamics related to politics in sports, my research exclusively concentrates on the politics of sports. In this light, my study endeavours to explore how sports has repeatedly been politicised by the states as a means to political and diplomatic gains.

THE NEGLIGENCE OF SPORTS IN THE STUDY OF POLITICS

It is also imperative to note that despite largely contributing to the evolving trajectories of international politics, the domain of sports has long been neglected in academic discussions and scholarly analysis. Sports lacks adequate attention in the intellectual discourses which are in search of a deeper understanding of international politics and certainly leads to the unavoidable question; “Why has sport been so ignored by people whose profession it is to understand the political?”⁶⁹ In fact, political credentials of sports lacks systematic and rigorous scholarly appraisal due to the elitism of academia itself in which sports is perceived as too flippant for critical inquiry. Hence, the inability of political scientists in case of giving sports a prominent position in academic discourses looks like “a form of intellectual myopia born of long-established prejudice”⁷⁰ The rationale behind this void is due to the reason that study of international politics is already preoccupied with the research agendas which arises out of the issues like regime change, voting, causes of international conflicts, war, diplomacy and many other major political themes. On this point, Lincon Allison and Terry Monnington notes:

⁶⁹ Hern, M. (2013). *One Game at a Time. Why Sports Matter*. Oakland, CA: AK Press, p.9

⁷⁰ Chatterjee, A. (2013) *People at Play: Sport, Culture and Nationalism*, Kolkata: Setu, p. iv

The sporting dimensions of international relations still often plays almost no part in education in the subject. We might expect to find no mention of sport in a collection called Classic of international Relations but it does seem strange to find it entirely absent from recent monograph textbooks like Michael Nicholson's International Relations and William Nester's International Relations'. An honourable exception might be Joshua Goldstein's International Relations which manages two references to international sporting organizations in over six hundred pages. It is not as if sporting relations are part of some new study of 'globalization', of international organizations separate from the state and a global 'civil society' which fits oddly with the traditional study of relations between states. They are, but it is also the case that states have used sport in a variety of ways in their foreign relations⁷¹.

Nevertheless, the combination of few ground-breaking works of the historians and academicians like Barrie Houlihan, James Riordan, Grant Jarvie, Lincoln Allison, John Hoberman, John Hargreaves, Alan Bairner and many more has extended the scope for further academic investigations on the political dimension of sports within the branch of political studies. Without a doubt, the domain of sports has historically been restricted to evolve as a major subject of mainstream political studies. As Victor Cha comments:

The study of international relations purports to explain how nation-states and individuals interact around the globe. Yet one major area of such interaction-international sport - remains exceedingly understudied. This in spite of the fact that countries have gone to war over sport, fought for sovereign recognition through sport, and that citizens around the world have it as a daily part of their lives. Indeed it is astounding that a phenomenon that matters so much has been so little studied by a field that purports to explain relations between states and humans around the world⁷².

⁷¹ Allison, L. & Monnington, T. (2005). Sport, prestige and international relations. In L. Allison. (ed). *The Global Politics of Sport : The Role of Global Institution in Sport*, London & New York : Routledge, p. 5

⁷² Cha, V, D. (2009). A Theory of Sport and Politics. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26 (11) : 1581, Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523360903132972> (Accessed on: January 15, 2020)

He further adds:

*...those who study sport rather than world politics have not observed the formers' impact on nation-states, instead largely working in fields like sports psychology and medicine, and in a social science context, in the fields of anthropology, sociology and gender studies.*⁷³.

The professor of Loughborough's School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Alan Bairner was also upset about the fact that 'not all political theorists or all political scientists are ignorant about sport. Indeed for many it is an important aspect of their lives-but often only of their lives as lived away from the lecture theatre, the seminar room, and the computer screen'⁷⁴. Mike Dennis and Jonathan Grix in their book *Sport under Communism: Behind the East Germany 'Miracle'* have also addressed the lack of political discourse under the broader purview of sports studies:

*Before we begin to look at the widespread political use of sport made by states, it is worth considering that little academic research has been conducted by the very people one would assume would analyse the politics of sport: political scientists and international relations scholars. There are, of course, a number of exceptions ... but astonishingly, there is barely a political science or international relations scholars 'literature' as such within which one could place one's own work.*⁷⁵.

THE GROWING RISE OF SPORTS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

However, the political resonance of sporting events in the past decades involving matters of power, ideologies or national interest of states across the world has strengthened the realm of

⁷³ Cha, V, D. (2009). A Theory of Sport and Politics. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26 (11): 1582 Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523360903132972> (Accessed on: January 15, 2020)

⁷⁴ Gift, T. and Miner, A. G. (2017). "DROPPING THE BALL": The Understudied Nexus of Sports and Politics. *World Affairs*, 180 (1): 135. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0043820017715569> (Accessed on: September 20, 2018)

⁷⁵ Dennis, M. & Grix, J. (2012). *Sport under Communism: Behind the East German 'Miracle'* (1st ed). UK : Palgrave Macmillan, p. 14

sports as an arena of serious concern for state politicians, policymakers, diplomats and civil society, especially in the past few decades. Sports occupies a prominent position in the contemporary global scenario. There are numerous sporting events in a colonial and post-colonial epoch which have immensely shaped the matrix of world politics. Further, the pace of academic endeavours toward the undeniable political salience of sports has considerably accelerated since the late nineteenth and twentieth century when sports began to be recognised as a politically malleable resource in the arena of domestics and foreign policy. According to Pascal Boniface: “The link between sport and international research runs deeper than just a researcher’s own sporting interests, or a sportsman’s inclination for reflection on world affairs. For a researcher today, sport.....is not just a spare-time leisure activity... It is also a social, political, cultural, economic and diplomatic issue”.⁷⁶

Allen Guttman’s in *Sport, Politics, and the Engaged Historian* advances this point further: “The intersection of sport and politics has been a major focus of contemporary sports history. This was definitely not the case in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when historians seldom commented on the political implications of sport or on the political controversies it engendered.”⁷⁷ Sports being socially constructed entity and having a strong community shared value is no longer considered to be an isolated and autonomous institution of society. It is logically impossible to avoid the wider implications of sports on society. Hence, sports as a socio-political phenomenon unquestionably invokes larger scholarly attention for further enquiry in light of a broader and comprehensive understanding.

⁷⁶ Boniface, P. (1998). Football as a factor (and reflection) of international politics. *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, 33 (4): 87. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03932729808456836> (Accessed on August 7, 2017)

⁷⁷ Guttman, A. (2003). Sport, Politics and the Engaged historian. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38 (3): 363

SPORTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

Simply put, the study of international relations as an academic field has evolved and expanded in an exciting way to systematically explore the behaviours and interactions between states and individuals across the globe. As, Goldstein states:

...the field of international relations (IR) concerns the relationships among the world's governments. But these relationships cannot be understood in isolation. They are closely connected with other actors (such as international organizations, multinational corporations, and individuals); with other social structures (including economics, culture, and domestic politics); and geographical and historical influences. IR is a large subject that overlaps several other fields⁷⁸.

On the other hand, sports has become associated with a range of issues in international politics such as power, diplomacy, cultural exchanges, inter-state relations, war, peace and so forth. In this context, it is pertinent to explain how sports has been shaping and nurturing a range of activities in contemporary international relations. Therefore, the political feasibility of sports requires to be scrutinised through a systematic theoretical framework to clarify how sports matters to international relations. It is worth noticing that my study sheds light on three competing theories; Realism, Pluralism and Globalism to understand the sports-politics nexus in a holistic way. Put differently, the comparative analysis of three schools of theoretical premises intends to explain the ever-changing contours of world politics through the lens of sports. In the next section, it is also relevant to better grasp the point why realism appears to be more appropriate to my case which exclusively focuses on the political developments concerning statecraft, foreign policies and diplomacy.

⁷⁸ Goldstein, J. S. (2003). *International Relations* (5th ed.). Delhi: Pearson Education, p.3

REALISM AND SPORTS

Gathering the experiences from the First World War and Second World War, realist tradition assumes that world politics evolves within a system of international anarchy with no overarching authority. States are primarily the leading actors in world politics. In this sense, international relations is all about the struggles for power among the states whose ultimate motive is to defend their interests and security⁷⁹. The most comprehensive and widely acknowledged idea of political realism in the academic study of international relations is found in the masterwork of Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations: The struggle for Power and Peace*. Morgenthau's remarkable work exclusively focuses upon the state-centric aspirations of power: "Politics is a struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining, and demonstrating it determine the technique of political action"⁸⁰. Besides, national interest precisely determines and shapes the decisions and actions of any states in the competitive environment of international politics. States chose war in a hostile environment as the ultimate tool of statecraft due to the extreme consequence of any unavoidable conflict of considerable duration. In such a case, the natural tendency of states for acquiring and maximising power gives rise to the phenomenon of aggressive nationalism and militarism. Following this context, the political salience of any sporting phenomenon can be explained through the realist school of thought.

First, as discussed above, according to the realist paradigm, nationalism is one of the fundamental parts of mainstream international relations. Whenever athletes participate in any international sporting forum they represent their nation. Their wins reassert the superiority of the country. In this way, sports strengthens national identity by articulating a sense of collective

⁷⁹ Jackson, R. & Sorensen, G. (3rd ed), (2007). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 60 - 74.

⁸⁰Jackson, R. & Sorensen, G. (3rd ed), (2007). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 60 - 74.

consciousness or shared identity. For example, the nationalistic manifestation of sports can be exemplified through the instance of the United States' conscious strategy of resisting the British dominated cricket by popularising baseball as an integral part of their cultural identity.

Second, within the scope of realism, sports has always been cultivated as a resource for sovereign governments. Sports has become integrally connected with inter-state competitions and geopolitical rivalries. Sports has often been utilised as a major instrument for state governments or political regimes to pursue their interests around the world. In such cases, the national sporting bodies often get manipulated by the policy objectives of any state in pursuit of national interests. With this insight, the 1936 Olympics can be the most significant example where the platform of sports was promoted to glorify Hitler's Nazi ideology and to propagandize the supremacy of its race. The right-wing government has invested much of its resources in the training of athletes. Additionally, sports is also regarded as an attractive resource for foreign policy and public diplomacy.

Third, as discussed before, realism never discards the possibilities of war. The famous soccer war stemmed from the violence surrounding the two-leg FIFA World Cup qualifying match between the national teams of Honduras and El Salvador in 1969 can be exemplified by a realist's lens to clear out how a battle on the sporting field may lead to a war-like situation beyond the field. Although there was a combination of long-standing tensions centering around the issues like border disputes, refugee crisis, Honduras' disadvantaged position within the Central American Common Market etc. which had deteriorated the relations between the two poor Central American countries, but it was due to an immediate outburst of the post-game riots aroused from the uncontrolled violence among fans, the soccer rivalry was escalated to 'La Guerra de Cien hoars' (The War of One Hundred Hours)⁸¹. Considering the spill-over

⁸¹ Bar-On, T. (2017). *Beyond Soccer: International Relations and Politics as Seen through the Beautiful Game*. Lanham, Maryland : Rowman & Littlefield, p. 43

effect of violence and hostility emanating from sporting fields, Eduardo Galeano states that ‘Soccer, metaphor for war, at times turns into real war’⁸². Their animosity took a serious turn in the first match in the Honduras capital of Tegucigalpa on June 8, 1969, which Honduras won by 2-1. The stadium was set ablaze followed by the fighting between rival fans. The nationalistic football fervour was further instigated due to the jingoistic coverage of Salvadoran media as they portrayed the match ‘as a point of national honour’⁸³. The Second game which took place in San Salvador, on June 15, 1969, ignited more violence with El Salvador’s emphatic 3-0 victory. The final playoff match was shifted to Mexico City by soccer administrators, on June 26, 1969, because of the worsening security challenges. Finally, El Salvador qualified for the World Cup by its dramatic decisive win by 3-2. In these couple of matches, players and officials were assaulted by the hostile crowds. The greater violence followed by the play-off matches took the extreme spark on July 14, 1969, when El Salvador’s fighter aircrafts bombarded the airport in the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa. The diplomatic ties between the two countries became shattered. The Honduran Air Force also retaliated with strategic bombings and destroyed almost half of El Salvador’s major power centres. Consequently, this war ended up with the losses of over 2,000 and displacement of more than 100,000 homeless Salvadorans⁸⁴ and a paralysed Central American Common Market. This instance of a soccer war considerably falls under the realist’s interpretation of sports.

⁸² Galeano, E. (1998) *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*. London : Verso, p. 129

⁸³ Mallin, J. (1970). Military Affairs Abroad: Salvador - Honduras War, 1969. *Air University Review*, 21 (3) : 89

⁸⁴Lindsey Barrett, Colby Leachman, Claire Lockerby, Steven McMullen, Matthew Schorr, Yuriy Veytskin, “The Soccer War,” at *Soccer Politics Pages*, [http: https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/the-soccer-war/](https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/the-soccer-war/)

(Accessed on: July 24, 2022)

PLURALISM AND SPORTS

According to the pluralist perspective, the political dynamics of world affairs do not always depend on state-centric activities. The trends of Pluralists' outlook became prominently evident in the 1960s and 1970s which laid the bedrock of liberal ideology in international politics. With the growing importance of non-state actors being ceaselessly involved in global political affairs, the state is no longer considered as the only legitimate actor in global politics. The paradigm of pluralism came into prominence during the 1970s through the influential work of Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane underpinning an alternative to traditional realism. Emphasising the issues like transnational relations and intersocietal interdependence, pluralism sought to establish the fact that international politics is no longer limited to and controlled by the exclusive premise of state apparatus. In summary, Pluralism emphasised a 'mixed-actor model that, while not ignoring national governments, emphasizes that international politics is shaped by a much broader range of interests and groups. At the very least, the emphasis on external sovereignty that is central to realism has to be replaced, in this view, by the more modest notion of autonomy'⁸⁵. The pluralist model stresses on the diffusion of power amongst competing bodies of transnational elites, groups, or organisations and a politically active citizenry. It arguably considers that states in the interconnected international system deliver neutral functions by adjusting and accommodating the bargaining interests of non-state actors through various channels. Hence, instead of exploring international politics in light of state-centric perspective, pluralism pays importance to concepts like multiple access channels, transnationalism, complex interdependence etc. to explain the changing dynamics of international politics. Unlike realism which concentrates on the struggle for power among states in which states tend to play the role of a unitary actor serving the national interests,

⁸⁵ Heywood, A. (2002). *Politics* (2nd ed). New York : Palgrave, p. 130

pluralism throws light on the complicated interactions of the sub-state actors (social, cultural or economic) which have diversified and expanded the domain of global politics. As Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane comments, “A good deal intersocietal intercourse takes place without governmental control...states are by no means the only actors in world politics’.⁸⁶

Thus if we explore the political salience of sports from the pluralistic perspective, it can be argued that sports as a potential non-state actor has largely influenced the broader range of interactions in transnational politics. Accordingly, the extensive role of non-governmental sporting organisations and governing bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), International Paralympic Committee (IPC) etc. in the arena of contemporary world politics cannot be ignored.

GLOBALISM AND SPORTS

Globalism, at its core, is integrally connected to the wider international totality. It goes beyond the traditional understanding of state-to-state relations. The central assumption of globalism emphasises the economic factors rather than security concerns to understand the changing dynamics of global politics. Globalists view the international system as a unified whole. Furthermore, the Marxist paradigm also needs to be highlighted within the broader ambit of globalist theory. From the Marxist perspective, economic structures, class dominations or global inequalities can reasonably explain how the world gets divided into richer and poorer states through the integrated process of dependence development. It highlights the structural inequality of the world system consisting of a core, a semi-periphery and a periphery which

⁸⁶ Nye, Joseph S. & Keohane, R. O. (1971) ‘Transnational Relations and World Politics: An introduction’. *International Organization*, 25(3): 330. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706043?origin=JSTOR-pdf> (Accessed on: January 23, 2021)

provides the ground for the capitalist exploitation (core) of the underdeveloped states (periphery and semi-periphery) in which the wealthy countries benefit from the low status countries. Immanuel Wallenstein in a seminal work *Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* aptly portrayed the ‘development of underdevelopment’ closely associated with the global inequality structures. The core-periphery system has led to the extraction of a diligent workforce from poorer blocks. Sunkel also thinks that the underdevelopment of third world countries requires to be interpreted in the background of ‘the development of an international capitalist system’⁸⁷. Johan Galtung also contends that imperialism being stimulated by the structure of the unequal relationship between a centre and a periphery serves the interests of the majority of people in the centres at the expense of the majority people of the peripheral countries. This analytical framework refers to an exploitative structure of ‘vertical’ interactions between the centre and periphery. The above-discussed scenario is highly relevant in the arena of sports. Research shows that developed countries extract cheaper sporting talents by lower transfer rates from third world countries to boost the industrial countries’ market. As a result, the underdeveloped countries have been deprived of the economic rewards which come from the world sports economy. This can be viewed as a ‘muscle drain’ where the sporting resources of Latin America or third world countries were exploited as commodities through the capitalization of the market. Further, the phenomenon of cultural imperialism can also be dragged in this context in which the ‘periphery’ through the process of cultural transmission ‘validates for the centre the culture developed in the centre [and also] reinforces the centre as a centre’⁸⁸. Looking at the history of the worldwide diffusion of cricket, it can be argued that cricket has become a major cultural export of British colonial power and thereby served as a tool of cultural

⁸⁷ Houlihan, B. (1994). *Sport and International Politics*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester- Wheatsheaf., p. 47

⁸⁸ Ibid.

imperialism. British domination through the cultural power of cricket was solidified by military soldiers, administrators or servants and educators. As a result, the Victorian conventions and their code of conduct were firmly fostered within the colonial populations through the cultural expansion of cricket.

WHY REALISM AS A FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY?

Notwithstanding, the comparative analysis between these theoretical paradigms has been done to have a multifaceted understanding of world politics. However, it is imperative to note that all of these theories have certain limitations. The biggest weakness of the realist approach lies in its over-emphasis on state-centrism and militarism as a result of which it falls short to theorise the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) beyond the arena of state based power politics. Thus, practitioners of the realist school find it difficult to explore the feasibility of sports as a non-state, transnational actor in controlling and manipulating multi-layered negotiations or bargaining in the wider context of international politics. Equivalently, the scope of pluralism also gets limited while explaining the nationalistic phenomenon of sports and the interactions among states as central stake holders of international system. The tradition of pluralism also considerably developed an affinity with the perspective of globalism in international relations. Globalism also has shortcomings due to its over-reliance on economic factors which subsides other factors like security issues. Thus, summarizing the comparative analysis of different theoretical schools of thoughts (realism, pluralism, globalism), it can be argued that pluralists' perspectives have certain advantages to explain the political viability of sports in global politics in the broader scenario. In a nutshell, pluralism not only recognises the central and often authoritative character of the state within the international political arena but also acknowledges the credibility of other non-state actors functioning independently or semi-independently from the states. Besides states, it widely recognises the value of civil society and non-governmental organisations which do not possess any legal political status and diplomatic

role in the international system. Further, the advocates of pluralism pay substantial attention to the interconnected transnational negotiations and exchanges in social, political, economic spheres transcending the porous character of territorial frontiers. Hence, in the broader scenario, the theoretical understanding of pluralism is much useful in exploring the multifarious contribution of sports to the changing matrix of international politics across the world.

However, it is also imperative to address the point that none of the above theoretical assumptions rejects the central importance of states in world affairs. Although pluralism as a theoretical approach pays much importance to the gamut of international actors, non-governmental organisations and civil society initiatives but the dominant role of states in terms of facilitating numerous political and diplomatic interests is very much evident in global politics. Thus, the realist's emphasis on the authoritative role of states cannot be discarded to understand the *realpolitik* conducting international relations. Therefore, it can be argued that although pluralism as an approach possesses the capacity to capture the subtleties of the political role of sports in the wider internal scenario, it becomes limited especially in the context of heated political settings or nation-building projects in post-colonial societies where sports is not only politicised but also gets drawn into the politics of collective identity formation and its mobilisation by and for the state elites. Therefore, despite acknowledging the viability of pluralism to better understand the larger scenario of sport-politics nexus, my study proceeds to follow the realist framework as it appears to be more befitting of my research area which aims at exploring the political significance of sports concerning the statecraft, foreign policy, diplomacy and so on.

Within the broader purview of realist's theoretical understanding, my study seeks to answer a few questions; does sports act as a nation-building tool? How far is sports relevant as a significant mechanism of state policy? Does sports influence inter-state relations? Finally, how

have states effectively utilised the arena of sports as a tool of public diplomacy and a soft power instrument? These questions are examined below:

SPORTS AS PART OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND NATION-BUILDING

Sports as a political asset can unify the people of a nation by inculcating a collective sense of national belonging and emotional togetherness. Sports provides the impetus for national imagination. In this sense, sports as an attractive locus of socialisation can contribute to the nation-building process. The traits of competitive sports as a mass phenomenon are the combinations of ‘a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which stand for or represent, the shared experiences, sorrows and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation’.⁸⁹ Sporting nationalism creates a ground for collective consciousness and symbolic oneness. Hans Kohn argues that it was the “primitive feelings” of man to develop “natural tendencies” towards his birthplace, his own language and customs, his childhood place and other aspects surrounding it in which he finds a feeling at home. This feeling correlates with other factors like territory, language, common descent etc. out of which a sense of national consciousness is formed.⁹⁰ This is similarly applicable to the world of sports where sports fanatics can perceive the national attachment by seeing the national players donning the national team jersey or singing the national anthem they are devoted to. Every time the national team performs, it is the “nation” that comes first and not any “community”. Thus sporting nationalism adds weight to Michael Billig’s concept of *Banal Nationalism*. Billig in his seminal work introduced the term banal nationalism “to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nation of the West to be reproduced. It is argued

⁸⁹ Grix, J (2015). *Sport Politics: An Introduction*, London: Macmillan international Higher Education, p.35

⁹⁰ Kohn, H. (1939). The Nature of Nationalism. *The American Political Science Review*, 33 (6): 1002-1004. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/1948728> (Accessed on: May 5, 2019)

that these habits are not removed from everyday life...Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged, in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition."⁹¹ Billig turns his attention to the neglected form of nationalism in the everyday context which is not similar to the extreme expression of peripheral nationalism. Craig Calhoun also highlights the inability "to see everyday nationalism that organizes people's sense of belonging in the world".⁹² For instance, in India people could barely see national flags except on the premises of public institutions or any events of national importance. In this case, popular sporting occasions provide the opportunity for the fans to encourage the everyday habits of reinforcing national identity in a subliminal way. People consciously or subconsciously tend to develop a spirit of symbolic oneness when they carry the national flag or sing the national anthem to show support to their national team. The sporting success of any country at the international level tends to have a nationalistic significance. Sporting glories have always been significant for the new nations to consolidate their national identity as an independent nation. The Olympic medals achieved by Finish athletes in Stockholm 1912 or Kenyan and Ethiopian runners' achievements in the 1960s and 1970s at the Olympics can be a good example of how a higher number in medal tallies boosted their national identity and national solidarity. Sporting nationalism also manifested in the wake of the anti-colonial struggle during the decolonisation period. Sports became an integral part of nonviolent national resistance to colonialism, especially in the nineteenth century. According to John Plamenatz, nationalism is a cultural phenomenon. To him, "nationalism is a desire to preserve or enhance a people's national or cultural identity when that identity is threatened, or the desire to transform or even create it where it is felt to be inadequate or

⁹¹ Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. New Delhi: Sage, p.6

⁹² Calhoun, C. (2007). *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, p. 27

lacking”.⁹³ From this perspective, nationalism arises as a reaction of people who find themselves at a culturally disadvantaged position. Based on this conceptual model, Plamenatz clarifies two forms of nationalism – “eastern” and “western”- in terms of their response to outside cultural influence.⁹⁴ He clarifies certain standards to assess the development of a particular national culture. Although he believes that “it was the West that provided this common set of standards to the East. However, he finds an inherent contradiction in an attempt of ‘eastern’ nationalism to culturally ‘re-equip’ nations to transform them”.⁹⁵ Keeping this argument in mind, the phenomenon of footballing nationalism in India can be contextualised where the football was initially appropriated by the Indians through the imitation of an alien culture, but later, the game was used to overturn the colonial supremacy. India’s Mohun Bagan Club’s heroic victory against a British regimental team East Yorkshire Regiment in the 1911 Indian Football Association (IFA) shield, had a powerful nationalist impact during the Swadeshi movement⁹⁶. The psycho-nationalistic influence of that sporting victory in generating a spontaneous anti-colonial nationalism and a sense of nationhood among the native Indians who are struggling to achieve independence cannot be disregarded in this scenario. As Soumen Mitra writes:

Mohun Bagan represented Bengal with its obsession for physical strength and the yearning to cast aside the stigma of feebleness by beating the colonial power at its own game. ... The 1911 victory reflected the image of Bengal society surging in anger against colonial rule. While sports became a symbol around

⁹³ Plamenatz, J. (1973). Two Types of Nationalism. In E. Kamenka (ed.) *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, pp. 23-24

⁹⁴ Dugis, V. M. A. (1999). Defining Nationalism in the Era of Globalization. *Masyarakat Kebudayaan dan Politik*, Th XII (2): 54. Retrieved from <https://journal.unair.ac.id/download-fullpapers-11-DUGIS.pdf> (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

⁹⁵ Majumdar, B. & Bandyopadhyay, K. (2006). *Goalless: The Story of a Unique Footballing Nation*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p. 62

⁹⁶ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2008). *Playing For Freedom: A Historic Sports Victory*. New Delhi: Standard Publishers, p. 60

*which anti-colonial consciousness developed, football became an instrument for establishing the 'native' superiority over the 'whites'*⁹⁷.

Although few European scholars like Tony Mason⁹⁸ or Paul Dimeo⁹⁹ interpreted the significance of native's sporting success as a triumph of 'games ethic'¹⁰⁰, a British imperial mission to diffuse sports as part of the British moral system to solidify its hegemony but most of the Indian scholars and journalists think that the victory had provided massive psychological currents in India to create an 'indigenous brand of nationalism'¹⁰¹. Kausik Bandyopadhyay depicts this epochal win as follows:

*Defeating the best European civil and military teams in their game of soccer placed Mohun Bagan like a colossal nationalist Himalaya on the sporting horizon. The Indians were prepared and desirous to see the British Raj humiliated and brought to its knees. That is a measure of what Mohun Bagan achieved on the football field. For a brief moment, the subconscious longing of the Indian to come out winner in the struggle for self-assertion leading to independence was made a tangible reality. The status of Mohun Bagan as the national soccer team made them a major fighting unit in India's wider battle against the imperialists. Mohun Bagan had become almost synonymous with the national battle cry of Bande Mataram ('worshipping the mother')... Thus, Bengali nationalist instincts in the wake of a perceived Indian national victory converged with the broader stream of Indian nationalism.*¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Mitra, S. (1991) 'Babu at Play: Sporting Nationalism in Bengal: A study of Football in Bengal, 1880-1911'. In Nitish, R. and Ranjit, R. (Eds.). *Bengal: Yesterday and Today*. Calcutta : Papyrus, pp. 56-57

⁹⁸ Mason, T. (1992). 'Football on the Maidan: Cultural Imperialism in Calcutta', in J.A. Mangan (ed.). *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*. London : Frank Cass, pp. 142-153

⁹⁹ Diemo, P. (2001). 'Football and Politics in Bengal: Colonialism, Nationalism, Communalism'. In P. Diemo & J. Mills (ed.), *Soccer in Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora*. London : Frank Cass, pp. 57-74

¹⁰⁰ For the detailed analysis of the concept of 'Games Ethic', see Mangan, J. A. (1998) *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*. London & Portland: Frank Cass.

¹⁰¹ Majumdar, B. (2002). The vernacular in sports history. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XXXVII, 29 : 3071

¹⁰² Bandyopadhyay, K. (2007). *Playing Off the Field: Explorations in the History of Sport*. Kolkata : Towards Freedom, p. 59

Sports also act as an important thread that binds people of multi-ethnic and multi-ethnic societies, transcending all kinds of socio-economic or cultural barriers, both across and within them. Delivering a lecture about the inclusive power of sports at the press event while launching the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General emphasised: “Sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status”¹⁰³. The political symbolism of the 1995 rugby World Cup in realizing Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s dream of a ‘rainbow nation’¹⁰⁴ to unite post-apartheid South Africa can be highlighted in this context to demonstrate how sports has been drawn into a nation-building project for an ethnically diverse country like South Africa. Sports as a significant element of everyday life in South African society reinforced the existing inequalities and power relations among different communities. On the one hand, the black disadvantaged communities had a stronghold in the field of football having a working-class image in the colonial era. On the other hand, before 1995, Rugby was mostly associated with Afrikaners.¹⁰⁵ South Africa was deeply divided before Nelson Mandela came into power as the first black president through the first democratic election in 1994.¹⁰⁶ Black disenfranchised populations were socially, economically and politically exploited by the white South Africans and thereby, wanted to dismantle the white dominance. The blacks remained disinclined toward the rugby game because of its intense association with

¹⁰³ United Nations (November 5, 2004). *Universal language of sport brings people together, teaches teamwork, tolerance, Secretary-General says at launch of international year*, [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://press.un.org/en/2004/sgsm9579.doc.htm> (Accessed on: July 5, 2016)

¹⁰⁴ Grundlingh, A. & Nauright, J. (2013). *Worlds Apart? : The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup*. In Alegi, P. & Bolsmann, C. (ed.) *Africa’s World Cup Critical Reflections on Play, Patriotism, Spectatorship, and Space*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

¹⁰⁵ Steenveld, L. & Strelitz, L. (1998). The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the politics of nation-building in South Africa. *Media, Culture & Society*. 20 (4): 610. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344398020004006> (Accessed on: August 24, 2020)

¹⁰⁶ Madhavan, N. (November 3, 2019). *Invictus: How Nelson Mandela used Rugby to unite South Africa*. *TheHinduBusinessline.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/sports/invictus-how-nelson-mandela-used-rugby-to-unite-south-africa/article29870024.ece> (Accessed on: November 19, 2021)

whites. They even extended their support for the foreign team playing against South Africa. In this context, the new South African government wanted to inculcate the spirit of the new democracy in the deeply divided country. They urged for hosting the Rugby World Cup as a strategy for national reconciliation. Most importantly, the white-dominated South African Rugby Board (SARB) and the anti-apartheid South African Rugby Union (SARU) also came closer in 1992 to form the new rugby controlling body called South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) bolstering the process of South Africa's national reconciliation¹⁰⁷. Given this context, the strongest support for the game came from Mandela who came up with the strong message that Springboks, South Africa's national rugby union team, must have the support of not just whites but also of the whole population by overcoming the segregationist policy apartheid system. Thus, the Rugby World Cup in 1995 not only culminated in a symbolic celebration of South Africa as a multiracial, unified nation but also ensured its international legitimacy as a vibrant and culturally diverse nation. Expressing the political and emotional significance of South Africa's historic win in the World Cup as a vehicle for constructing a collective South African identity, Mandela remarked: 'when the final whistle blew ... the foundations for reconciliation and nation-building had been truly strengthened'¹⁰⁸. Dennis Worrall, one of the famous political commentators of South Africa also believed that "when South Africa defeated Australia for the World Rugby Cup and Nelson Mandela, wearing South African captain Francois Pienaar's number six jersey, lauded the Boks on their victory... The

¹⁰⁷ Steenveld, L. & Strelitz, L. (1998). The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the politics of nation-building in South Africa. *Media, Culture & Society*. 20 (4): 618. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344398020004006> (Accessed on: August 24, 2020)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 610

emotional impact and political symbolism of this event eclipsed everything else that happened in South Africa in 1995.¹⁰⁹ In this account, J.Van Der Merwe further writes:

The 1995 Rugby World Cup proved cathartic for South Africa at a time when the nation was galvanised through the 'one team, one nation' slogan. The slogan, which extended into the identity building of the 'Rainbow Nation', was to become a cornerstone of Mandela's presidency... The event appear to capture the imagination of the nation and proved a poignant focal point for the country's multiracial aspirations. The Rugby World Cup was one of those classic text book case suggestive of the liberating nature of sports events with a powerful symbolic appeal. This was something which made the political elite sit up and realise the significance of such events for strengthening national identity and manufacturing legitimacy for a newly created, still fragile political order.¹¹⁰

SPORTS AS A PART OF INTER-STATE RELATIONS

Sports, both positively and negatively, influences inter-state relations. Sports has facilitated interactions and cultural exchanges between states. Several states have instrumentalised sports in curbing conflicts with other countries. One of the leading instances of the positive implications of sports on inter-state relations can be traced to the remarkable event of North and South Korean athletes march under one flag at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang¹¹¹ which turned out to be a major diplomatic breakthrough for creating mutual

¹⁰⁹ Steenveld, L. & Strelitz, L. (1998). The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the politics of nation-building in South Africa. *Media, Culture & Society*. 20 (4): 609. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344398020004006> (Accessed on: August 24, 2020)

¹¹⁰ Merwe, J.V.D. (2007). Political analysis of South Africa's hosting of the Rugby and Cricket World Cups: Lessons for the 2010 Football World Cup and beyond?. *South African Journal of Political Studies*, 34 (1): 72. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589340701336294> (Accessed on: October 7, 2021)

¹¹¹ *PyeongChang Official Report, Volume 1 (2018)*. The PyeongChang Organising Committee for the XXIII Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, PyeongChang. Retrieved from https://library.olympics.com/Default/doc/SYRACUSE/206806/pyeongchang-2018-official-report-the-pyeongchang-organising-committee-for-the-xxiii-olympic-and-para?_lg=en-GB (Accessed on: August 17, 2021)

trust and friendship between them. In this case, the participation of athletes from both halves of the peninsula has facilitated the dream of national reunification.

Sports as a political tool has also been regulated by the states in a negative way. For instance, international sporting boycotts are regarded as the most low-cost tool for the states to pursue their political and diplomatic interests as an alternative to follow coercive actions against any states. When a full-fledged war or economic sanction persuaded by any state could cost them heavily with more adverse consequences, sporting boycotts proved to be instrumental as a means of bargaining with the opponents. As Cha states:

Sport has also been subjected to instrumental use as a tool of statecraft. Governments will use sport to convey political messages of protest. Sport's high profile is often deemed an effective medium for getting a message out to a wide audience. It also symbolically conveys one's political intentions. Furthermore, sport is relatively costless to the government relative to other means of statecraft such as war or economic sanctions¹¹².

For instance, in 1980 the then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, urged British athletes to boycott the Moscow Olympics in response to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Consequently, the USSR boycotted the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles as a retaliation for the 1980s boycott.

SPORTS AS A PART OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Sports has also been promoted by states as a significant policy instrument. States have strategically utilised sporting investments to serve their government's policy agendas. For Robert Redeker 'some less powerful countries seek to call attention to themselves through sports, which procure for them a surplus of power and influence greater than that which is

¹¹² Cha, V. D. (2009). *Beyond The Final Score: The Politics of Sport in Asia*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 9

effectively theirs on the world stage'¹¹³. In this context, Erich Honecker, the then Head of the Free German Youth Movement in the Soviet Zone, also contends that sports cannot be considered as an end in itself, but a means to the end¹¹⁴. For instance, the state's investment in sports was impressively revealed in the East German's sports system. The GDR wanted to target sports for gaining international recognition. They desperately wanted to get out of the shadow of her bigger neighbour West Germany through sporting success. Efforts were made from part of the GDR government to introduce reforms in sports. Most interestingly, doping was introduced in their sports system after Manfred Ewald took charge as a sports minister in 1961.¹¹⁵ It resulted in East Germany's immense success at the Olympics. A tiny country of 17 million won more medals than West Germany in the 1968 Summer Olympics although they participated under common flag and anthem. In the 1976 Olympics they stood third in the Olympic medal tally. It was believed that 'Eight percent of West Germans who advocate recognition of the GDR do so because of the success of the German socialist state in sport, especially at the Olympic Games'.¹¹⁶ Jonathon Grix also put forth the similar argument:

East Germany's political instrumentalization of sports for international recognition and legitimacy remains unparalleled. East Germany's success in elite sport has had far-reaching and unintended consequences; the sports model developed and refined in the GDR continues to shape modern-day elite sport in advanced capitalist states. There is a certain irony that East Germany

¹¹³ Redeker, R. (2008). Sport as an opiate of international relations: The myth and illusion of sport as a tool of foreign diplomacy. *Sport in Society*, 11(4): 499. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430802019482> (Accessed on: December 10, 2017)

¹¹⁴ Grix, J (2015). *Sport Politics: An Introduction*, London: Macmillan international Higher Education, p. 42

¹¹⁵ Dimeo, P., Hunt, T. M. & Horbury, R. (2011). The individual and the state: a social historical analysis of the East German 'Doping System'. *Sport in History*. 31 (2): 227. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2011.590026> (Accessed on: July 25, 2018)

¹¹⁶ Riordan, J. (1986). Elite Sport Policy in East and West. In L. Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 77

*collapsed, yet its sporting legacy continues to influence its erstwhile opponents.*¹¹⁷

It needs to be remembered that the politicisation of sports reached its zenith during the time of the Cold War wherein sporting platforms, athletes or ambassadors were purposely used by statesmen and diplomats to influence public opinion. There are a number of evidences which distinctly reveal how sports had been manipulated by superpowers as a tool of public diplomacy and state propaganda. Sporting spectacles, from grassroots to top-level, have been manipulated by the state elites as a political weapon to earn prestige on the international stage. National sporting organizations have been controlled by state instruments as part of wider foreign policy goals. The instrumentalisation of sports in Soviet foreign policy can be cited as an example to elaborate how sports became integrated with the Soviet political system reflecting the ideology and values of the new Socialist state ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917. According to the first Health Minister of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Semashko, “Physical culture in the Soviet understanding of the term is concerned not with breaking records, but with people’s physical health. It is an integral part of the cultural revolution and therefore has personal and social hygiene as its major objective”.¹¹⁸ Given this context, two compelling reasons can be highlighted about how sports was promoted as a fundamental propagandist and diplomatic policy instrument for Soviet governments.

First, Soviet leadership wanted to ensure its world supremacy. They wanted to pursue a well calculated sports policy as an important part of Soviet foreign policy. Soviet leadership left no stone unturned in “uniting progressive forces in the international sports movement, consolidating the united front of sports organizations socialists states, young independent states

¹¹⁷ Grix, J (2015). *Sport Politics: An Introduction*, London: Macmillan international Higher Education, p. 42

¹¹⁸ Riordan, J. (1986). Elite Sport Policy in East and West. In L. Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 70

and workers sports organizations in capitalist states for the purpose of reaching progressive decisions on issues facing the international sports movement, and employing sport as a weapon in the campaign for peace and international understanding”¹¹⁹ Besides, Soviet policy was designed to counter the western colonialism. They had developed a strong association with Red Sports and Gymnastic Organisation, known as Red Sport International (RSI) in Moscow as a strategy of counterbalancing the social-democratic Worker Sports International (later named as Socialist Worker Sports International in 1929) being developed by Belgian, French and German Social democrats¹²⁰. The essence of class struggle seemed deeply embedded in RSI’s statutes; ‘Red Sport International embraces all worker and peasant sports associations which support the proletarian class struggle... Physical culture, gymnastics, games and sports are means of proletarian class struggle, not an end in themselves’¹²¹. Sporting ties had also been reinforced as a strategy of mitigating divisions within the communist community. For example, to integrate worker sports’ organizations, sporting ties were channelised to reduce the differences between social democrats and communists factions.

Second, sports had also been promoted as a significant part of Soviet cultural diplomacy and good neighbourhood policy to integrate socialist societies with Soviet institutions and policy. For instance, a Black sea area soccer competition was held in 1970 which included teams such as Odessa, Sevastopol, Batumi, Bulgaria, Turkey, Rumania etc. In 1972, a Baltic Cup weight - lifting competition also took place which included participants from countries such as Finland, East Germany, Poland, USSR etc. Bilateral sporting links had also been encouraged for a long-

¹¹⁹ Riordan, J. (1988). The role of sport in Soviet foreign policy. *International Journal*, 43 (4): 575 Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40202564> (Accessed on: September 5, 2020)

¹²⁰ Riordan, J. (1986). Elite Sport Policy in East and West. In L. Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 71

¹²¹ Ibid.

term strategic reasons.¹²² The Uzbek sports minister, Y. I. Ibragimov points out this issue: “The attainments of Soviet Uzbekistan and its entry into world sport are of huge importance. They demonstrate graphically the triumph of Lenin’s national policy. Today, Uzbekistan has become a beacon of mature socialism in the East, attracting the attention of young developing states”.¹²³ Several sporting ties and agreements were negotiated by the USSR in the 1980s onwards as a strategy to strengthen cooperation with developing states. Soviet coaches were associated with around 30 national teams from developing countries. By 1980, coaches and officials from 44 developing countries of South America, Asia, and Africa had sent for training at the Moscow Physical Culture Institute. Sporting aids were also provided by the USSR to Cuba with a motive to strengthen Cuba’s road to socialism. The Soviet wanted to help Cuba to acquire sporting resources and expertise so that they could confront the sporting arena with other states on the American continent and could glorify the superiority of the socialist community. As Fidel Castro considered Cuba’s Olympic success as ‘a sporting, psychological, patriotic, and revolutionary victory’ over the capitalist sport.¹²⁴

Sports has also been promoted by different political regimes for reinforcing the government’s political position. Over the years, states have successfully utilised the platform of sports to orchestrate a propaganda triumph. For instance, when Adolf Hitler had assumed power in 1933, Nazi Germany saw the 1936 Berlin Olympics as an opportunity and also a means of propaganda to promote a stable, peaceful and racially tolerant image of Nazi Germany. The sheer grandiosity of the event turned out to be the greatest propaganda strategy in history and the most significant tactical attempt from the Nazi Party to curb the growing political opposition and to subdue the growing political and social pressures at home and abroad. The propaganda

¹²² Riordan, J. (1988). The role of sport in Soviet foreign policy. *International Journal*, 43 (4): 575-576

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.585

worked overwhelmingly to re-energise Nazi ideology and its Aryan supremacy. It successfully cultivated adoration of global audiences as ‘the various sportspeople and diplomats who came to Berlin were hugely impressed with what they say. So it was an enormous success in propaganda’¹²⁵. The official Olympic report on the Berlin Games stated:

*German organization, German hospitality and German enthusiasm for the Olympic ideals created the background for an incomparable example of true Olympic competition. The German nation thus provided the world with renewed proof of its capability and its willingness to cooperate in large international projects designed to further universal peace*¹²⁶.

In 1931 Germany had been selected to host the XI Olympic Games at the 29th IOC session in Barcelona which marked the re-emergence and reintegration of Germany in the international scene after prolonged isolation owing to the backlash from the defeat in World War I. The first memorandum of the Secretary General entitled ‘Our Expectations’ concerning the preparatory work of the Berlin Olympic stated:

*In order that the success of the Olympic Games may be assured, they must not be regarded as the exclusive affair of the German sporting and gymnastic circles nor of the City of Berlin, but must command the interest and support of the entire German nation. If they can be organized on this basis, the Games of 1936 will be the most outstanding Festival of modern times, for German interest in sport is not less than that of the United States and is probably greater than that of any country in Europe*¹²⁷.

¹²⁵ O’ Malley, JP. (March 10, 2018). How the Nazi’s token Jew turned the 1936 Berlin Olympics into a propaganda war. *The Times of Israel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-the-nazis-token-jew-turned-the-1936-berlin-olympics-into-a-propaganda-win/> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

¹²⁶ Anderson, S. (2015). *The Politics and Culture of Modern Sports*. London: Lexington Books, p. 97

¹²⁷ *Official Report, The XI Olympic Games, Berlin (1936)*, Vol. 1, p.45.

William Shirer, an American journalist and war correspondent, illustrated this issue in his diary:

*[I am] afraid the Nazis have succeeded with their propaganda. First, the Nazis have run the Games on a lavish scale never before experienced, and this has appealed to the athletes. Second, the Nazis have put up a very good front for the general visitors, especially the businessman.*¹²⁸

However, one of the major discomfort before the successful execution of Berlin Games was Germany's anti-Semitic public policy and Nazi's persecution of Jews which had led to the international debate about mass boycotts of the Games. In fact, Germany had to sacrifice many sporting talents due to their policy. Professional light heavyweight boxing champion Eric Seelig was expelled by the German Boxing Association because he was Jewish athlete. Gretel Bergmann, a world-class track and field athlete, was also prevented from taking part in the 1936 Summer Olympic because of her Jewish origins¹²⁹. Further, Nazis Germany's radically discriminatory policies also seemed to have contradicted the ideals (fair competition and international unity) of the Olympic Games. As a result, it led to the clarion call for boycott movements which had strongly surfaced in America being followed by other countries such as Britain, France, Sweden, Netherlands, Czechoslovakia etc. Even the Jewish organisations such as the American Jewish Congress or the Jewish Labour Committee and also the Jewish athletes conveyed their support for the boycott. However, the boycott movement came to an end when the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States decided to participate in the Games being supported by a close vote in favour of sending teams to Germany. On the other hand, following

¹²⁸ Muratovski, G. (2012, July 26). Politics in the Olympics: learning from Nazi Germany. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/politics-in-the-olympics-learning-from-nazi-germany-7963> (Accessed on: November 8, 2021)

¹²⁹ The Nazi Olympic – 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. *The Holocaust*. Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nazi-olympics-berlin-1936> (Accessed on: July 16, 2021)

the instruction of Joseph Goebbels, the Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Nazi regime wanted to conquer the world public opinion by exploiting the Olympic Games, thereby turning it into a stage of political advantage. Further, to overcome threats of Olympic boycotts, Nazi regime allowed the star fencer Helene Mayer to compete under their flag whose father was a Jewish. Moreover, to camouflage its extremely racist policies¹³⁰, Nazis temporarily removed the publication of the weekly anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer*. Other anti-Jewish signs in public places were also taken down to showcase a positive image of Germany and to overcome the cultural isolation of Reich's government. The XIth Olympiad was strategically promoted as a perfect stage of the propaganda campaign and to display the virtue of National Socialism. According to US diplomat George Messersmith:

*The youth of Germany believe that Nationalist Socialist ideology is being rapidly accepted in other countries... To the party and to the youth of Germany, the holding of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 has become the symbol of the conquest of the world by National Socialist doctrine. Should the Games not be held in Berlin, it would be one of the most serious blows which National Socialist prestige could suffer within the awakening Germany.*¹³¹

49 athletes around the world participated in the Berlin Olympics. The Berlin festival organised a mind-blowing torch rally from ancient Olympia to the host city. The Berlin Games was broadcasted worldwide by radio and television. Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl was even commissioned by the Nazi regime to produce a documentary called *Olympia* to glorify the Berlin Olympics of 1936 with a clear propagandist intent¹³². In this context, Young stated:

¹³⁰ The Nazi Olympic – 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. *The Holocaust*. Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nazi-olympics-berlin-1936> (Accessed on: July 16, 2021)

¹³¹ Young, C. (2010). Berlin 1936. In A. Bairner & G. Molnar (ed.), *The Politics of the Olympics: A Survey*. New York: Routledge, p.102

¹³² How Leni Riefenstahl shaped the way we see the Olympics. *BBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20160810-how-leni-riefenstahl-shaped-the-way-we-see-the-olympics> (Accessed on: August 2, 2020)

The Olympics were anathema to Nazi ideology. None the less, Hitler never missed an opportunity, and as with sport in general, he decided to embrace the Games for his own purpose. Several reasons will have informed his apparent volt-face. First, the Games would promote sport among German youth and build national strength. Second, success in the sporting realm would help the country regain its status as a world power. Third, the event itself, would, as Hitler told Goebbels in 1933, 'impress world opinion by cultural means'. Finally, such cultural means would project a peaceful image whilst preparations of another kind continued pace. By October 1933, Germany was withdrawing from the League of Nations, and only two weeks after the Games, Goebbels unveiled four-year plan that culminated in the nation readying itself for war by 1940.¹³³

SPORTS AS A DIPLOMATIC INSTRUMENT

Sporting events have also been used for expanding the ground for dialogue making when traditional diplomacy failed to bring normalcy between the conflicting nations. Team spirit, respect for the opponents, fair play or tolerance etc. seemed to be the most appealing virtues of sports which smoothen the ground for negotiation or dialogue making. To illustrate this point more concretely, the implications of 'Ping Pong Diplomacy' in US-China relations is mention-worthy. The diplomatic efforts behind this sporting cooperation turned out to be an ice-breaker between the USA and China. This historic match has led them to open the doors of formal negotiations after a long freeze in their relations following a basketball competition between them after one year. According to Cha's observation, 'Ping-Pong diplomacy offered an out-of-box channel for demonstrating good intentions that no other form of diplomacy could replicate. The event contributed to an underlying decision by the Nixon administration to engage China'¹³⁴. When the diplomatic climate of international relations was clouded by cold war

¹³³Young, C. (2010). Berlin 1936. In A. Bairner & G. Molnar (ed.), *The Politics of the Olympics: A Survey*. New York: Routledge, p. 99

¹³⁴Cha, V, D. (2009). A Theory of Sport and Politics. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26 (11): 1594

propaganda, a real breakthrough took place when the United States table tennis team visited China in 1971 which led to the US President Nixon's decision to lift a trade embargo with China. China's superiority in ping pong and US' excellence in basketball had set the stage for turning sports into a positive forum of diplomatic innovation. Chinese Premier Zhou En-Lai commented on the historic visit of the American ping pong team to China: "The Chinese and American people used to have frequent exchanges. Then came a long period of severance. Your visit has opened the door to friendship between the peoples of the two countries."¹³⁵

SPORTS AS A TOOL OF SOFT POWER

The concept of soft power has become very relevant in the contemporary multipolar world. Contrary to the conventional view of hard power, soft power can be defined as "the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or payment".¹³⁶ Joseph Nye has introduced the term "Soft Power" in his book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* where he pays his attention to the co-optive power rather than the coercive power. He further expanded this idea in his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. In this book, he wrote:

A Country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it. In this sense, it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions. This soft power

¹³⁵ Cha, V, D. (2009). A Theory of Sport and Politics. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26 (11): 1594

¹³⁶ Nye, J. (2017). Soft Power: the origins and political progress of a concept. *Palgrave Commun*, 3 (17008): 1. Retrieved from <https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms20178.pdf> (Accessed on: December 3, 2021)

– getting others to want the outcomes that you want – co-opts people rather than coerces them.¹³⁷

In this complex present scenario, states have increasingly been investing on its soft power resources to shape the preferences of other countries through appeal and attraction. Steven Lukes thinks that “power is often hidden, unobserved... and can be at its most effective when least observable”.¹³⁸ In this context, it is imperative to clarify that soft power cannot be a substitute of tangible and measurable hard power resources like military and economic power but it can definitely be turned into a cheaper resource than hard power which adopts positive interactions and persuasion through public diplomacy or cultural exchanges to achieve long-term foreign policy goals of any state. Nye himself notes that “there is no contradiction between realism and soft power. Soft power is not a form idealism or liberalism. It is simply a form of power, one way of getting desired outcomes.”¹³⁹ Besides, a new concept called “smart power” has also been developed engaging a broad range of tools of statecraft which “underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand one’s influence and establish legitimacy of one’s action.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, a smarter and skillful combination of both hard and soft power can be effective to shape a country’s global agenda. In this backdrop, my study tries to analyse

¹³⁷ Nye, J. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, p. 5

¹³⁸ Lukes, S. (2021). Power and rational choice. *Journal of Political Power*, 14(2): 281. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1900494> (Accessed on February 5, 2022)

¹³⁹ Nye, J. S. (2011). *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs, p.82

¹⁴⁰ CSIS COMMISSION ON SMART POWER: A SMARTER: A smarter, more secure America (2007) *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, p. 7. Retrieved from https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/071106_csissmartpowerreport.pdf (Accessed on March 14, 2021)

how sports has emerged as a powerful soft power tool for the states to fulfill their global ambitions.

The former United States ambassador to Denmark, Jim Cain's stated in 2009 at the Second Hague Conference: "Sports can be a powerful medium to reach out and build relationships... across cultural and ethnic divides, with a positive message of shared values: values such as mutual respect, tolerance, compassion, discipline, equality of opportunity and the rule of law. In many ways, sport can be a more effective foreign policy resource than the carrot and the stick."¹⁴¹ Sporting events have not only been utilised by the states for image-building but also for dialogue and trust building with other countries. For instance, the motive of the Chinese government to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, commonly known as the Beijing Olympics, was to boost its soft power and rejuvenate its global image which was tarnished due to its alleged involvement in human rights violations.

CONCLUSION

Summing up this chapter, it can be argued that the rapid changes in geopolitical affairs also transformed the global role of sports. The former British Prime Minister Tony Blair opined that 'Sport today is far more important than just sport itself'.¹⁴² Sports has strongly cemented its global presence because 'people in every nation love sport. Its values – fitness, fair play, teamwork, and the pursuit of excellence - are universal. At its best, it brings people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status'.¹⁴³ Most

¹⁴¹ Murray, S. (2012). The Two Halves of Sports-diplomacy. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 23(3): 582. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2012.706544> (Accessed on: July 15, 2021)

¹⁴² Gilbert, K. & Bennett, W. (2012). Reconstructing lives through Sport. In K. Gilbert & W. Bennett (ed.), *Sports, Peace & Development*, Champaign, Illinois: Common Ground, p. 7

¹⁴³ United Nations (2005), *Report on the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005*, United Nations, Geneva. Retrieved from

interestingly, the UN, FIFA, International Olympic Committee along with other non-governmental organisations and sports federations have showed their commitment towards the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) to promote sports in a coherent, systematic and strategic way to facilitate cultural exchanges, people to people contacts, post-conflicting relief, rapprochement, conflict prevention, resolution, and reconciliation.¹⁴⁴ Sports has been legitimised as a fundamental resource for global peace and development programmes for its far reaching abilities and appeals beyond the limitations of state borders. As UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated in this context:

*Sport is increasingly recognized as an important tool in helping the United Nations achieve its objectives, in particular the Millennium Development Goals. By including sport in development and peace programme in a more systematic way, the United Nations can make full use of the cost-efficient tool to help us create a better world.*¹⁴⁵

Jacque Rogge, the former president of the IOC also commented on the wider implications of global sport:

We seek change through sport – and the promotion of peace and development has been at the centre of Olympic Movement since its inception’.

And,

https://www.un.org/sport/sites/www.un.org.sport/files/ckfiles/files/Electronic_Version_IYSPE_book.pdf (Accessed on: August 5, 2020)

¹⁴⁴ Cardenas, A. (2013), ‘Peace Building through Sport? An Introduction to Sport for Development and Peace’. *Journal of Conflictology*, 4(1): 24-33. Retrieved from **<http://dx.doi.org/10.7238/joc.v4i1.1493>** (Accessed on: October 10, 2021)

¹⁴⁵ Statement of Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General, available in ‘Achieving the Objectives of the United Nations through Sport’, Sport for Development and Peace, United Nations. Retrieved from **https://www.un.org/sport/sites/www.un.org.sport/files/ckfiles/files/Achieving%20the%20Objectives%20of%20the%20UN%20through%20Sport_Sep_2011_small.pdf** (Accessed on: July 17, 2020)

*Our founder, Pierre de Coubertin, believed deeply that the unifying power of sport could help lead us to a more peaceful world. Sport cannot solve all of the world's ills, but it can contribute to meaningful solutions. Sport provides a common language. It breaks down barriers and brings people together. It is the magnet for young people that can be used to reach positive values and memorable life lessons.*¹⁴⁶

Further, validating sports as the most influential cost-effective tool for facilitating development goals, several declaration have been made worldwide to integrate sports with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹⁴⁷ There are several international declarations and reports such as *Maglingen Declaration and Recommendations*, 2003¹⁴⁸; *Sports for Development & Peace International Working Group's (SDPIWG) Report on Harnessing the Power of Sport, Development & Peace: Recommendation to Governments*, 2008¹⁴⁹; *United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force, Sport for Development and Peace Sports for Development & Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. 2003 etc.¹⁵⁰ which have

¹⁴⁶ Rogge, J. (2011). Plenary, UN 2nd International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development, United Nations, Geneva.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (2010). *Contribution Sport to the Millennium Development Goals*. MDGs Factsheet. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sport/sites/www.un.org.sport/files/ckfiles/files/Sport%20and%20the%20MDGs_FACTSHEET_February%202010.pdf (Accessed on: July 12, 2021)

¹⁴⁸ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Swiss Federal Office of Sport, and Swiss Academy for Development. Switzerland (2003). *The Maglingen Declaration and Recommendations: Creating a better World through Sports*, United Nations Office for Development and Peace. Retrieved from, https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/18_the_maglingen_declaration.pdf (Accessed on: July 13, 2021)

¹⁴⁹ Sports for Development & Peace International Working Group (SDPIWG) (2008). *Report on Harnessing the Power of Sport, Development & Peace: Recommendation to Governments*. Toronto. Right to Play. Retrieved from, https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/rtp_sdp_iwg_harnessing_the_power_of_sport_for_development_and_peace.pdf (Accessed on: July 14, 2021)

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force (2003) *Sport for Development and Peace Sports for Development & Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. Geneva: United Nations. Retrieved from, https://www.un.org/sport2005/resources/task_force.pdf (Accessed on: July 14, 2021)

acknowledged and emphasised the potential of sports to contribute to the goals of development and peace programmes.

Although the above discussion indicates that sport has become truly global, going beyond state bound activities, the fact cannot be denied that states still take immense interest in the political mobilisation of sports. Sports as a viable tool of public diplomacy and also as a soft power mechanism is very much relevant in contemporary geopolitical scenarios. Sports as a part of public diplomacy has become an intrinsic part of global politics where sporting actions have been utilised to send subtle messages to foreign audiences with a purpose of serving the national interests. The effective staging of sports mega-events by states have turned out to be instrumental in attracting the attention of billions of people across the globe. Any sporting mega events can showcase the credibility of the hosting nations, thereby altering the negative stereotypes about their countries among international audiences. Recently, winning the bid for hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar has unveiled their global aspirations for nation branding at the international stage. Doha sought to promote soft power through sports which could immensely boost Qatar's tourism sector. It could also bolster economic diversification beyond the hydrocarbon sector.¹⁵¹ Ministry of foreign affairs, the State of Qatar, precisely addressed this point:

The State of Qatar is one of the sponsors of the UN resolution on sports for development and peace, highlighting the importance of sports in enhancing development, peace, respect and tolerance, achieving an active and healthy community. Therefore, the State of Qatar gives greater importance to sports, through hosting numerous international sports events. The value of sports culture in the State of Qatar is reflected through launching of local and

¹⁵¹ Caflero, G. & Dr. Alexander, K. (March 9, 2020). Qatar's soft power sports diplomacy. *Middle East Institute*, Retrieved from <https://www.mei.edu/publications/qatars-soft-power-sports-diplomacy> (Accessed on: September 15, 2021)

international initiatives including the National Sport's Day and "Doha Goals" initiative.

The State of Qatar is preparing to host the World Cup in Doha in 2022. The World Cup will accelerate the pace of development on a national level in regards to the infrastructure, taking into consideration national laws which the state of Qatar works to amend and implement, in accordance.

Hosting the World in Qatar is a regional accomplishment that will contribute to development in the Middle East. This event will change the image of the Middle East and create an atmosphere of positive interaction between the region and the world¹⁵².

Most importantly, although sports often solidifies the ground for aggressive nationalistic expressions of the states but the universally acclaimed values of sports also cannot be denied. Sports is still considered as a powerful confidence building mechanism between conflicting states. The growing competition over the bidding for and hosting of sporting mega-events among the emerging global players like India, China or Brazil justifies the relevance of the political utilisation of sports in the contemporary arena of international politics.

¹⁵² Sports Diplomacy; Foreign Policy. *Ministry of foreign Affairs*, the State of Qatar, Retrieved from <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/foreign-policy/international-cooperation/sports-diplomacy> (Accessed on January 5, 2022)

SECOND CHAPTER

CRICKET AND POLITICS: UNCOVERING THE SHIFT OF CRICKET FROM AN IMPERIAL TOOL TO SOUTH ASIANIZATION OF CRICKET.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CRICKET:

The game of cricket, like the majority of other sports, has originated in England. Cricket as a modern sports has a rich legacy and it is believed to have been invented in the late Middle Ages before the other major competitive popular sports. Although the genesis of cricket seems a little obscure owing to the various scholarly and etymological descriptions, but there is more or less consensus of experts' stances over the issue that the name of the game itself derives from Anglo-Saxon 'cricce', a staff or crutch.¹ Derek Birley in his well-researched book *A Social History of English Cricket* mentioned that the game emerged in England in the time of the Norman invasion. Their commonly used word 'criquet' was considered as the dialect name for a variant of *jeu de crosse* or *pila baculorea* (translated as 'club-ball') which was prohibited by Edward the III in 1369 due its adverse impact on his war effort.² It is also believed that the word 'creag' is borrowed from *creaget* in 1299-1300 in the Royal Wardrobe Accounts which is similar to *criiquet* and concerns the future Prince Edward playing at 'creag' in Westminster and Newenden³. Another concrete reference related to the history of cricket can be spotted in the evidence of a court case in Guildford in 1598. The case was dealing with the ownership of a parcel of land of Holy Trinity. John Derrick, the Queen's Coroner for the county, has referred

¹ Bailey, T. (1978). *A History of Cricket*. London: George Allen & Unwin, p.9

² Birley, D. (1999). *A Social History of English Cricket*, (EPUB version). London: Aurum Press, p. 12

³ Ibid

to the existence of the land 50 years past in the written testimony mentioning that ‘he and diverse of his fellowes did runne and play there at creckett and other plaies’ during his days as a scholar of the Free Schools of Guildford.⁴ The earliest illustration of cricket can also be traced in the Latin poem written by William Goldwin, a scholar of Eton and King’s College, Cambridge which was published in 1706 under the title *Musae Juveniles*.⁵ Besides, the climax of a match played between Kent and All England on the Artillery Ground in 1744 was immortalised through a poem called *Cricket: An Heroic Poem* by an eye-witness of the game, James Love. The poem started with its rhyming couplets which showcased how cricket was legitimised as a symbol of British national identity: “Hail, cricket! glorious, manly, British game! / First of all sports! be first alike in fame.”⁶

Besides, several fascinating references had been projected with regard to the emergence of cricket in the time of 16th century. For instance, after leaving Eton, Horace Walpole’s reminiscences in 1736 about the attraction of cricket is noteworthy: “An expedition against bargemen, or a match at cricket, may be pretty things to recollect but, thank my stars, I can remember things that are very near as pretty”.⁷ There are certain accounts which also indicated that cricket has evolved from the Scottish sports around 1700 known as ‘Cat-and-Dog’.⁸ Another major source which reflects the earliest renaissances of cricket is John Nyren’s memoirs of the game which was published in a London magazine titled *The Town*. The former Hambledon cricketer’s rich text was reprinted in 1907 as the finest study of cricket titled *The*

⁴ Althem, H. S. (1962). *A History of Cricket: From the Beginning to the First World War*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, p. 21

⁵ Ibid, p. 24

⁶ Love, J. (1754). *Cricket: an heroic poem, with the critical observations of Scriblerus Maximus*, in *Poems on Several Occasions*. Edinburgh : R. Flemming, p. 2

⁷ Bailey, T. (1978). *A History of Cricket*. London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 9

⁸ Ibid.

Cricketers of My Time.⁹ Nevertheless, from the 17th century onwards, cricket has significantly progressed from club-ball to a well-recognised and uncomplicated pastime in south-eastern England across the neighbouring villages in Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Middlesex. The first reference of the game can be found recorded in Florio's Italian-English dictionary in 1598.¹⁰ The elucidations of the noble game can also be traced in the late 19th and 20th century literature. Cricket is considered to be the gentleman's game encompassing the characteristics of British virtues such as strength, persistence, courage, sportsmanship, camaraderie, dignity, healthy competitiveness and so forth. For instance, the ideals of the game and its intrinsic connection with the British Empire were stressed by Fredrick Gale, a well-known cricket enthusiast, journalist and columnist, while lamenting for not giving description about cricket in the dictionaries of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Johnson's imaginary conversation with his biographer, Boswell, holding a discussion on cricket was interestingly depicted by Gale in his book.

Why did not the great lexicographer give us a definition of the sport as he might have done? If I had been a member of the firm which undertook the republication of Boswell's 'Life of Johnson', I should have added something about cricket, and half the world would have taken it as genuine...

Sir, cricket is a manly game, demanding exercise of patience and temper, combined with some danger, and therefore requiring courage. The two men at the wickets are viceroys, who alternately rule each other's kingdom, and the space between the batsman's wicket and the popping crease, though it be put four feet in extent, is as much the batsman's kingdom, so long as he can hold his fortress, which is called a wicket, as Ireland is the Lord Lieutenant's. The laws of the game are just and reasonable as the laws of chivalry were, and it is

⁹ Nyren, J. (1907). *The Cricketers of My Time*. In Edward, V. L. (ed.) *The Hambledon Men*. London: Henry Frowde.

¹⁰A Brief History of Cricket (2006, March 6), Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/a-brief-history-of-cricket-239757> (Accessed on: January 15, 2020)

*a sport which interests rich and poor, old and young, and promotes 'good will towards men' and one which ought to be supported by the bishops and clergy, who can mix sociably with their parishioners on the village green without losing their dignity and self-respect. Sir, if I had been a bishop I should have played cricket.*¹¹

In 1600, cricket became popular amongst tenants and the local peasantry and by 1700, the game began to be promoted as the favoured pastime of the aristocratic landowners. Soon cricket had integrally connected with a large part of their lives through which they could connect and communicate with each other, compete with each other and also show their social loyalty. The attendance of the Earl of Sussex as early as 1677 provided clear evidence of the transformation of cricket into a gentle sport¹². The earlier version of cricket had developed a strong connection with the village life of England. For instance, cricket was played in a long period of time which went on 5 days and still the outcome could be nothing but an endless draw. In this way, cricket became associated with the rhythms of pre-industrial village life resulting in the slower pace of the game. Even the logic behind the vagueness of the cricket ground's dimension is also connected to the rural past. In village cricket, most of the matches were played on unfenced land with no designated boundaries when one village meets another.

The existence of the code of laws can be hailed as a significant footstep in the conduct of the game under which the first recorded inter-county match took place between Kent and Surrey in 1709¹³ and soon expanded its growth in London during the inter-county match between Kent

¹¹ Gale, F. (1972). *Echoes from Old Cricket Fields*. Yorkshire: Scholar Press, pp. 4-5

¹² Szymansky, S. (2006). 'A Theory of the Evolution of Modern Sport', Working Paper Series, (6-30), *International Association of Sports Economists*, p. 13. Retrieved from https://college.holycross.edu/RePEc/spe/Szymanski_Evolution.pdf (Accessed on: February 6, 2019)

¹³ Williams, M. K., Alston, R. and Longmore, A. (2021, July 8). *Cricket*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/sports/cricket-sport> (Accessed on: July 10, 2021)

and London dated 1744.¹⁴ Cricket continued to proliferate in the first three decades of the 18th century. In 1728, one of the foreign travellers Cessar de Saussure observed:

*The English are very fond of a game they call cricket. For this purpose they go into a large open field and knock a small ball about with a piece of wood. I will not attempt to describe this game to you, it is too complicated; but it requires agility and skill, and everyone plays it, the common people and also the men of rank. Sometimes one county plays against another county. The papers give notices of these meetings beforehand, and later, tell you which side has come off victorious. Spectators crowd to these games when they are important.*¹⁵

It is further noteworthy that the earlier version of *The Laws of the Game of Cricket* was published in *The New Universal Magazine* in 1752 and was headed as ‘The Game of Cricket, as settled by The Cricket Club, in 1744 and played on the Artillery Ground, London’.¹⁶ However, in 1744 the first known laws (rules) of cricket were recorded¹⁷ and later, a set of systematic rules were brought into effect in 1755 being ‘settled by the several cricket clubs, particularly that of the Star and Garter Club in Pall Mall’¹⁸ which mostly kept faith on the essentials of the codified 1744 laws modifying it into modern wordings. In this context, Bailey’s observation is important:

The most important year in the first century was undoubtedly 1774, because on 25 February of that year a committee of noblemen and gentlemen from Kent, Hampshire, Sussex, Surrey and Middlesex met at the Star and Garter in Pall

¹⁴ Bailey, T. (1978). *A History of Cricket*. London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 9

¹⁵ Szymansky, S. (2006). ‘A Theory of the Evolution of Modern Sport’, Working Paper Series, (6-30), *International Association of Sports Economists*, p. 13 Retrieved from https://college.holycross.edu/RePEc/spe/Szymanski_Evolution.pdf (Accessed on: February 6, 2019)

¹⁶ Althem, H. S. (1962), *A History of Cricket: From Beginning to the First World War (Vol-1)*, London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p. 24

¹⁷ History of Cricket, ICC. Retrieved from <https://www.icc-cricket.com/about/cricket/history-of-cricket/early-cricket> (Accessed on: May 5, 2022)

¹⁸ Rait Kerr, R. S. (1950). *The Laws of Cricket: Their History and Growth*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., p.91

*Mall and drew up the new laws, revising the old. It was an incredible and an historic meeting in every sense, because the results of their deliberations formed the fundamental basis of the game as it has been played for over two hundred years.*¹⁹

The codes were first formulated by the ‘Star and Garter Club’ whose members contributed to the foundation of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) at lords in 1787²⁰ and since then it became the custodian of laws. It is also imperative to note that the Laws of Cricket has gone through a few amendments. For instance, in 1774, few revisions were made concerning the systematic standardization of rules, related to lbw, the middle stump, a third stump and maximum width of bat.²¹

CRICKET AS AN IMPERIAL GAME:

From the early phase of the industrial revolution in the 18th century, cricket has become recognised as the most popular sports. By inculcating the imperial value of the British game cricket had epitomised the behavioural and emotional outlook of the Victorians being guided by the “Spirit of Cricket”. The “Spirit of Cricket” being emboldened by the unique appeal of the game rests upon certain values and ideals of the game, e.g., leadership, friendship and teamwork. According to the preamble: “Cricket owes much of its appeal and enjoyment to the fact that it should be played not only according to the Laws, but also within the Spirit of Cricket”.²² Further, the Hambledon Club in Hampshire had a large influence in the second half of the 18th century to promote the game until the formation of MCC. Soon, it became crystal clear that cricket would evolve as a significant metaphor of the 19th century-Victorian culture.

¹⁹ Bailey, T. (1978). *A History of Cricket*. London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 11

²⁰ *History of Cricket, ICC*. Retrieved from <https://www.icc-cricket.com/about/cricket/history-of-cricket/early-cricket> (Accessed on: May 5, 2022)

²¹ Ibid.

²² ‘Preamble to the Laws: Laws of Cricket’, *MCC*. Retrieved from <https://www.lords.org/mcc/laws-of-cricket/preamble-to-the-laws/> (Accessed on: May 15, 2022)

The English perception of excellence and manliness was manifested in the British colonial endeavour in which “Cricket was considered the main vehicle for transferring the appropriate British moral code from the messengers of empire to the local populations”.²³ Cricket was promoted in colonies to keep the natives disciplined: “[C]ricket unites, as in India, the rulers and ruled. It also provides a moral training, an education in plank, and nerve, and self-restraint, far more valuable to the character of the ordinary native than the mere learning by heart of a play of Shakespeare”,²⁴ writes historian and author Cecil Headlam following the Oxford University’s Authentics’ cricket tour to India and Burma. Thus, it was expected that the game would not only represent England all across the globe but also the unique spirit and ethos of Englishness such as fair play, gentleness, discipline and other virtues being developed over the centuries. From the 1890s, the colonial administrators of MCC started taking a leading role in serving the imperial mission. This may be the sole reason why the English were eager to get involved in the global governance of cricket while they remained reluctant to engage in other unions of sports at that time like the rugby or football union. Consequently, it led to the formation of the Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC) in 1909 by the representatives from Australia, England and South Africa under the chairmanship of the MCC President, the Earl of Chesterfield. This historic step made the confluence of cricket and colonial politics stronger. It was believed that cricket would become the yardstick for the imperial ‘civilising mission’ as well as the fundamental cultural export of the British hegemony. The code of conduct of cricket turned into a value-laden civilising tool for soldiers, missionaries or civil servants in the ever-expanding territory of the British Empire. In this way, cricket was deliberately instrumentalised

²³ Stoddart, B. (1988). Sport, cultural imperialism, and colonial response in the British Empire. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30 (4) : 658, Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178928> (Accessed on: August 2, 2022)

²⁴ Hedlam, C. (1903). *Ten Thousand Mile through India and Burma: An Account of Oxford University Authentics’ Cricket Tour With Mr. K. J. Key in the Year of the Coronation Durbar*, London: Dent, pp. 168-169.

as a tool of homogenising the colonial societies. This assumption became reality when cricket had become an integral part of rising imperialism. British imperialism turned cricket into “the umbilical cord Empire linking the mother country with her children”.²⁵ According to Sandiford, “The Victorians were inordinately proud of this empire which they regarded as tangible proof of their racial and moral superiority”.²⁶ Cricket had started proliferating as a part of British expansionist policy in the nineteenth century. As Allen remarked:

*The population explosion which the British Isles witnessed during 1750-1900 left room for mass emigration as British subjects were encouraged to seek new opportunities in the colonies. By the time of Queen Victoria’s death in 1901, there were approximately 100 million people of ‘British stock’ occupying territories beyond the United Kingdom. As Britons moved abroad so did cricket.*²⁷

Notwithstanding, the British Empire was considered to be the largest empire in history comprising around 460 million people. It occupied more than 12 million square miles in the twentieth century.²⁸ It became a global hegemon by expanding its overseas colonies in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sports, especially cricket, as a part of the cultural imperialism has immensely helped the white settlers to consolidate their colonial expansion to a large extent: “When people go in large numbers to other countries, and established colonies there...so far from abandoning their social habits and customs, they do their best to maintain them and; not

²⁵ Mangan, J. A. (1983). *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*. London: Frank Cass, p. 153

²⁶ Sandiford, K. A. P (1994). *Cricket and the Victorians*. Aldershot: Scholar Press, p. 144

²⁷ Stoddart, B. (1998). Other Cultures. In B. Stoddart and K.A.P. Sandiford (ed.), *The Imperial Game*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 135

²⁸ Tozer, M. (1989). Cricket, school and empire: EW Hornung and His Young Guard. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 6 (2) : 157

only that, to maintain them in the state they knew when the first substantial number of them arrived in their new homeland.”²⁹

Cricket began to disseminate in North America via English colonies in the 17th century. It was brought to the West Indies through the colonial expansion of British imperialism and to India by British East India Company mariners and by local upper classes. Cricket started spreading in Australia and New Zealand in the early 19th century. Cricket emerged in the Western Cape, South Africa during the first British occupation. The game was permanently rooted in the territorial soil of Rhodesia, Kenya, and Ceylon followed by imperial expansion and thereby, became an integral part of British colonial history. These former British colonies such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, West Indies or Zimbabwe, all were constitutive part and full members of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and still are members of the Commonwealth. Following this context, Anvesh Jain comments:

*The fates of cricket and empire were inextricably intertwined. The impacts of sport on moulding the colonial consciousness and in enforcing the structures of imperial power relations cannot be understated. Sport, society, and history are inseparable, doubly so when it comes to a game as revered and sacrosanct as cricket...Its proliferation and popularization are necessarily a result of the historical and sociological conditions of the British empire. Where the map of the world was painted the red of Britain’s imperial conquest that is precisely where cricket rooted itself in the colonial psyche. Cricket’s rise in the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent, the southern tip of Africa, and in Australia and New Zealand, was a result of British imperial export. Where British soldiers slung a rifle over the one shoulder, they carried a cricket bat on the other.*³⁰

²⁹ Bowen, R. (1970). *Cricket: A History of Its Growth and Development throughout the World*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd., p. 72

³⁰ Jain, A. (2020, April 1). Mapping Cricket: A Game of Empire. Retrieved from <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/922f66778fc6408785fbc3fc40fcbfc?fbclid=IwAR0OLUrR>

In a nutshell, a few reasons can be highlighted in this backdrop to understand the factors which paved the way for the exponential rise of cricket in its early phase and its inextricable acquaintance with the British colonial endeavour;

First, historical records revealed that cricket developed a lot throughout the late 17th century and 18th century because the game largely drew the attention of the gamblers, who were also aristocrats. Their effective engagement in the game has transformed the game of cricket from a simple pastime activity at the village level into a competitive sport. For instance, the Prince of Wales was passionately involved in the game and assisted Surrey to a large extent³¹. Aristocrats were intensely involved in the game to enhance their social status as they considered their on-field duel a ‘reasonably friendly rivalry’³². There were several notables and leading figures such as Charles Lennox, the son of the first Duke of Richmond, the Earl of Middlesex, the second Duke of Richmond, the first Duke of Newcastle, the ninth Earl of Winchilsea, the fourth Earl of Sandwich etc. - all have indulged the game. Further, the glory of cricket was restored when the Stuart Monarchy came to power in the 1660s in place of the puritan government. As a consequence of the increasing popularity of the game, gambling became a significant part of big cricket matches under the influence of aristocrats. In the early days, cricket started gaining a good amount of revenue because of its growing connection with gambling. The renewal of interest in cricket was evident following the enactment of the Gaming Act in 1664. For instance, in 1735, the sum of £1000 stakes was placed on the intense rivalry between the Earl of Middlesex and the Prince of Wales.³³ While addressing this issue,

[mVpXs4uCjoxVTyOgaQqFD0SuJpWRX-O0B0ojkvKrbuJTU84zChk](#) (Accessed on: January 5, 2021)

³¹ Bailey, T. (1978). *A History of Cricket*. London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 9

³² Malcolm, D. (2014). *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 21

³³ Szymansky, S. (2006). A Theory of the Evolution of Modern Sport, Working Paper Series, (6-30), *International Association of Sports Economists*, p.13. Retrieved from https://college.holycross.edu/RePEc/spe/Szymanski_Evolution.pdf

the remark of a magistrate of London before delivering a judgement concerning a case can be recalled: “It (cricket) is a manly game, and not bad in itself, but it is the ill-use that is made of it by betting above £ 10 that is bad and against the law, which ought to be constructed largely to prevent the great mischief of excessive gambling”.³⁴ David Underdown’s comment is also mention-worthy in this context:

*The development of professionalism was closely connected with the increasing emphasis, by both players and promoters, on the amount of money being generated by the game. Gambling had always been part of the life-blood of English people of all social classes, and we find it in cricket from almost the earliest times... Besides gambling and corruption, the subject that has attracted the most interest is the game’s financial structure.*³⁵

Second, it can also be argued that the notion of “Muscular Christianity” which became evident in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century had given rise to the development of cricket. Walter Houghton contends that Victorians were living in ‘an age of transition’³⁶. This was considered to be the age of doubt and uncertainty in which the old dominant ideas and values were getting discarded or modified by the new doctrines of philosophic rationalism emerging out of Puritan theology. It led to a transformational phase of destruction and reconstruction. John Morley claimed that this entire period turned into ‘the age of science, new knowledge, searching criticism, followed by multiple doubts and shaken beliefs’.³⁷ Although, according to Puritan culture, sports often stood as an idle action and therefore as a vice, but under ‘lawful recreation’ sports was encouraged by them for the productive use of the body

³⁴ Malcolm, D. (2014). *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity*. London: Bloomsbury, p. 20

³⁵ Underdown, D. (2006). The history of cricket. *History Compass*, 4(1): 49-50

³⁶ Houghton, W. E. (1957). *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 1

³⁷ Morley, J. *Recollections*, 1, cited in Houghton, W. E. (1957). *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press p. 11

integrating the body and spirit into the collective health. Hence, Puritans advocated sports for a healthy life-style without causing any distraction in one's spiritual life. Their appropriation for physical health was also instigated by the persistent warning of mortal illness. Hero worship was also believed to be served by cricket.³⁸ Thus, in this transitional age of doubt and scepticism, cricket appeared to be a means of expressing the old moral values in new scientific theories related to well-being or health³⁹. This confluence between the spiritual and physical, culminated in the notion of 'Muscular Christianity' which provided a strong basis for the promotion of cricket by the Victorians. The moral and physical beauty of athleticism was stressed in the ethos of muscular Christianity wherein physical weakness was considered a sign of 'moral and spiritual inadequacy'⁴⁰. According to Keith Sandiford, the creed of muscular Christianity delineates that 'there is something innately good and godly about brute strength and power, so long as that energy is directed to noble purposes'.⁴¹ He precisely contends:

*The muscular Christians adopted cricket as their special game, and bestowed upon it a sanctity that no kinetic expression in the modern age can come close to matching. Almost to a man, the Victorians viewed cricket as the game least tainted by human foibles. It became so closely identified in their minds with religion, morality, and public health that it could loom large in every discussion from education to imperialism. It had to be encouraged in academic institutions because it was an indispensable aid to intellectual pursuits. It was equally a part of the white man's burden as it had become also an integral feature in the process of imperial assimilation.*⁴²

³⁸ McGlusky, N. (2005). *The willow and the palm: an exploration of the role of cricket in Fiji* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, James Cook University), p. 45. Retrieved from <https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/1247/1/01front.pdf> (Accessed on: August 15, 2019)

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Sandiford, K. A. P (1994). *Cricket and the Victorians*. Aldershot: Scholar Press, p. 35

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Sandiford, K. A. P. (1983). Cricket and the Victorian Society. *Journal of Social History*, 17 (2) : 306-307, Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsh/17.2.303> (Accessed on: May 5, 2018)

Third, the role of public schools in English society such as Eton, Harrow, or Winchester had a large impact on the growing rise of cricket. It was believed that ‘Probably the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton’ which was popularly ascribed to the Duke of Wellington. He reached the zenith of fame as a leading military figure of the British allied army who studied at Eton College and was remembered for his excellence in military skills which led to his victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. It was considered that the major driving force for Britain’s military success came from its public schools which had intensely trained their boys for representing the institutions of imperial England. For instance, Thomas Arnold, the founder of the modern public school system and the headmaster of the Rugby School, wanted English boys to learn and imbibe the virtue of unselfish social service, the spirit of fair play, leadership qualities, codes of honour, disciplined way of life, and the importance of hierarchy.⁴³ On this point, Henry Newbolt’s well-known poem, *Vitai Lampada’s*, can be recalled which started with the lines; ‘There’s a breathless hush in the Close tonight – Ten to make and the match to win... Play up! Play up! And play the game!’⁴⁴ It stressed the fabulous maxim of Wellington which assumed that the English boys seemed well versed with the ideals like fairness, self-sacrifice, duty or teamwork due to the promotion of school cricket. These virtues turned out to be the bedrock of patriotism being firmly embedded in the British psyche catering to the needs of imperial ambition. Hence, by instilling these qualities in the English boys, these institutions helped them to learn the civilising ethos of the British Empire, thereby, helping the Victorians to run their empire. Lord Harris, the co-founder of the then Imperial Cricket Conference and Governor General of colonial Bombay also equated the notion of ‘gentlemanliness’ with playing cricket: “cricket is more remote than sordid, anything dishonourable than any game in the world. To play it...honourably...is a moral lesson in

⁴³ What was the Role of Sport in British Empire, Retrieved from <https://www.britishempire.me.uk/sportandempire.html> (Accessed on: May 8, 2022)

⁴⁴ Newbolt, H. J. (1912). ‘Vitai Lampada’. In *Poems: New and Old*, London: John Murray, p. 78

itself.”⁴⁵ In this way, cricket glorified the ‘Englishness’ in the journey of their colonial conquest across the globe. C.L.R James, one of the most influential Trinidadian intellectuals and historians, wrote: “Cricket was one of the most complete products of that previous age to which a man like Dickens always looked back with such nostalgia...It is the only contribution of English educational system of nineteenth century to general education of Western civilization’.⁴⁶ In this context, Sandiford remarks:

*[British] educators encouraged cricket participation among their students in profound conviction that it produced better citizens as well as scholars...[They] argued that organised sports could bring order and discipline to aggressive groups of rich, spoilt rebellious brats...The public schools established the cricketing cult from about 1830 onwards. By 1860 it was an essential feature of their curriculum.*⁴⁷

Fourth, the British imperial mission was also being served by the then governing authority of cricket in Britain, the MCC, which became ‘Parliament House of Cricket, not only of Great Britain but of overseas dominion’. As perceived by Lord Harris, The MCC, the Vatican of cricket, was considered as ‘the most venerated institution in the British Empire’.⁴⁸ As Jack Williams comments:

Cultural values within England do much to explain the general acceptance of how power was exercised in cricket. Cricket indicates the importance of tradition in generating approval for existing institutions. Much of the significance accorded to cricket stemmed from assumptions that cricket resonated with those strands of English culture which place special value upon

⁴⁵ Robert, M. (2006). Cricket as Global as Honourable. In M. Robert (ed.) *Essaying Cricket: Sri Lanka and Beyond*. Colombo: Vijitha Yapa., p. 6

⁴⁶ James, C. L. R. (2005). *Beyond a Boundary*. London: Yellow Jersey Press, p. 218

⁴⁷ Sandiford, K. A. P. (1998). England. In B. Stoddart & K. A. Sandiford. *The Imperial Game: Cricket, Culture, and Society*, Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, p.14.

⁴⁸ Bradley, J. (1990). The MCC, society and empire: a portrait of cricket’s ruling body, 1860-1914. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 7(1): 3. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523369008713710> (Accessed on: July 15, 2022)

*the traditional. The antiquity of the MCC and beliefs that it had been the dominant force within cricket in the nineteenth century contributed much to the acceptance of its role within cricket between wars.*⁴⁹

It can be further argued that the presidency of the MCC was subject to aristocratic preserves which were mostly occupied by the sons or brothers of peers, knights or baronets. Besides, the political orientations were also perceived to be a crucial part of the presidency because it was mainly British Liberal elites who dominated the MCC between 1860 and 1880 rather than Conservatives. These elites represented the upper class nature of society. However drastic changes happened in the 1890s when personalities like Lord Harris or Hawke began to control the voices of MCC. For instance, Lord Harris, a British colonial administrator and Governor of Bombay in colonial India was himself a Conservative and imperialist. He firmly believed that cricket has a wider role to offer to strengthen the imperial dream. Harris, being a highly influential administrator of MCC did his best to promote the noble game to educate oriental people so that they can embrace the spirit of western systems of government. Lord Hawke also played a vital role to promote cricket overseas as a successful successor of Lord Harris. He was a member of Cambridge University Cricket Club and the Yorkshire Club President. He was a major administrative figure and the appointed president of MCC and was responsible for sending tourist teams across the Empire. He was part of MCC's overseas team tours to India (1892-93), South Africa (1895-96, and 1899-1900), West Indies (1896-97), Australia and New Zealand (1902-3), and to Argentina.⁵⁰ Even after the establishment of the Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC) in 1909, cricket continued to bolster imperial expansion. Thus, the hidden political and economic motives cannot be denied behind the foundation of the ICC by the then

⁴⁹ Williams, J. (2013). *Cricket and England: A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-war Years*. Abingdon. Oxon: Routledge, p.41

⁵⁰ Bradley, J. (1990). The MCC, society and empire: a portrait of cricket's ruling body, 1860-1914. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 7(1):7-13. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523369008713710> (Accessed on: July 15, 2022)

cricket boards of England, Australia, and South Africa following the initiative of Abe Bailey. ICC was the governing body of world cricket until 1965. The year 1926 was very significant because at that time several meetings were held and new membership laws were included under the aegis of the ICC. This year, it was made clear that ICC would include “governing bodies of cricket in countries within the Empire to which cricket teams are sent, or which send teams to England”.⁵¹ Besides, three new Test playing nations, West Indies, New Zealand and India were recognised as the new Test playing nations. Surprisingly, the United States of America which used to send teams to England were excluded from the official cricket. Therefore, the inclusion of certain states and exclusion of the USA revealed the England-centric control of cricket which was mostly linked to the ‘British Commonwealth’ membership aiming at consolidating the imperial family.⁵² According to Mike Marqusee, the selective incorporation of South Africa as a founding member along with England and Australia and that too superseding USA was nothing but the imperial compulsions of the MCC to assert a strong claim in South Africa where a substantial amount of gold reserves was located.⁵³ In this regard, Kaufman’s observation is impressive:

...the global diffusion of cricket is more than just a case of a popular sporting activity being adopted by societies around the world. Cricket has never been an Olympic sport, and its main international body, the ICC, was originally an appendage of the British colonial state. Until 1965, in fact, it was the express policy of ICC to admit only Commonwealth Countries as members – the International Cricket Council was actually named the International Cricket

⁵¹ History of ICC, ICC, Retrieved from <https://www.icc-cricket.com/about/the-icc/history-of-icc/1909-1963> (Accessed on: May 5, 2022)

⁵² Iyer, U. (2013). *Decolonisation and the Imperial Cricket Conference, 1947-1965: A study in transitional commonwealth history?* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Central Lancashire), p.10 Retrieved from [http://clou.uclan.ac.uk/9659/1/Iyer%20Usha%20Final%20e-Thesis%20\(Master%20Copy\).pdf](http://clou.uclan.ac.uk/9659/1/Iyer%20Usha%20Final%20e-Thesis%20(Master%20Copy).pdf) (Accessed on: August 21, 2019)

⁵³ Marqusee, M. (2005). The Ambush Clause: Globalisation, Corporate Power and the Governance of World Cricket. In S. Wagg (ed.), *Cricket and National Identity in the Postcolonial Age: Following On*, London & New York: Routledge p.256

*Council until 1965, further evidence of its distinct ties to British colonial system.*⁵⁴

THE CENTRALITY OF CRICKET IN SOUTH ASIA

Coming to this section, it is important to seek the colonial legacy of cricket in South Asia, the way cricket was adopted and turned into the most followed and favourite sports of the subcontinent and the factors which paved the way for the rise of South Asian cricketing powers in the world of cricket. Cricket has occupied the central part of popular culture in South Asia, carrying the legacy of colonial and post-colonial history of the sub-continent. According to Kausik Bandyopadhyay:

*Sport in colonial and postcolonial South Asia has been closely linked to wider historical processes that have shaped the society and culture of the region since the twentieth century. It has been a powerful vector of forces, such as imperialism, nationalism, communalism, regionalism, decolonization, partition, immigration, violence, diplomacy, interstate relations, and commercialization. Quite simply, patterns of history and society have transformed sport in the region while simultaneously sport has shaped the history and society of South Asia.*⁵⁵

Cricket is deeply enmeshed in the socio-political history of this region. Despite being politically separated most of the South Asian countries share a mutual love for cricket. The centrality of cricket in terms of creating common bond in this region has made this game politically significant. There is no denying the fact that on several occasions, cricket has been the subject of political manipulation in this South Asian belt, be it asserting national identity or creating the stage for regional cooperation. It can be further noted that although South Asian

⁵⁴ Kaufman, J. & Patterson, O. (2005). Cross-national cultural diffusion: The global spread of cricket. *American Sociology Review* 70(1):85, Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000105> (Accessed on: May10, 2021)

⁵⁵ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation : Perspective from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*, New Delhi: Sage, p. xviii

countries have achieved their independence long back, but prevailing conflicts among them often exacted a heavy toll. Naturally, the spill-over effect of internal political turbulences, the military crackdown, diplomatic tensions, inter-state conflicts and the fall out of war, enduring tensions over unresolved border disputes, the increasing threats posed by terrorism and other socio-political crises have largely impacted the game of cricket in this region. As a result, cricket carrying the hangover of partition has never been detached from the changing dynamics of sub-continental politics. For instance, when the national cricket team of India and Pakistan faced each other for the first time in 1952, the first war was already fought between them triggered by the unsettled territorial disputes over Jammu and Kashmir which began in October 1947 and continued through 1948. The increasing political tensions between these neighbouring countries had largely impacted their bilateral cricketing rivalries as a result of which neither India nor Pakistan wanted to take the risk to lose the match against each other at the expense of inflicting pain on their national sentiment. The first series between India and Pakistan in 1952/53 convincingly ended in a spirit of comradeship which created the ground for India's return tour in 1954/55. However, following India's victory over Pakistan by 2-1 in the first series, the successive test series culminated in endless draws in 1954/55 and 1960/61. It was said that the way these bilateral cricketing rivalries were approached by both India and Pakistan, was nothing but a clear signal of 'let's not lose to the enemy'.⁵⁶ Since then, a number of scheduled tours involving the two sides were aborted due to the persistent strained relations between them. The intense clashes between two hostile nations often escalated to sporting hooliganism. Nonetheless, cricket also has significantly led South Asian countries to find a common ground to share their joy and common sentiments. According to Roshni Chakraborty, "With the British policy of divide and rule attempting to create fusion, among the numeric

⁵⁶ Wagg, S. & Gemmell, J. (2011). Cricket and International Politics. In A. Bateman & J. Hill. (ed.) (South Asian edition), *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, p.259

ethnic and linguistic identities in South Asia, cricket transcended those barriers and united all”.⁵⁷ This is why cricket has often been instrumentalised as a diplomatic mechanism amongst the neighbouring countries in this region. The context of India-Pakistan or India-Bangladesh cricket diplomacy must be viewed in this light where cricket has been channelised as a confidence building measure to strengthen people-to-people contact. Besides, another vital reason behind the popularity of cricket in South Asia lies in the fact that cricket cannot be categorised as a topmost physical sports and thereby, it doesn’t require that much physicality, strength, brute power or high intensity in comparison to other physically challenging sports such as rugby, football, Boxing, Wrestling and so forth. South Asians generally have lower lean mass and relatively short stature due to the hot equatorial climate and genetic reasons. They are not as big and physically powerful as Africans and Europeans. Besides, South Asians have not shown enough competence till now at the highest level of those team sports which are physically gruelling. Most importantly, no other sports has given international success as cricket did. The symbolic success of cricket has become a matter of national pride for South Asian countries.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF CRICKET IN SOUTH ASIA:

Notwithstanding, there was nothing called the South Asian geopolitical region as such as we perceive today. ‘South Asia’ is considered to be the outcome of a long historical process which is deeply rooted in the British colonial era. The term ‘South Asia’ is often used synonymously with the Indian subcontinent, most of the territories of which were part of larger British India in the colonial period. According to historians like Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, “The Subcontinent carries the weight not only of its people but also of their ancient history,

⁵⁷ Chakraborty, R. (2018). Cricket, Diplomacy and Nationalism in South Asia. *Harvard International Review* 39 (1) : 34-35, Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26617319> (Accessed on: March 15, 2021)

stretching back five millennia, and a modern history encompassing the experience of British colonialism compressed in tumultuous development within the past couple of centuries'.⁵⁸ The usage of 'South Asia' as a separate region replacing the traditional notion of Indian subcontinent is 'more recent and neutral parlance'.⁵⁹ Following this context, Joshi also elaborates on the difficulties of defining the region precisely due to the lack of clarities concerning its geographical and geopolitical demarcations:

*What is South Asia? Who is part of South Asia and who is not? Bodies such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) dictate that the label South Asia be used to refer to a region comprising of the sovereign states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Yet SAARC simply assumes the existence of an entity called South Asia instead of defining it. If South Asia is simply an expression of geographical proximity, then why, for instance, is Myanmar (Burma) not a part of South Asia, while the Maldives are? Why do some descriptions include Afghanistan in South Asia, while others, include those of SAARC, do not? These questions do not have answers we can simply deduce from 'objective' geographic realities. If fact, these questions themselves reveal that there is nothing natural or objective about South Asia. Most attempts to define the region are fairly arbitrary, and the boundaries region encompasses, somewhat uncertain. The notion of South Asia today is a product not of proximity, nor is based on a shared world-view. Rather, South Asia is the product of a variety of global, regional, and local political processes, which in turn, reflect different configurations of power relations and history.*⁶⁰

Although South Asia seemed to be synonymous with British India, but since the partition, the countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh found it offensive to view the region as Indian

⁵⁸ Bose, S. & Jalal, A. (2004). *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, New York & London : Routledge, p. 3

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Joshi, S. (2003). Colonial Notion of South Asia. *South Asia Journal*, (1) : 6. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/south-asian-media-net/docs/saj_01/14 (Accessed on: July 15, 2021)

subcontinent and the dominant placement of the term 'India' in it. Further, various geopolitical developments over the past decades have moulded the South Asian landscape. Hence, from the wider geopolitical perspective, it is convenient to argue that this region contains the countries (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Pakistan) and the Indian Ocean (Sri Lanka and Maldives). Afghanistan, a landlocked country, also shares a link to both Central Asia and South Asia. In this case, my study mainly focuses on the major cricket playing nations in South Asia and how cricket turned out to be politically significant in these countries.

Unravelling the historiography of the subcontinent, it is needless to mention that India was central to the political, economic or strategic interests of the British Empire. Consequently, the traditions, norms, socio-cultural practices and elements of popular culture of the Victorian Empire were imposed on the colonial Indian society through the agencies of the British colonial regime such as administrators, army officials, company rulers, educators and the like. To be specific, Indian society was undergoing a transitional phase when company rule consolidated in the eighteenth century. As mentioned before, sports in British colonies served as a powerful mechanism to foster control over the colonised locales with the help of imperial institutions.

As Isobel Roser remarked:

Sport did not have a singular role in Empire, it had multiple purposes which changed and developed over time. Sport was used to create bonds, enforce British control and 'civilise' the natives. Much like a pushy parent, the motherland tried to encourage her colonies to take up as many sports as possible. Ironically, the British failed to recognise that by bestowing her sports upon the Empire she was empowering her colonies, rather than suppressing them. However, initially, it was a successful imperial tactic, allowing the British a subtle, yet potent means of cultural control. By importing sports across the Empire, the British could instil Victorian values among the natives, particularly their class ideals. It is easy to forget the murky past of our beloved sports, one

*that was rooted in subjugation and domination, but it is a vital part of the imperial narrative which should not be forgotten.*⁶¹

Cricket as a key project of British cultural imperialism was codified by the British in the 19th century⁶² to strengthen the British hegemony and sustain their dominance within the Empire.⁶³ Cricket was encouraged in the colonies as part of their civilising mission. Another intention behind the dissemination of the game lies in the fact that the white settlers wanted to promote an organised, streamlined sporting culture which could replace the native customs and idiosyncratic nature of native sports with distinct imperial culture. From this perspective, cricket had smoothed the wider British movement of ‘creating tradition’ within the colonies”.⁶⁴ Cricket was brought to the Indian subcontinent in the early 18th century during the time of the British Raj. As stated by Roshni Chakraborty: “The East India Company and the British crown dominated the political and economic life of the Indian subcontinent for centuries; however their chief export was not tea- it was cricket”⁶⁵. British settlers used to play the game for recreational pursuits. The earliest manifestation of cricket in India can be traced to Clement Downing’s war memoir in 1721 informing the first cricket match by British sailors at Cambay. The establishment of Calcutta Cricket Club (CCC) in 1792, the second oldest cricket club after the Marylebone Cricket Club (1787) and the formation of Oriental Cricket

⁶¹ Roser, I. (2016, April 30). Sport: A Tool of Colonial Control for the British Empire. *The Butler Scholarly Journal*. Retrieved from <https://butlerscholarlyjournal.com/2016/04/30/sport-a-tool-of-colonial-control-for-the-british-empire/> (Accessed on: October 15, 2019)

⁶² Perkin, H. (2007). Teaching the nations how to play: sport and society in the British empire and commonwealth. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 6 (2): 145. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523368908713685> (Accessed on: July 18, 2020)

⁶³ Hutchinson, R. (1996), *Empire Games: The British Invention of Twentieth Century Sport*. Edinburgh: Mainstream. p. 95

⁶⁴ Roser, I. (2016, April 30). Sport: A Tool of Colonial Control for the British Empire. *The Butler Scholarly Journal*. Retrieved from <https://butlerscholarlyjournal.com/2016/04/30/sport-a-tool-of-colonial-control-for-the-british-empire/>

⁶⁵ Chakraborty, R. (2018). Cricket, Diplomacy and Nationalism in South Asia. *Harvard International Review* 39 (1): 34. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26617319> (Accessed on: March 15, 2021)

Club (OCC) in 1848 by the Parsees of Bombay were considered to be the watershed moments in the history of Indian cricket. Gradually other communities also enthusiastically welcomed cricket in their communities. As a result, the Bombay Union Cricket Club (1861) and the Hindu Cricket Club (1877), the Aligarh Cricket Club (1879), the Madras Cricket Club (1891) were founded.⁶⁶ Soon cricket was disseminated in the areas like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras through the Company. The First Class cricket is believed to have started in the year 1864 when a match was held between the Madras and Calcutta. The locals sought to adopt the game as they started watching the encounters between white settlers. The Parsis were the first Indian civil community who took immense interest in cricket and embraced the game for their professional proximity with the colonisers. Parsis were the most affluent community in India who sought to use the platform of cricket as a social ladder for their upward social mobility and thereby self-differentiating them from other Indians in general. Shapoorjee Sorbajee wrote in his *Chronicle of Cricket Among Parsees and the Struggle*: “Parsee boys began with a mock and farcical imitation of European soldiers and officers playing at Fort George, Bombay, their chimney-pot hats serving as wickets, and their umbrellas as bats in hitting elliptical balls stuffed with old rags and sewn by veritably unskilled cobblers”.⁶⁷ It is relevant to mention that although India has played four unofficial test matches in 1893, 1911 and 1926-27 but India’s first official historic international cricket tour to England in 1932, under the title of the ‘All-India’, was reported by the London based newspaper *Evening Standard* April 13, 1932: “No politics, no caste, just cricket. This is the unofficial slogan of the cricket team that has come from India after a lapse of 21 years. There has never been such a team of contracts meeting on the common footing of cricket. The 18 players speak 10 languages among them and belong to

⁶⁶ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play: A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking, p. 48

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 47

five different castes.”⁶⁸ Indian natives also adopted cricket and transformed it into a tool for resisting the colonial hegemony. C. K. Nayudu’s legendary performance with a score of 153 at the Bombay Gymkhana against the MCC side in 1936-27 has successfully contributed to the growing national sentiment. Vijay Marchant’s withdrawal from the England team in 1932 during the rise of the civil disobedience movement in India also must be remembered in the background of the Indian national movement for independence. Further, princely patronages also immensely contributed to the popularisation of cricket across the subcontinent. The Maharajas of Patiala, Gwalior, Dhar, Natore, Cooch Behar and the like were the major patrons of cricket, recruiting talents from all over the country. The other parallel developments like the rise of Quadrangular and Pentangular tournaments in 1912 and 1937 engaging communities like Muslim, Christians and Anglo-Indians, and the rise of major domestic tournaments like Irani, Ranji, Duleep etc. illuminated the prominence of cricket as the most significant spectator sports in the subcontinent.

Cricket also played an instrumental role in uniting the newly emerging Pakistan after the partition. The fundamental question here is how far Pakistan has effectively pulled off a cohesive national identity based on the feeling of oneness and commonality. When Pakistan, officially the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, emerged as a separate nation envisioning a homeland for Muslims, it was constructed in the name of religion Islam. Over time, hostility towards India also became an important factor which unified their population into a united front. In this regard, it is also important to note that Pakistan is made up of several ethnic groups such as Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Saraikis, Muhajirs, Baloch and other smaller groups. However, there is no denying the fact that religious nationalism has never been sufficient to

⁶⁸ Pal, S. (April 5, 2007). Real Life Laggan : India’s First International Cricket Match Left England Rattled Way Back in 1932. Retrieved from <https://www.thebetterindia.com/94513/ipl-first-international-cricket-match-1932-india-england/> (Accessed on: March 25, 2019)

unite its dozen of ethnic-linguistic groups. As a consequence, the sectarian and ethnic cleavages in the country have become the major hindrances to the country's unity. As Dr Ahmer observes:

*In Pakistani nationalism, the focus will not be on Islam which is actual basis of the existence of the country but on the unity of various lingual and ethnic groups, and religious nationalism to be the ideological pillars of Pakistan failed to realize a fundamental contradiction in their approach. If Islam was the source of the creation of Pakistan, language, ethnicity and culture also existed as strong forms of identity.*⁶⁹

In such a scenario, cricket has turned out to be the most prominent nation-building tool in Pakistan which promotes national cohesion in Pakistan overcoming ethnic, cultural, lingual or caste differences. Cricket has provided the platform for Pakistan to gain recognition on the international map. As Hanif Mohammad, one of the luminaries of Pakistan cricket commented on Pakistan's epic victory against England at the Oval in 1954: "It was a glorious moment for all of us... The win gave Pakistan a visible identity. Not many had known about Pakistan until then".⁷⁰ Most importantly, the historic moment in the cricket history of Pakistan came when Pakistan won their first World Cup beating England in 1992 at Melbourne Cricket Ground. It gave them the chance to uplift their country's image in the world, overcoming the enduring constraints within the country which had brewed since partition. Following this backdrop, Shaharyar Khan, the former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan and ex-chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, commented: "In Pakistan it (cricket) is the strongest unifying force amongst its people, young and old, rich or poor, man or woman, Shia or Sunni, Pathan or Sindhi. It brings

⁶⁹ Dr. Ahmer, M. (August 14, 2014). The Myth of Pakistani Nationalism, *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1125123> (Accessed on: July 10, 2015)

⁷⁰ Haigh, G. (July 7, 2005). The Making of Epics, *ESPNcricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/the-making-of-epics-142119> (Accessed on: September 10, 2020). Also cited in Wagg, S. & Gemmell, J. (2011). Cricket and International Politics. In A. Bateman & J. Hill. (ed.) (South Asian edition), *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, p. 258

a unity in peacetimes only achieved in times of War”.⁷¹ This may be the reason why Pakistani players coming out from different backgrounds have represented their national teams irrespective of the internal differences. Players like Shaheed Afridi, Nasim Shah are Pashtuns and players like Muhammad Hafeez, Muhammad Abbas are Punjabis.⁷² Most importantly, some non-Muslim cricketers also played for Pakistan like Wallis Mathias, Ducan Sharpe, Anil Dalpat, Danish Kaneria, Antao D’Souza and so on. These phenomena revealed the unifying role of cricket in Pakistan.

In the case of Bangladesh, cricket has immensely contributed to their nationalist and self-determination movement. The partition of undivided India has led to the creation of two contiguous territories East Pakistan (today’s Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (today’s Pakistan). The relations between the two divisions had been strained following the partition. The centralised Pakistan state was undemocratically dominated by the oppressive military-bureaucratic nexus of West Pakistanis. According to Jayanta Kumar Ray, “Since the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state, those who dominated the Central Government, remaining predominantly West Pakistani in composition (despite occasional changes especially upto the time of the military take-over in 1958), have consistently tried to impose (and generally succeeded too) a cultural, economic and political hegemony upon East Pakistan.”⁷³ As a result, Bengali culture and populations were ruthlessly suppressed by the West Pakistan ruling elites. This scenario was also echoed in the cultural arena of cricket. The East Pakistanis were hardly getting recognition in the national sporting spectrum and thereby continued to suffer due to the nepotism and discretionary policy of the new colonial hegemony being commanded by the

⁷¹ Khan, S. (2005). *Cricket: A Bridge of Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. viii

⁷² Bilal, M. & Khan, R. (April 5, 2021). Cricket and Nation Building in Pakistan. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3840382> (Accessed on: May 3, 2021)

⁷³ Ray, J. K. (1968). *Democracy and Nationalism on Trial: A Study of East Pakistan*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, p. 1.

West Pakistani military-bureaucratic complex. In this context, it is imperative to note that cricket was immensely popular in colonial East Bengal in undivided British India. Cricket started spreading as the favourite recreational activity in the regions like Dhaka, Sylhet, Khulna, Natore and so forth. As Hasan Babli writes:

*Around the time the Pentangular was in full swing in Bombay, cricket had assumed popularity in Bengal. In the 1940s, there was a lot of cricket being played in Dhaka. There was a great deal of excitement among the public, and good cricketers have started becoming heroes. By the 1950s, the Dhaka Cricket League had also started and Victoria, Dhaka Wanderers, Wari, Gymkhana, Ispahani, Eagles, etc had emerged as the major club.*⁷⁴

Unfortunately, despite an immense supply of renowned Bengali talented players coming out from East Pakistan such as Chand Khan, Abdul Latif, Sukumar Roy, Moinuddin Ahmed, Bakul, Masiuddin Ahmed Mantu, Athar Ali, Altaf Hossain, Raqibul Hassan, S. M Farooq, Amirullah Munni and many more, they were rejected in the national squad⁷⁵ as ‘in the period between 1947-1971, cricket in East Pakistan was not allowed to blossom and talented players were unjustly kept out of national sides’.⁷⁶ As a result, there was a growing resentment amongst East Pakistanis against the discriminatory attitude of their West Pakistani counterparts which was echoed in the rivalry between West Pakistan and East Pakistan side. Further, the language movement was also gaining momentum amongst the Bangla activists in that phase which vehemently challenged the cultural and linguistic oppression by the Urdu speaking West-Pakistani dominated government. The strong urge for self-determination became evident in the sporting field too. For instance, widespread protests by Bengali spectators took place during a

⁷⁴ Dasgupta, S. (2007). Bangladesh Cricket : Scoring on Passion, but Little Else... , *Sport in Society*, 10(1): 165 Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17430430600989274> (Accessed on: May 2, 2019)

⁷⁵ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspective from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*, New Delhi: Sage, pp. 141-142

⁷⁶ Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards to Freedom : A Social History of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi : Penguin Viking, p. 134

match between the Pakistan national side and Commonwealth XI at the Dhaka stadium in 1971. The Pakistani cricketers had to face the wrath being fuelled by President Yahya Khan's decision to postpone the National Assembly which was supposed to be aired on radio on 1P.M.⁷⁷When Bangladesh got independence cricket was slowly becoming a nation-building tool. During the initial years of independence, the Bangladeshi masses had supported either India or Pakistan because till then the national team of Bangladesh cricket did not bear any fruit in the international cricket circuit. But, soon the psyche of the masses towards the red-and-green brigade changed when Bangladesh won the ICC trophy in 1997 and the world began to recognise them as an emerging cricketing nation. The watershed moment came in the history of Bangladesh cricket when it had beaten Scotland and star-studded Pakistan in their debut World Cup in 1999. Their victory against Pakistan was considered to be a milestone for Bangladesh cricket. The far reaching impact of this remarkable triumph was compared with the War of Liberation in 1971. Further, Bangladesh's dream came true when they achieved the long aspired Test-status in 2000. Besides, in 1999, The National Cricket League, the oldest domestic first-class cricket competition in Bangladesh, was inaugurated. The participation of divisional teams coming from Dhaka, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Khulna, Chittagong, Rangpur etc paved the way for the growing population of the game. The slow but steady progress of Bangladesh cricket on the global stage and the momentous impact of Bangladesh's first Test victory against Zimbabwe in 2005 has given Bangladesh a strong footing in the international arena to stand out as a strong cricketing force. Where complex political problems, vicious cycles of poverty, human rights issues, heavy monsoon floods, refugee issues and other humanitarian crises have turned out to be the major hindrances in the way of Bangladesh's progress, cricket has proved to be an integral part of Bangladesh's national culture by having a humongous impact upon the

⁷⁷ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspective from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*, New Delhi: Sage, p. 142

social, political, cultural or economic life of common Bangladeshis. Further, the inspirational performance of Bangladesh cricket was noticed during the 2007 World Cup in which they reached the Super Eight Stage by beating India and Bermuda. This epic win ensured the end of the decolonization of Bangladesh cricket. Furthermore, when Bangladesh's national identity seemed to have been contested due to internal tension, the co-hosting right of World Cup 2011 has given them the chance to channelise the platform of cricket to mitigate the civil strife and transcend the politico-religious divisive affiliations, thereby asserting a new brand of prosperous Bangladesh. Further, following the historic victory of Bangladesh against the cricket giants, India and Pakistan, Subir Bhawmik wrote: "A manifestation of the all-round progress that South Asia's youngest nation has made since a US State department official had sneeringly called it a 'basket case' after its birth in an 'ocean of blood' 1971. And it is reflective of the enormous self-confidence born out of a powerful language-and-culture driven nationalism playing out on a homogenous demography replete with dividend".⁷⁸ Thus cricket has always been an integral part of the popular culture in pre and post-colonial Bangladesh. Kaushik Bandyopadhyay's observation in this context is noteworthy:

Cricket as a nationalist obsession transcends everything in Bangladesh, binding all in one knot from a rickshaw puller to the prime minister, from a fundamentalist mullah to a westernized IT professional, from a poor farmer's wife to a high society lady or from a high society lady or from a Hindu priest to a disgruntled Chakma [an ethnic group found mainly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh]. More importantly, cricket educates the Bangladesh youth about nationalist ideology and instils in them a deep emotional attachment towards the nation thus imagined. Performing well or not, nationalism around cricket is not fragile as the other 'invented traditions' are argued to be, since it cuts across affiliations of race, religion, community or

⁷⁸ Bhaumik, S. (June 26, 2015). Cricket Victories reflect large resurgence of Bangladesh. *bdnews24.com*, Retrieved from <https://opinion.bdnews24.com/2015/06/26/cricket-victories-reflect-larger-resurgence-of-bangladesh/> (Accessed on: November 15, 2021)

*ethnicity. The religious fundamentalists and their lay followers, who do not agree with the idea of nationalist ideology, too, seem to have succumbed to the all-pervasive wave of cricketing nationalism in the wake of the World Cup. The impact of globalization and transnational bonds makes this cricketing nationalism more stable and viable. Cricket, thus, redefines and rekindles Bangladeshi nationalism. Beyond the rhetoric of struggle over the question of religious versus ethno-linguistic identity, cricket now provides a space where Bangladesh as a 'homogenous' nation makes its presence felt globally.*⁷⁹

Cricket also played a reconciliatory role in Sri Lankan society. While Sri Lanka had been suffering from the severity of a long ethnic civil war since 1983 and the devastating impact of natural disasters which had suffocated their social, political, and economic life, the memorable World Cup win in 1996 gave them a new ray of hope. As Tissa Jayatilaka in Colombo Observer states: "It was not a terrorist bomb. Neither was it a natural disaster nor a political scandal of epic proportions. And yet, Sri Lanka had made the world headlines. The island nation won the cricket World cup."⁸⁰ According to Shehan Karunatilaka, the historic World Cup win in 1996 not only ensured social currency, the influx of money, recruitment of foreign coaches and other infrastructural developments on Sri Lankan soil which not only made Sri Lankan cricket more professional but also successfully produced national icons which were largely missing in Sri Lankan society in that time. He stated: "...1996's lasting legacy was something more precious than cash or column inches – 1996 gave us heroes. In our 48th year of independence, who else did we have to look up to? The soldiers pawned in the war? The overfed politicians? The martyrs of failed revolutions? For a nation short of on heroes or causes for celebration, the sight

⁷⁹ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspective from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*, New Delhi: Sage, p. 158

⁸⁰ Quoted in Ismail, Q. (1997). Batting against the break: On cricket, nationalism, and the swashbuckling Sri Lankans. *Social Text* (50) : 34, Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466813> (Accessed on: February 15, 2019)

of our boys in blue outwitting the world, at least for a moment, was one to behold.”⁸¹ Cricketers like Arjuna Ranatunga, Marvan Atapatu, Aravinda de Silva, Sanath Jayasurya, Chaminda Vass, Muttiah Muralitharan emerged as the public heroes for the new generation. Interestingly, Muttiah Muralitharan, the greatest Tamil cricketer of all time, was also part of the team. Their achievement helped the country to heal from the trauma of civil strife by overcoming the antagonism between Sinhalese and minority Tamils where both of them cheered for the national team regardless of their ethnic differences. This view was reflected in the editorial of Colombo Sunday:

*Little Sri Lanka’s spectacular emergence as World Champions in cricket has brought about positive factors that go far beyond the scoreboard... Almost everybody in Sri Lanka started smiling again from last Sunday night and there was a happy feeling in the heart, despite all the crises facing us. Sri Lanka’s revolution in World Cricket also brought about deep unity among people of all races and religions here. We hope the unity rebuilt on the playing fields will grow into other areas.*⁸²

Michael Roberts also wrote about the impact of Sri Lankan cricket on their inspirational journey in the World Cup:

The story of Sri Lankan cricket is a tale of cricket cricketing success within the context of a polity struggling with civil war and great levels of internal violence. Cricket is the one arena in Sri Lankan people where Tamils and Sinhalese, looked in a bloody civil war for decades, come together on a national public platform. From being revealed as a Western import in the early years of independence to its gradual embrace and penetration of new catchment areas

⁸¹ Karunatalika, S. (March 13, 2011). How Cricket Saved Sri Lanka, *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/13/how-cricket-saved-sri-lanka> (Accessed on: August 5, 2019)

⁸² Ismail, Q. (1997). Batting against the break: *On cricket, nationalism, and the swashbuckling Sri Lankans* (50): 40, Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466813> (Accessed on: February 15, 2019)

*in less affluent and more rural areas, the story of Sri Lankan cricket in many way mirrors the development of post-colonial Srilankan nation.*⁸³

Thus, cricket was instrumental in bringing normalcy when Sri Lanka turned into a war zone following the hit of 3-decades of civil war. Most importantly, in 2007, a ceasefire was declared during the Cricket World Cup by the separatist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). When the citizens of a war-torn country were suffering from fear and insecurity due to the persistent strife between the majority Sinhalese and minority Sri Lankan Tamils, cricket had captured the heart and mind of a war-driven society and appeared as more than a sports. Furthermore, when the 25-year-old war between the Sri Lankan government and the separatist LTTE came to an end, cricket was used as a development mechanism where the Sri Lankan government teamed up with UNICEF has launched rehabilitation measures through cricket under the banner of ‘Cricket for Change’ aiming at involving the young combatants of the separatist movement. Eighteen Ex-fighters associated with armed groups were provided the chance to graduate as Cricket Peer Leaders. According to Philippe Duamella, UNICEF’s representative for Sri Lanka: “These young people have acquired new skills, learned the importance of team work and partnership. They have embraced the values of trust, respect and fair play”.⁸⁴

CRICKET AS A MEDIUM OF SOUTH ASIAN SOLIDARITY:

Cricket has unquestionably flourished in every corner of contemporary South Asia. Cricket has expanded even in countries like Nepal or Afghanistan. In addition, cricket has played a significant role in enhancing the cooperation between South Asian countries because of their

⁸³ Roberts, M. (2009). Wunderkidz in a Blunderland: tensions and tales from Sri Lankan cricket. *Sport in Society* 12 (4/5) : 566. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17430430802702830> (Accessed on: August 20, 2020)

⁸⁴ Cricket helps heal Sri Lanka’s ex-child soldiers (March 23, 2010), *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-srilanka-cricket-children-idUSTRE62M1H120100323> (Accessed on: February 25, 2021)

common attraction for the game. Despite several enduring problems and imbalances which have created hindrances to the progressive rise of South Asia as a region, cricket has been channelised as an influential medium to facilitate development and progress in the region due to its huge appeal to the mass psyche in the subcontinent. Cricket has facilitated people-to-people contact across the states which has brought normalcy and reconciliation in conflict-driven South Asian nations. It has also been witnessed that on several occasions cricket has opened opportunities for regional cooperation amongst the South Asian countries. The cricketing solidarity has enabled the South Asian countries to stand shoulder to shoulder. Although the respective cricket boards of India and Pakistan often find it difficult to maintain a strong cricketing tie due to their strained political relations since the partition, the opposite picture has also been noticed as South Asian blocks also have jointly hosted major Cricket World Cups in 1987, 1996 and 2011 setting aside their political constraints. What was highly impressive is that despite India's unilateral ban on cricket matches against Pakistan, the latter has supported Jagmohan Dalmiya's elevation to the authority of the ICC. The 1987 World Cup, known as the Reliance Cup, was hosted by India and Pakistan and must be considered the watershed moment in the sub-continental sporting folklore because it was the first time such a big international tournament was held out of England. Further, the Indian subcontinent has snatched the hosting rights of the 1996 World Cup over the mighty English with the help of Dalmiya. This victory was described by The Times as "Asian tigers twists Lord's tail".⁸⁵ This seemed to be a major step for the rise of strong South Asian blocks countering the long hegemonic control of the west over world cricket. Addressing the ever-growing popularity of cricket in South Asia, Amit Gupta writes:

⁸⁵ Jayakumar, A. (Modified July 22, 2022). Is cricket heading in the right direction? *Sportskeeda*. Retrieved from <https://www.sportskeeda.com/cricket/cricket-heading-right-direction> (Accessed on: August 15, 2022)

The position of the non-western countries is reinforced by the financial control they have over the game. It is these countries that drew the crowds, with the exception of the West Indies, which remains plagued by financial difficulties, it is the countries of South Asia that can provide the large purses to make an international competition attractive, and thus it is they who will increasingly dominate the game. The push to get India to play in international one-day competition is indicative of positive impacts of the Indian national team on gate receipts. So too is the demand to get India and Pakistan to start playing against each other.⁸⁶

Thus, the common bond being developed out of the staggering passion for cricket in South Asia results in the creation of a strong premise upon which they can collaborate and showcase their mutual support for each other. For instance, India played a significant role in legitimising the claim for Bangladesh's test-playing status as a result of which Bangladesh emerged as the 10th Test-playing nation in June 2000. However, despite the wait for long years to get the 'Full Member' status, cricket has proved to be a symbol of unity in Bangladesh capturing the hope and determination of millions of Bangladeshis. Their first official foray into international cricket had come in England in the 1979 ICC trophy. In 1976, the MCC team, under the captaincy of Ted Clark, visited Bangladesh and played a match with Bangladesh XI in 1977 in front of 40,000 crowds in Dhaka which ended in a draw. In the same year, Bangladesh cricket was given the recognition of an associate member of the ICC. Although Bangladesh was accorded the status of Associate Membership on 26th July 1977, but they were far away from gaining the official test status. However, being a regular member of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was given the right to participate in ODIs. In 1979, their performance was praiseworthy as they had beaten Fiji and Malaysia in their first ICC trophy. In 1982, Bangladesh's performance was spectacular in the second ICC trophy and

⁸⁶ Gupta, A. (2004). The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21 (2): 268. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360410001681975> (Accessed on: August 20, 2022)

the fourth ICC trophy as they successfully reached the semi-finals. They also successfully hosted bilateral and triangular tournaments. For instance, Bangladesh hosted Denmark in 1990 and the Asia cup in 1988. Bangladesh's eye-catching rise in world cricket was ensured through the formation of the Asian Cricket Council in 1983. Besides, Bangladesh was also awarded to host the 'Mini World Cup' being backed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 1998. In the late 1980s and 1990s Dhaka and Chittagong of Bangladesh became one of emergent cricket destinations. In 1999 Bangladesh cricket team won the championship of the 1997 ICC Trophy by defeating Kenya and cemented its place in the 1999 World Cup in England. Their win against Scotland and most importantly, against Pakistan was instrumental in strengthening their claim for the test status. Bangladesh needed strong support from the Asian bloc to ensure a strong foothold in international cricket. In this case, the most strong support came from Jagmohan Dalmiya, the then President of BCCI, which culminated in challenging the domination of the established order in the world of cricket. Dalmiya won a massive battle by championing the cause for Bangladesh's entry into the test arena. It strengthened the ground for the emergence of a strong Asian block which was clearly evident. As Sharda Ugra has indicated that 'the headquarters of world cricket was no longer England's and Lord's, but the Asian subcontinent'.⁸⁷ Dalmiya's cooperation was the fruit of his foresight who knew that Bangladesh's test status could give a mileage for the rise of South Asian bloc. English cricket writer Robin Maler, wrote in an article titled '*Whither Bangladesh*':

Bangladesh is not a member of the International Cricket Conference. She should be. Bengali cricket is numerically strong. Dacca is a Test match ground fit to rank with any in the world, and if the attraction to Pakistan for playing there in the 50s and 60s was as much concerned with revenue at the gate as encouraging local stars, that in itself was a reflection of the passionate interest

⁸⁷ Wagg, S. (2018). *Cricket: A Political History of The Global Game, 1945-2017*. New York : Routledge, p. 133

*in the game. And there have been talented players there, too. Something has to be done to restore the people of the seventh-largest democracy in the world to the family of cricket... The fact is that the Bangladeshis – as in so many other, features of life – need a helping hand. They are unaware that they need a proposer and a seconder for their entry.*⁸⁸

In this regard, Ex-New Zealand cricketer said: “Let’s face it – Bangladesh and Zimbabwe are being kept on the international stage for political reasons...Talking of politics, why were so few questions raised about the way the Asian subcontinent has taken a stranglehold on World cricket?”⁸⁹ Dileep Premachandran, editor-in-chief of Wisden India, also stated: “I think it was a very far-sighted move. Some would say it was political in terms of getting one more vote...in the ICC. That’s a cynical way of looking at it”.⁹⁰ On this issue, Stephen Wagg contends:

...Indian administrators having been instrumental in Bangladesh’s admission to international cricket’s high table. A key figure here was the Kolkata businessman Jagmohan Dalmiya, a dominant influence at the BCCI in the 1960s who had become the President of the ICC in 1997 and was also a significant presence on the Asian Cricket Council. In 1993 Dalmiya had successfully challenged the monopoly of India’s national TV station Doordarshan on coverage of Indian cricket and opened the door for national cricket boards in the region to strike lucrative deals with commercial broadcasters and marketers. For these commercial interests, Asia, with its huge population of cricket enthusiasts, represented an attractive market for soft drinks, replica shirts, mobile phones and the like. Politically Bangladesh, with an established cricket culture, 130 million inhabitants and a history of war with its cricket-playing neighbour, was a potentially lucrative addition to the market.

⁸⁸ Marlar, R. (February 1976). *Whither Bangladesh*, Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/cricketer/content/story/135968.html> (Accessed on: February 5, 2019)

⁸⁹ Marqusee, M. (July 17, 2006). The thump of humbug on willow. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jul/17/disspiritofcricket> (Accessed on: January 15, 2019)

⁹⁰ How Indian Power Play Helped Bangladesh Rise, Change Dynamics of World Cricket (February 6, 2017), Retrieved from <https://sports.ndtv.com/cricket/how-indian-power-play-helped-bangladesh-rise-change-dynamics-of-world-cricket-1656399> (Accessed on: January 10, 2020)

Moreover, Dalmiya could feel certain that Bangladesh would vote with the emergent 'Asian bloc' on the ICC.⁹¹

The dissatisfaction of the western media regarding Bangladesh's promotion to Test playing cricket circuit was also revealed through Scyld Berry's opinion in the Daily Telegraph:

It was through no fault of Bangladesh's cricketers, but of the sport's administrators, that their country was awarded Test status obscenely prematurely. The ICC granted it in 1999- England at least abstained while the eight other Test countries said yes – on the flimsiest possible playing evidence: Bangladesh had won three of their 35 one day internationals, two of them against Kenya and Scotland.⁹²

Another instance needs to be understood in this light to clarify how cricket has consistently provided the ground for South Asian solidarity. When Australia and West Indies refused to send their teams to Sri Lanka due to the security fears following the Central Bank bombing attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, India and Pakistan agreed to play in volatile Sri Lanka to normalise the situation. This act of solidarity convinced other cricket playing nations and officials to consider Sri Lanka as a safe place for cricket. Most importantly, Pakistan was considered to be the traditional ally of Sri Lanka in the cricketing fraternity. Pakistan showed their strong support along with India to include Sri Lanka as an eight test playing nation. In fact, Pakistan was the first country who has agreed to welcome Sri Lanka for a test series in 1982. However, the proposal for promoting Sri Lanka as the test playing country was rejected by Australia and England due to their veto power in the ICC. It was Kardar, the first captain of Pakistan Test cricket team and a leading administrator of Pakistan cricket, who

⁹¹ Wagg, S. (2018). *Cricket: A Political History of The Global Game, 1945-2017*. New York: Routledge, pp. 132-133

⁹² Berry, S. (October 19, 2016). Bangladesh are still paying the price for gaining Test status obscenely prematurely, *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cricket/2016/10/19/bangladesh-are-still-paying-the-price-for-gaining-test-status-ob/> (Accessed on: March 15, 2020)

strongly advocated Sri Lanka's inclusion as the test playing country. Kardar fought for the cause of Sri Lanka's test status. He also initiated the Ali Bhutto Trophy for the interactions of Under-19 teams between the two countries, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Neil Perera, who was the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) from 1973 to 1976, commented on Pakistan's contribution to the rise of their cricket:

Mr. Kardar brought our case at the ICC level very forcefully in the 1970s. But there was staunch opposition from Australia or England. At one of those meetings, Mr. Kardar spoke forcefully and stressed that both India and Pakistan were playing regularly against Sri Lanka and the quality of cricket in the country was good. Our case was still vetoed, and then Mr. Kardar said that the reluctance to grant us Test status was nothing but racial discrimination... He also requested us to send some of the coaches in Pakistan and gain knowledge. We are indebted to Mr. Kardar for the initiative to develop our cricket'.⁹³

Sunil Wettimuny, a former Sri Lankan international cricketer, also recalled:

Travelling in Pakistan those days wasn't easy. When we were playing the Ali Bhutto Trophy, Mr. Kardar sent an Air Force plane to Multan for us to be flown to another destination. It was a C30 big Air Force plane. It was quite an experience for us Under-19 boys. He went out of his way to help Sri Lanka.⁹⁴

He further added:

I wonder whether we would have got Test status when we eventually got it, if not for Mr. Kardar. When we won the ICC trophy in 1975 and qualified to play the inaugural World Cup, it was the icing on the cake for Mr. Kardar. He really backed us.⁹⁵

⁹³ Clementine, R. (September 28, 2017). Why Sri Lanka should help bring cricket back in Pakistan, *Cricbuzz*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricbuzz.com/cricket-news/97396/why-sri-lanka-should-help-bring-cricket-back-in-pakistan> (Accessed on: July 20, 2021)

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Most interestingly, Wettimuni was in Lahore when Sri Lanka clinched their World cup in 1996. His reminiscence of the Sri Lanka-Pakistan friendship being fuelled by their cricketing cooperation needs to be remembered in this scenario:

I was there in Lahore that night and I have never seen a nation supporting another nation like that. It will go down in the history of sports. The Pakistanis supported us as if their own team were playing... If Sri Lanka went out shopping that day in Lahore, he didn't have to pay for the shopping. Everything was free. At restaurants they gave food free. The only thing you had to say was that you were Sri Lankan. I wonder we should have done for Pakistan'.⁹⁶

Unsurprisingly, the World Cup win of Sri Lanka in 1996 led by Arjuna Ranatunga gave them a new identity as a sub-continental superpower. The fearless brand of cricket by Sri Lanka had thrashed Australia, crossing the 242-run target in the 47th over. While lifting the World Cup, Arjun Ranatunga, the Captain of Sri Lanka, also gave a glaring speech applauding Pakistan's support for their historic win: "I would like to thank Wasim and Azhar for coming over to Colombo when we were in trouble...I would like to thank the Pakistani people as well. Thank you for supporting us today. We felt like playing at home".⁹⁷

Notwithstanding, when the New Zealand team abandoned their tour in Pakistan following the massive military build-up in the region in the wake of the US terrorist attack and India called off the three-day Test series in Pakistan due to the political reason, it was Sri Lanka who showed their gratitude to Pakistan by agreeing to send their teams to an unscheduled tour to Pakistan, helping the latter to be saved from national embarrassment and revenue losses. "The players have shown keenness to go to Pakistan and help them out of financial dilemma, after

⁹⁶ Clementine, R. (September 28, 2017). Why Sri Lanka should help bring cricket back in Pakistan, *Cricbuzz*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricbuzz.com/cricket-news/97396/why-sri-lanka-should-help-bring-cricket-back-in-pakistan> (Accessed on: July 20, 2021)

⁹⁷ Clementine, R. (September 28, 2017). Why Sri Lanka should help bring cricket back in Pakistan, *Cricbuzz*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricbuzz.com/cricket-news/97396/why-sri-lanka-should-help-bring-cricket-back-in-pakistan> (Accessed on: July 20, 2021)

the support Pakistan gave us during the 1996 World Cup”, commented a BCCSL official regarding their willingness to accept Pakistan’s invitation for the proposed tour. Sanath Jayasuriya’s remark on this issue also showed the lion’s solidarity with Pakistan: “We are willing to go. Pakistan helped us in 1996 and we would like to return that favour now if our government gives us the all-clear”.⁹⁸

Further, as mentioned before, South Asian countries seemed to have engaged in cricket diplomacy because of the huge mass appeal generated through cricket in the South Asia region. For instance, cricket played a key role in restoring the channels for communication between India and Pakistan. There were several instances ranging from Pakistan President General Zia-ul-Haq’s coining of the term ‘cricket diplomacy’ while attending the test match between India and Pakistan in 1987 in Jaipur to India’s ‘Goodwill Series’ to Pakistan in 2004, cricket has turned to be a potential medium to bridge the gap between them while their bilateral seemed to be at stake. Furthermore, the historic ‘Pink Ball-Test’ between India and Bangladesh in 2019 at the 67,000-capacity iconic Eden Garden, Kolkata must be considered as one of the recent examples about how both countries showed their eagerness to utilise the platform of cricket to solidify their 20-years long friendship. Responding to the invitation of India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sheikh Hasina, agreed to witness the match. “We are two neighbouring countries and we share a very cordial relationship. At present both countries are experiencing the best phase of this friendly relationship. We want this cordial relationship with our neighbouring country to remain like this forever”,⁹⁹ she uttered before the inauguration of the day and night test. Expressing her gratitude towards India, She further stated:

⁹⁸ Austin, C. (September 26, 2001). Sri Lanka players willing to answer Pakistan SOS. *ESPNcricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/sri-lankan-players-willing-to-answer-pakistan-sos-110726> (Accessed on: September 2, 2019)

⁹⁹ Grateful to India for standing by us, our father of nation: Hasina (November 23, 2019). *The Indian Express*, Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/grateful-to-india-for-standing-by-us-our-father-of-nation-hasina/> (Accessed on: January 25, 2021)

*I have come here with the blessing of the people of Bangladesh, I have come here to attend this country's first day-night pink ball test match after being invited by Sourav Ganguly. We are always grateful to the people of India for standing by us and our father of nation, Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, during our liberation war. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the people and government of this country. Refugees from Bangladesh had taken shelter here and received all kinds of support and we always remember that. It always special to come here.*¹⁰⁰

Cricket diplomacy has also been evident in India's recent initiative to promote cricket in Afghanistan or Maldives. For instance, the India government's multiple initiatives concerning the progress of cricket in Afghanistan must be considered as a part of India's strategic soft power projection to enhance influence in the landlocked country. BCCI gave the nod to host Afghanistan's debut test match against India in Bengaluru in 2018 after their promotion to full ICC member in 2017¹⁰¹ and also pledged to provide them with technical assistance for the development programme concerning umpiring, coaching, curators, performance analysts and so on. The government of India also approved USD 1 million¹⁰² funds to build a cricket stadium in southern Kandahar. The Afghanistan government has praised BCCI's contribution to the progress of Afghanistan cricket. Most importantly, before the inauguration of Afghanistan's maiden historic test, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his pleasure to host the Afghanistan team in Greater Noida and Dehradun: "Today cricket is a unifying force for the people of Afghanistan. India takes pride in being shoulder-to-shoulder with Afghanistan in this

¹⁰⁰ Grateful to India for standing by us, our father of nation: Hasina (November 23, 2019). *The Indian Express*, Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/grateful-to-india-for-standing-by-us-our-father-of-nation-hasina/> (Accessed on: January 25, 2021)

¹⁰¹ Afghanistan to play debut Test V India in Bengaluru in June (January 17, 2018). *ICC*. Retrieved from <https://www.icc-cricket.com/news/596817> (Accessed on: February 18, 2020)

¹⁰² India approves USD 1 million for the construction of Kandahar cricket stadium (August 8, 2014). *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/23887/India+approves+USD+1+million+for+the+construction+of+Kandahar+cricket+stadium> (Accessed on: May 25, 2019)

journey.”¹⁰³ Taking note of the Afghanistan national team’s progressive journey within a short period after its promotion to an affiliate member of ICC in 2001, Mr. Modi further added: “These achievements have come about in challenging and difficult circumstances. This demonstrates the indomitable Afghan spirit to overcome all challenges and realize aspirations for a purposeful, stable, united and peaceful nation”.¹⁰⁴ Afghan President Ashraf Ghani also conveyed the significance of the match: “As President of Afghanistan, I welcome their maiden Test match against India. I am proud of the men who championed cricket in Afghanistan in the dawn of the century and believed in themselves that one day Afghanistan will play against the best in the world. Today is that historic day. On behalf of all Afghans I pray tribute to their contribution to the game. India and now Afghanistan are now two major Asian forces in cricket.”¹⁰⁵

Likewise, India also showed interest in strengthening its relations with Maldives through cricket. India had signed an agreement to assist in the construction of a cricket stadium in Hulhumate. In 2009 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted Maldives’ President Ibrahim a cricket bat, containing the India players during their bilateral talks. According to Pallab Bhattacharya: “It is not often that one sees such a gesture from one head of government to another. It was high on optics as a powerful statement of India’s soft power diplomacy. Modi could not have chosen a better time for this given that the frenzy surrounding the World Cup at its peak.”¹⁰⁶ BCCI has contributed to the growth of cricket in Maldives by providing coaching

¹⁰³ Modi salutes indomitable spirit of Afghanistan on Test debut, (June 14, 2018). *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/sport/cricket/modi-salutes-indomitable-spirit-of-afghanistan-on-test-debut/article24160242.ece> (Accessed on: January 21, 2021)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Modi salutes indomitable spirit of Afghanistan on Test debut, (June 14, 2018). *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/sport/cricket/modi-salutes-indomitable-spirit-of-afghanistan-on-test-debut/article24160242.ece> (Accessed on: January 21, 2021)

¹⁰⁶ Bhattacharya, P. (June 17, 2019), ‘India’s cricket diplomacy in the Maldives’, *The Daily Star*, Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/perspective/news/indias-cricket-diplomacy-the-maldives-1757863> (Accessed on: February 18, 2021)

programmes and other technical assistance. It was assumed that the cricketing bonds would improve their mutual relationship in near future and could consolidate the bonhomie among the people of two countries.

The Rise of South Asia as the Powerhouse of World Cricket

As previously discussed, cricket has become integrally connected with the socio-political history of South Asia. Although cricket has often been victimised due to its link to the heated political climate in this region, but it has also opened the door for cooperation amongst the neighbouring countries in several circumstances. It is further noteworthy that the cricketing dominance of South Asia has widely been evident in the new millennium, especially after the rise of India as a cricketing superpower in the post-colonial scenario. As Kaushik Bandyopadhyay argues: “The phenomenon of South Asian cricket has transformed the cricket culture across the world since the 1990s. The forces unleashed by globalization played a critical role in redefining the unique cricket culture in South Asia”.¹⁰⁷ Addressing this point, Amit Gupta has highlighted one of the core reasons behind the rise of cricket in South Asia which paved the way for the emergence of Asian power block:

*While cricket in the core, particularly in England, displayed signs of atrophying, cricket in the periphery flourished. There were several reasons for this. The sport was one of the few where the countries of the South could not only compete but also succeeded. It was also one where, perforce, they could play against top-flight opposition. The ability to go to England and Australia and challenge the two established powers of test cricket and, as in the case of the West Indies, beat them, was an incentive that could not be matched by other sports.*¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspective from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*, New Delhi: Sage.

p. 202

¹⁰⁸ Gupta, A. (2004). The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21 (2): 263

In addition, the centrality of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in reshuffling the power structure must be considered in this light to understand the neo-economic growth of cricket. In the 20th and 21st centuries, a huge transformation has been observed in the global power hierarchy where cricket is no longer dominated by the traditional cricket nations like England or Australia. To be precise, the ‘Indianisation’¹⁰⁹ of cricket being sufficiently fuelled by the money power, television partnership and a strong consumer market has marked the new era of global cricket where the ‘epicentre’ of world cricket has drifted towards India. For Nalin Mehta et al.:

*India’s growing financial power is the bedrock of its increased control over world cricket. This is not to argue that India’s growing economic power automatically translates into power in soccer, hockey or other sports. But in cricket it has found a vehicle for post-colonial assertion. India has money but the aggressiveness of its cricket managers grows fundamentally from a belief that the time has come to change the old order which they see as a vestige of the colonial past.*¹¹⁰

The rise of the ‘Asia block’ seemed to be the reason for the growing discomfort of the traditional power centres of the game. It was revealed when a possibility was created for Sharad Pawar, the ex-president of BCCI, to take over control of the ICC following Parsi Sonn’s death which left a power vacuum in 2007. The anxious remark of an English justifies can be mentioned in this regard: “With the Asian bloc unbreakable, all it would take for a Pawar victory would be a shifting of support of the African continent, and then Pandora’s Box really would be cracked open... With Pawar installed at the head of the ICC, the way would be cleared

¹⁰⁹ Malcolm, D. & Waldman (2017). The politics of international Cricket. In A. Bairner, J. Kelly & J. W. Lee (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Sport and Politics*. Abingdon, Oxon & New York : Routledge, p. 525

¹¹⁰ Mehta, N., Gemmell, J., & Malcolm, D. (2010). ‘Bombay Sport Exchange’: cricket, globalization and the future. In D. Malcolm, J. Gemmell, and N. Mehta (ed.) *The Changing Face of Cricket*, Abingdon, Oxfordshire : Routledge, p. 268

for the takeover of the ICC that has long been threatened by the frustrated Indians, who represent 70% of the game's income and whose early exit from the World Cup conventionally distanced them from-if not all- of the tournament's myriad failing'¹¹¹. To further add to this, England showed their reluctance about joining the IPL in 2008. According to Mike Marqusee, "On the England side, there's an incredible resentment of the Indian's rise. The English need to accept this demographic reality, which inevitably translates into superior financial power"¹¹². But the England and Wales Cricket Board, the governing body of cricket in England and Wales, showed their unwillingness to allow their centrally contracted players to play in the IPL citing the reasons that their players had a prior national commitment to the Ashes series ahead in 2009. Nonetheless, the tremendous attraction of the cash- rich IPL on the global stage tempting the world's top-most cricketers to play in the league was not possible to avoid. Simultaneously, it became clear that if the benchmark of ECB contracts would not increase, they would face players' revolt for not giving them the green signal to play in the IPL as they found the league monetarily much more beneficial for them. For instance, whereas MS Dhoni was supposed to earn around £775, 000 for six weeks in the Indian League, ECB's top central contracts players were stuck at around £400,000.¹¹³ In this backdrop, Ronnie Irani, Broadcaster and former England cricketer also criticised about ECB's decision in this condition:

In this country we concentrate on the negative too much. It is all right for former players to complain about greed and that it is not the traditional form of the game but those players would have wanted to go as much as the current lot if they had this amazing opportunity. Instead we should concentrate on the positive side of the new league. Look at football – Manchester United and

¹¹¹ Mehta, N., Gemmell, J., & Malcolm, D. (2010). 'Bombay Sport Exchange': cricket, globalization and the future. In D. Malcolm, J. Gemmell, and N. Mehta (ed.) *The Changing Face of Cricket*, Abingdon, Oxfordshire : Routledge, p. 268

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Irani, R. (April 16, 2008). Should England Cricketers be allowed to play in the IPL, *The Guardian*, Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2008/apr/16/cricket.indianpremierleague> (Accessed on: July 14, 2021)

*Chelsea attract the best players because they have the most money and it will be the same with cricket. There is no point pretending it will be any other way. The cricket at the IPL will be the best in the world, with huge crowds and lots of pressure on the players. That will only be a good experience for the England stars. They will get used to being in the spotlight and they will have to show a lot of bottles and perform or they will not get asked back. To me that is a great way to get in shape for the Ashes.*¹¹⁴

Shane Warne, the spin wizard of Australia, questioned the ECB's decision in this context: "This has been going on in England for a quite long time, with cricketers from other countries playing in counties. It is ridiculous for the ECB not to allow its players in IPL"¹¹⁵. England's Professional cricketers Association (PCA) also slammed the ECB for their rigid approach toward their contracted players. "It's human nature that they want to play in the IPL. You can't fight the market. The cricket market has had a significant amount of money going into it and we should be looking to capitalise and develop it and not be King Canute"¹¹⁶, PCA chief executive Sean Morris commented on this issue. However, with the increasing popularity of the IPL, the entry of top English stars in different IPL franchises starting from Kevin Peterson, Andrew Flintoff etc was just a matter of time.

Notwithstanding, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has turned out to be the World's wealthiest cricket board and will plausibly become the highest earner with an agreed amount of \$405 million as per the new sharing model of the International Cricket Council which will be effective from 2016-2023. Further, according to the new model, BCCI's share

¹¹⁴ Irani, R. (April 16, 2008). Should England Cricketers be allowed to play in the IPL, *The Guardian*, Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2008/apr/16/cricket.indianpremierleague> (Accessed on: July 14, 2021)

¹¹⁵ 'Warne slams ECB stand on IPL' (April 21, 2008), Retrieved from <https://sports.ndtv.com/cricket/warne-slams-ecb-stand-on-ipl-1606051> (Accessed on: February 5, 2022)

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Bolton, P. (April 8, 2008), Giles Clarke blocks England players from IPL, *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/cricket/2296627/Giles-Clarke-blocks-England-players-from-IPL.html> (Accessed on: February 14, 2022)

will be \$266 million more than ECB which will be around 139 million. Following this context, it is worthy to remember that since the 1980s, Indian cricket became a consumable commodity when the television turned into a powerful means of communication in India. In addition, Jagmohan's Dalmiya's influencing role in revolutionizing Indian cricket by making it a commercial entity as well as changing the balance of power of world cricket in favour of the South Asian block must be taken into consideration in this regard. He played a game changing role in solidifying the Asian block by snatching the hosting bid of the 1987 World Cup from England's catches. Without a doubt, Dalmiya, a master of realpolitik in world cricket, had a huge contribution to increasing the numbers of Associate countries. When he started his journey as the ICC's Chairman in 1997, there were only 20 Associate members out of which 5 were from Asia. But, he overturned the traditional power hierarchy being enjoyed by England and Australia. There were more than 70 Associate members during his tenure, 14 of which were the Asian countries.¹¹⁷

In the present scenario, India became the new capital of cricket with the advent of IPL in 2008 as a new form of commercialised cricket which can be considered as a watershed moment not only for India but also for world cricket. The impact of the billion-dollar IPL has challenged the west's sporting monopoly. This was reasserted through Lalit Modi's audacious vision of the IPL: "we are trying to change the world". Seeing the vast cricket watching audience and its impact upon changing economic equations, Mike Marqusee stated:

Because of its vast popular base, cricket in the subcontinent is an ideal vehicle for multinational corporations seeking to penetrate 'emerging markets'. And thanks to satellite television, sub-continental cricket can be used to sell goods in Europe, North America, the Middle East and South-East Asia. As a result this

¹¹⁷ Mehta, N., Gemmell, J., & Malcolm, D. (2010). 'Bombay Sport Exchange': cricket, globalization and the future. In D. Malcolm, J. Gemmell, and N. Mehta (ed.) *The Changing Face of Cricket*, Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, p. 271

*World Cup has become a kind of carnival of globalization – sponsored by tobacco, soft drink and credit card giants’.*¹¹⁸

Besides, the advent of new professional T20 cricket leagues by South Asian countries such as the Pakistan Super League (PSL), or the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) has indicated the growing popularity of cricket in this region. These leagues also have confirmed tourism dollars and inflows of foreign investments, helping these countries to create a more favourable national image.

Conclusion:

The emergence of South Asian countries in world cricket, is firmly evident. The recent shift of the headquarters of the ICC from London to Dubai in 2005 was a clear indication of the end of western hegemonic control over the game. It marked the shift of the nucleus of cricket from the traditional powers to the South Asian countries. As Andrew Leonard commented:

*This is a fascinating reversal of cultural imperialist fortune. I can't be the only spectator from afar who has always found the subcontinent's adoration of cricket a bizarre legacy of British conquest. The Japanese love of baseball is the only thing I can think of that is similar, but even that pales when compared to the wholesale adaption of upper crust English behavioural attitude towards such things as "fair play". For India to now be so influential in the global economics of cricket would have been hard to predict, I dare say, when the British were crushing the Mutiny, back in the day.*¹¹⁹

Therefore, so far as the present scenario is concerned, there is no point in disagreeing with the fact that South Asia has received the spotlight in the cricketing world, especially because of the neo-liberal economic growth in the sub-continental countries centering around the

¹¹⁸ Gupta, Gupta, A. (2004). The Globalization of Cricket: The Rise of the Non-West. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21 (2): 265. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360410001681975> (Accessed on: August 20, 2022)

¹¹⁹ Leonard, A. (January 10, 2008). Reverse cricket imperialism. Retrieved from https://www.salon.com/2008/01/10/reverse_cricket_imperialism/ (Accessed on: March 17, 2019)

popularity of cricket. Among the major cricket playing South Asian countries, India has emerged as the superpower in world cricket. It has become the most dominant force in global cricket, driving the ICC policy and decision-making.

Therefore, by having a glimpse into the nature of cricket in the changing world order of the post-colonial era, it can be argued that cricket has turned out to be a vital medium for the interaction and integration among South Asian people and a platform for fulfilling their national ambitions. When almost all South Asian countries are suffering from developmental challenges, cricket has given them a ray of hope in their lives. Undoubtedly, cricket provided a common platform for South Asian countries to emerge as a powerful Asian block, overcoming the constraints of mutual suspicion. Most evidently, when South Asian countries have been unsuccessful to achieve much credit in other team sports on the world stage, it is cricket which gave them international fame. Therefore, it can be said that although cricket was disseminated in its initial period as a strategy of British expansionist endeavour aiming at strengthening the colonial hegemony across the globe, this scenario has drastically changed in the new millennium. In the post-colonial time, cricket has come out of the clutches of colonial imperialistic ideology. Rather, the rising dominance of South Asian cricketing powerhouses in shaping the power politics of world cricket is much evident in the contemporary scenario, leading to the phenomenon of 'South Asianization' of cricket.

CHAPTER: THREE

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CRICKET UNDER THE RAJ: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1721-1947)

INTRODUCTION:

The previous chapters attempted to explain the intersection between sports and politics and why sports as a microcosm of society requires to be explored in the broader socio-political context within which it operates. Cricket has been inherently political in India since the inception of colonial rule. The political significance of cricket in India also echoed a similar phenomenon. To be specific, the significant impact of cricket on the socio-political lives of the people of India has arguably paved the way for the political utilisation of cricket to a large extent. Or to put it differently, the colonial root of cricket in India and its growing involvement in the socio-political dynamics of Indian society unfolded the reason why cricket should be considered more than a game in India. As Ashish Nandy remarks:” Cricket is an Indian game accidentally discovered by the English. Like chilli, which was discovered in South America and came to India only in mediaeval times to become an inescapable part of Indian cuisine, cricket, too, is now foreign to India only according to the historians and the Indologists. To most Indians the game now looks more Indian than English. They find it only natural that cricket today arouses more passion in India than in England”.¹ C. Rajagopalachari, the most influential independence activist and the last Governor-General of India, also reasonably speculated that ‘the day might come when India would give up English, but not cricket’.²

¹ Nandy, A. (2000). *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.1

² Sanyal, S. (1912). *40 Years of Test Cricket: India-England (1932-1971)*, New Delhi: Thompson Press. P. vii.

Cricket came to India as a part of the cultural export of Victorian imperialism which has helped to sustain the white domination in this country. Arjun Appadurai writes that “Although there was never a conscious policy in regard to support of cricket of colonial regime in India, cricket evolved into an unofficial instrument of state cultural policy.”³ Cricket was brought to India in the early 1700s by the English sailors of the East India Trading Company. The sailors used to play the game in the ports like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Karachi and often drew curiosity among the local crowds. Edward Blunt, a British ICS officer states that “Whenever an Englishman goes, he takes his games with him. It is not strange, therefore, that many English games are known in India’.⁴ The earliest reference of cricket in India was recorded in 1721 when a cricket match was played by English sailors, in Cambay, Gujarat. Unsurprisingly, one of the earliest references to cricket was found in Clement Downing’s war memoir titled *A Compendious History of the Indian Wars with an Account of the Rise, Progress, Strength and Forces of Angria the Pyrate. Also the Transactions of Squadron of Men of War under Commodore Matthews* where he recalled his fascinating time in India playing cricket near the Bay of Cambay on the Western seaboard of India:

When we lay in the same Place, and I was Captain Herring’s Lieutenant, Captain Dogget in the Hunter-Galley was with us; for we never had any single Vessel sent up from Bombay after this Accident, but always two together. If we did not happen to go just at the Height of the Spring-Tides, we could not get over the Bar, the Channel being so very difficult. Captain Dogget and Captain Herring went up in our Galleywat, which was allow’d us as a Tender. We lay here near a Fortnight before they return’d, and all the while kept a good Look-out; and tho’ all the Country round was inhabited by the Culeys, we everyday

³ Appadurai, A. (2015). ‘Playing with modernity: The decolonization of Indian Cricket’. *Altre Modernita*, (14) : 4, Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/5911056.pdf> (Accessed on: December 10, 2017)

⁴ Blunt, E. (1937). *The ICS: The Indian Civil Service*. London: Faber and Faber, p. 221

*diverted ourselves with playing at cricket, and other Exercises, which they would come and be Spectators of.*⁵

The game gradually expanded in India through the hands of soldiers, administrative officers, educational missionaries and officials who wanted to spread the game to civilize the natives and transfer the Victorian ethos to the colony. Arjun Appadurai also elaborated a similar point: “Cricket was one of many arenas in which a colonial sociology was constructed and reified. In this sociology, India was seen as a congress [sic] of antagonistic communities, populated by men (and women) with a variety of psychosocial defects. Cricket was seen as an ideal way to socialize natives into new modes of inter-group conduct and new standards of public behaviour. Ostensibly concerned with recreation and competition, its underlying quasi-official charter was moral and political”.⁶ Although the Calcutta Cricket Club (CCC), is known to have established in 1792 as the second oldest cricket club after the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) but Hickey’s Bengal Gazette dated 16 December 1780 points to an earlier reference of cricket in Bengal : “Calcutta Cricket Club enjoys today the use of a splendid site as good as can be found anywhere”.⁷ A copy of Madras Courier, an entry on 23rd February 1792 also reported cricket fixtures between the Calcutta Cricket Club and Barrackpore and the Calcutta Cricket Club and Dum Dum.⁸ There was also a record of the historic two-day “Grand Match of Cricket” in Calcutta Gazette on 26th January, 1804 between the “Old Etonians” belonging to the East India Company and the “Rest of Calcutta”, presumably organized by the CCC on January 18 and 19.⁹ The “Old Etonians” secured a victory by 152 runs, with Robert Vansittart distinctly

⁵ Downing, C. (1737). *A Compendious History of the Indian Wars with an Account of the Rise, Progress, Strength and Forces of Angria the Pyrate. Also the Transactions of Squadron of Men of War under Commodore Matthews*. London: T. Cooper, pp. 228-229

⁶ Appadurai, A. (2015). Playing with modernity: The decolonization of Indian Cricket. *Altre Modernita*, (14): 4-5.

⁷ *Bengal Gazette*, December 16, 1780.

⁸ Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CCFC) – History, Retrieved from, <https://www.ccfc1792.com/history.php> (Accessed on: July 3, 2017)

⁹ Ramaswami, N. S. (1975). *From Porabandar to Wadekar*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, p.2

registering the “First-Recorded Century” and taking eight wickets, seven in the first innings on the Indian soil.¹⁰ Hastings and Edward, sons of Sir Elijah Impey, who was the first chief justice of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal and presided over the trial of Maharaja Nandakumar, played the match¹¹. Charles Metcalfe, who was to act as Governor-General in 1835, also took part in the Match.¹² The historical report of the match recorded in the Calcutta Gazette is mention worthy: “On the 18th and 19th instant, was played a grand match of cricket between the Etonians civil servants of the company and all other civil servants of the company resident in the Calcutta, which was won by former in one innings by 152 runs”.¹³In 1846 the Madras Cricket Club was established¹⁴. Further, when the British crown took over the administration from the East India Company, a new class of Englishmen was recruited into the civil services. Many of them had a knowledge of cricket as they were trained by the English public schools. They had taken active roles to promote cricket in India. Cricket like other sports such as tennis, golf, polo, shooting or tennis also became one of the favourite pastimes for the soldiers who stayed away from home. Sports contests between regiments and cantonments were officially encouraged at that time. Soon cricket started occupying a central place in the national sporting culture by growing steadily in the regions Khulna, Rajshahi, Chittagong of East Bengal and Rander in Gujarat or Nagpur in Central India¹⁵. Historical evidence recognised the relentless passion of cricket among the sepoys. A reporter took an account of a match

¹⁰ Ramaswami, N. S. (1976). *Indian Cricket: A Complete History*. New Delhi : Abhinav Publications, p.2

¹¹ Ramaswami, N. S. (1975). *From Porabandar to Wadekar*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, p.2

¹² Ramaswami, N. S. (1976). *Indian Cricket: A Complete History*. New Delhi : Abhinav Publications, p.2

¹³ *Calcutta Gazette*, January 26, 1904.

¹⁴ History – Madras Cricket Club, Retrieved From <https://www.madrascricketclub.org/> (Accessed on: July 5, 2017)

¹⁵ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, p.39

between Sepoy Indians and British published in the magazine named *Sporting Intelligence*, on 3rd March 1845 in an article entitled “Sepoy Cricket Players”:

The most enthusiastic European cricketers could not have played with more energy and cheerfulness than the native sepoys did. I am not a cricketer myself, but invariably attend as a spectator when the natives are playing; the knowledge that the officers, whether playing or not, take an active interest in their performances gratifies the sepoys. Among them I observed one or two who bowled well, some who were very good wicket keepers and others who caught well”.¹⁶

From its beginning, cricket was introduced by the colonisers as a representational force to affirm their superiority. The notion of ‘Oriental despotism’ imposed by the British Raj in colonial India can be taken into consideration in this context. It can be seen as an endeavour of the British to legitimise Britain’s absolute authority and a sense of mastery over the subcontinent.¹⁷ For this, cricket was utilised as a strategy of segregating the British as the master class, the Raj from the ‘OTHER’, the Indians, who they think as inferior to them.¹⁸ The most relevant questions emerge from this development are how cricket became intrinsically connected with the lives of the natives and why this game was indigenously appropriated? How did cricket carrying the legacy of imperial identity turn into a non-violent means of subverting colonial superiority? And finally how far has cricket become attached to the colonial discourse in which the phenomenon of communalism seemed to have been dominantly present, ultimately leading to the creation of Pakistan? The answers require a comprehensive analysis as discussed below:

¹⁶ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, pp.35-38

¹⁷ Metcalf, T. R. (2008). *The Cambridge History of India III.4. Ideologies of the Raj*. New York & UK: Cambridge University Press, pp.xi-8

¹⁸ Basu, B. (2019). Implanting the Games Ethic in Bengal: The Colonial Context. *Indian Historical Review*, 46 (2): 264. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0376983617747990> (Accessed on: August 22, 2018)

CRICKET AS A BRITISH COLONIAL TOOL IN UNDIVIDED INDIA.

As discussed before, sports is a socially constructed cultural entity, a social phenomenon and also a subsystem of human civilization. Sports as a mirror of society significantly reflects the values, norms, behaviours and the power structure of society. Due to its broader socialization force, sports has been instrumentalised to facilitate numerous social and political objectives and ideological agendas. Cricket as the opiate of sub-continental masses has also largely been politically exploited and served as a political tool since the colonial time and thereby, demands academic attention for further investigation on the political historiography of cricket in the colonial structure. For the above reason, to understand why cricket was deliberately exported to India by the British imperialists and in what way cricket had helped to strengthen and stabilize the norms and codes of Victorian ideology in Indian society, it is imperative to drag the Neo-Marxist perspective in this context. As exemplified by the key Neo-Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci, hegemony persists in our the process of persuasive control through which the ideology of the dominant class gets protected. In this way, the dominant class indirectly controls the actions of the subordinate class. Cultural components within a socio-cultural system also act as a significant element of hegemony which seem to have been cultivated by the dominated sections of society for manufacturing consent of the civil society without resorting to the repressive or coercive apparatus. This idea was put forward by the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci in his famous intellectual work *Prison Notebook* with a remarkable notion of 'Hegemony' which pointed out the synthesis between politics and culture. According to Gramsci, the bourgeoisie become hegemonic with strong support of cultural, moral or ideological components of society which are equally important besides the economic variables. In other words, bourgeois 'hegemony' is reproduced and reinforced in the structure of knowledge and ideas being legitimised through the consent of civil society (public sphere). In common parlance, "dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively

the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the ‘spontaneous consent’ of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups”¹⁹ Looking at the nature of Britain’s imperialist domination in the undivided Indian subcontinent, it can reasonably be argued that the cultural practices and customs of the Victorians also played a crucial role in persuading the natives to accept their moral, cultural or political values. In this sense, sports was promoted by the whites for enforcing their cultural domination over the natives which would help them to be hegemonic. In this backdrop, Brian Stoddart contends that “sport may be envisaged as a powerful but largely informal social institution that can create shared beliefs and attitudes between rulers and ruled while at the same time enhancing the social distance between them. This is particularly the case in the British imperial setting, where sport became a strong determinant of social relations, beginning with the British environment itself, from which the game code was exported”²⁰ The British invested in cricket aiming at promoting an ideology of athleticism, the ‘games ethic’, which has arguably served its colonial mission. Cricket was utilised by the British colonial agencies as a tool to strengthen social imperialism. In other words, cricket by inculcating British values facilitated the British authoritarian regime to a certain extent²¹. The Rev, James Pycroft noted in his *The Cricket Field*: “Our soldiers, by order of the Horse Guards (the War Office), are provided with cricket-grounds adjoining their barracks; and all of her Majesty’s ships have bats and balls to astonish the cockroaches at sea, the crabs and turtles ashore. Hence it has come to pass that, whenever Her Majesty’s servants have “carried their victorious arms” and legs – wind and weather

¹⁹ Striniti, D. (2004). *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. London: Routledge, p.153

²⁰ Stoddart, B. (1988). Sport, cultural imperialism, and colonial response in the British Empire. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (4): 652. Retrieved from, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/178928> (Accessed on: April 5, 2017)

²¹ Malcolm, D. (2008). *The Sage Dictionary of Sport Studies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, p. 130

permitting-cricket has been played. Still, the game is essentially Anglo-Saxon”²²On one hand cricket became a crucial medium for strengthening the bond between colonizers and colonised people, it also played an important role to implant the spirit of sportsmanship among the non-whites natives on the other. It was believed that the cult of cricket would help the Indians to be more obedient, disciplined, loyal and physically and morally powerful. Exploring the rationale behind the encouragement of ‘games ethic’ by the whites, J.A. Mangan remarked:

*The game was considered by the colonizer to carry with it a series of moral lessons, regarding hard work and perseverance, about team loyalty and obedience to authority and, indeed involving concepts of correct physical development and ‘manliness’. As such, it was used as a key weapon in the battle to win over local populations and to begin transforming them from their ‘uncivilized’ and ‘heathen’ state to one where they might be considered ‘civilized’ and ‘Christian’.*²³

Thus, the altruistic virtues of cricket were propagated by the Victorians and Edwardians to train and educate the Indians to learn English moral values. J. E. C Weldon, the headmaster of Harrow school from 1881 to 1895, proclaimed that “‘Englishmen are not superior to Frenchmen or Germans in brains or industry or in the science or apparatus of war’. Instead their dominance derived from ‘the health and temper, which games impart [...] the pluck, the energy, the perseverance, the good temper, the self-control, the discipline, the co-operation, the esprit de corps, which merit success in Cricket and football [...] the very qualities which win the day in peace and war’.²⁴Cricket was projected a means for the Victorian imperialists to transfer their distinctive values and cultures to the colonies. The ideals of athleticism not only

²² Pycroft, J. (2019). *The Cricket Field: Or, the History and Science of the Game of Cricket*. Glasgow: Good Press (Kindle ed.), p. 13. Available at: <https://www.amazon.in/Cricket-Field-History-Science-Game-ebook/dp/B082KW1DBH>

²³ Dimeo, P. & Mills, J. (2013). *Soccer in South Asia: empire, nation, diaspora*. New York: Routledge, p. 41

²⁴ Bose, M. (2011). *The Spirit of the Game: How Sports Made the Modern world*. London: Constable & Robinson, p.70

enabled the British Raj to represent themselves superior and more civilised and advanced than the indigenous populations but also gave the chance to the former to enlighten the latter to ‘learn team work, the value of obeying constitutional authority, courage in the face of adversity, loyalty to fellow players and respect for rules’²⁵. As Dr. Michael Woolf noted:

The British Empire was justified on the grounds that it brought a higher civilization to the colonies. A perverse form of social Darwinism and increasingly popular notion of eugenics offered a racial rationale for that construction. By the late nineteenth century, in the British Empire, a more idealistic, paternalistic objective emerged out of those theories. Colonial missionaries followed in the bloodier footsteps of armies. They brought bibles; colonial administrators carried with them cricket bats and balls, the paraphernalia of the game, and a means of civilizing the primitive.

*In what we might think of as evangelic or social imperialism, cricket plays a significant role.*²⁶

The British governors such as Colonel Lord Harris, who also represented Kent and England as a captain or Lord Brabourne, on whose name the historic Brabourne stadium was built, had enthusiastically promoted cricket in colonial India with the hope of solidifying the bond between ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse Indians.²⁷ Summarizing the above discussion, Souvik Naha’s comment is mention worthy:

It was the Victorian who wove a distinctive English imprint into cricket by trumpeting the virtues of fair play, equanimity and loyalty—all of which they hailed as the building blocks of British democracy and empire... Yet just as white soldiers in the outposts of empire sought to exclude locals from cricket, British politicians were increasingly turning in to the game’s potential as a conduit of

²⁵ Basu, B. (2019). Implanting the Games Ethic in Bengal: The Colonial Context. *Indian Historical Review*, 46 (2): 266

²⁶ Woolf, M. (June 2, 2020). Cricket and Colonialism. *CAPA World Blog*. Retrieved from <https://capaworld.capa.org/cricket-and-colonialism> (Accessed on: August 10, 2020)

²⁷ Guttman, A. (1994). *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism*. New York: Columbia University, p. 33

imperial solidarity. Cricket, they thought, could serve as a unique cultural bond between the coloniser and colonised.

Colonialism, a matter of great pride for the British ruling elite, brought with it – in their eyes, at least – a moral obligation. They regard empire building as a ‘civilising mission. And what could educate the non-white better than cricket?’²⁸

Therefore, cricket has acquired a central place in the development of imperial culture. Public schools which ran within the colonialist’s framework played a key role in the development of cricket in India. Colleges like Mayo, Rajkot, Rajkumar, Daly, Aitchison, encouraged various sports and games in their institutional premises and started organizing competitive matches with a desire to train a class of people to learn the altruistic values of games ethic. Sir Fredrick Lugard, a British colonial administrator and imperial proconsul, also believed that the English public school system had a significant civilizing role in preaching to Indians the importance of English habits, values and action. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, also felt the requirement of establishing institutions for royalty and nobility to raise the indigenous people with moral conviction. Thus, public school training became a crucial product of the British civilizing process which sought to promote superiority type of education for the sons of princely and nobles in India. For instance, Mayo College was known for developing a sporting culture where boys used to take part in cricket, football and other sports with great enthusiasm. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Mayo had three cricket and football elevens. Mayo had played their first match against the government college of Ajmer and from 1987 onward, Mayo used to play with the local Ajmer gymkhanas. There was also a series of matches between the Mayo and the Rajkumar. Mayo College won their first cricket shield in the Rajputana Schools tournament. From 1906, an annual tournament was introduced where the colleges like

²⁸ Batting for the British Empire: how Victorian cricket was more than just a game (August 27, 2021). *History Extra*. Retrieved from, <https://www.historyextra.com/period/cricket-colonialism-role-british-empire/> (Accessed on: October 15, 2021)

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Aitchison College, Lahore, Imperial Cadet College, Dehradun, and Daly College, Indore used to participate.²⁹

A PHASE OF INDIGENIZATION OF CRICKET:

Following the above discussion, it is imperative to throw light on the fact that although cricket was projected by the colonisers as a medium to establish indirect control and dominance over the Indian natives so that the latter can be made loyal citizens of the Raj but it is also true that despite collaborating with the civilizing mission of the British, the colonised subjects had appropriated cricket in the later period as a resistance tool to challenge the imperial authority. As Mihir Bose commented: “Nothing could be more English than cricket, yet nothing could be more Indian in the way the subcontinent has taken to the game and fashioned out of it something unique and very different to the English game”.³⁰ For Souvik Naha: “The act of emulation has often been endowed a nationalist / anti-colonial agency in which subversion of the colonial regime came through apparent imitation.”³¹ C. L. R. James, one of the most powerful voices in postcolonial literature, in his classic book *Beyond a Boundary*³² also excavated similar points about the centrality of cricket in the unremitting anti-colonial struggle of the Caribbean. However, in this context, the most significant question is why cricket has not adequately flourished in a place like United States despite having a ‘special relationship’ with Britain and subsequently marginalised with the popularity of baseball in the country, whereas the same game was adapted by the Indians resulted in the creation of an everlasting bond of the

²⁹Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking, pp.77-78

³⁰ Bose, M. (2002). *A History of Indian Cricket*. London: Andre Deutsch, p. 16

³¹ Naha, S. (2013). Brown Man’s Burden?: The Historiography of Cricket and Nationalism in Colonial India. In A. Chatterjee (ed.) *People at Play: Sport, Culture and Nationalism*. Kolkata: Setu, p. 28

³² James, C. L. R. (2005) *Beyond a Boundary*. London: Yellow Jersey Press.

Indian public with the game. Seeking the reason regarding the fans' intimate involvement in Basketball in the USA, Boria Majumdar pointed out:

In essence, because baseball was not established the way cricket was, it was shaped by the people that began to standardize it. It was natural that baseball would reflect the values of nineteenth-century America, because it was forged during that era by people who held values. Its destiny as a 'national' game rested on its relative formalness during that era compared to cricket, with its long (and foreign) history...As American nationalism emerged and strengthened, baseball continually forged and moulded to suit the needs of Americans, began to assert a stronger hold on the American public eventually pushing cricket forever into margins of American sporting life.³³

In the case of India, the diffusion of cricket happened in a different way. Cricket was taken up by the Indian elites and princes as a ladder for upward social mobilization and to become the loyal feudatories of the imperial administration. Cricket became a significant part of their life as they were looking for avenues which would enable them to integrate with the colonial authority. However, due to the symbolic value of cricket, the Maharajas, Nawabs and the Princes also wanted to compete with the whites to utilize the platform of cricket to assert their identity. Various sports such as cricket, polo, hunting, golf, horse-racing, billiards were patronised by the native princes in the late nineteenth century for various objectives – “peer rivalry, regional pride, nationalist instinct, social mobility, and financial and political benefit”.³⁴ Thus princely patronage of cricket had immense contribution to promote cricket in the British ruled subcontinent. The maharajas and moneyed-class cricket enthusiast like Sikh rulers of Patiala, the Maharaja of Porbander, the Maharajas of Natore and Cooch Behar, the

³³ Majumdar, B. & Brown. S. (2013). Why Baseball, Why Cricket? Differing Nationalisms, Differing Challenges. In In A. Chatterjee (ed.) *People at Play: Sport, Culture and Nationalism*. Kolkata: Setu, pp. 7-8

³⁴ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2017). *Mahatma on the Pitch: Gandhi and Cricket in India*. New Delhi: Rupa, p.24

Maharajkumar of Vizianagram, Maharajas of Gwalior and Dhar, the Nawab of Bhopal, the Nizam of Hyderabad played a leading role to popularise the game to a large extent. There are several reasons behind the aristocratic patronage of cricket in India. Some of them encouraged cricket for their upward social mobility by emulating the colonizers. The princely investment in cricket was also evident in the colonial state for establishing regional supremacy being instigated by peer rivalries. Cricket was also promoted by the Maharajas for serving the nationalist cause by challenging British supremacy on the sporting field. For instance, the Maharajas of Patiala were at the forefront to assemble a team recruiting players from all over India. European coaches like W. Brockwell, J.T. Hearne, were employed by the initiative of the royal family of Patiala. Maharaja Rajendra Singh, Maharaja Bhupender Singh, the son of Rajender Singh, grandsons Bhalendra and Yadavendra etc. were known for their patronage to leading Indian cricketers.³⁵ Among them, a stadium was built after the name of Maharaja Rajendra Singh. Thanks to his funding, Brabourne Stadium was constructed. It was due to Rajendra's initiative, English coach, the Surrey and England professional Walter Brockwell - a Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1895 - were employed to train the nobles in his court.³⁶ Most importantly, Bhupinder Singh, a product of Aitchison College who himself was a batsman, had invested money and time in cricket which paved the way for India's rising stature as a cricket playing nation in the colonial era. Legendary cricketers like Wilfred Rhodes, Harold Larwood, George Hirst, Maurice Leyland came to Patiala at his invitation. Due to his sponsorship, Australian eleven, led by J. S. Ryder toured India in 1935-36. He was also known for his key role in the origination of the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI), the governing body of cricket in India, in February 1927. He was the ruling prince who discharged his duty as the first captain in India touring abroad in 1911. Besides, the captain of MCC AER Gilligan and a

³⁵ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking, p. 86

³⁶ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p. 105

British businessman named RE Grant-Govan, Maharaja Patiala had an active role in the historic conversation that led to the existence of the BCCI. He was also known for his contribution to the growth of the Cricket Club of India. In 1934, he donated £500 for the trophy named after the famous former cricketer Ranjitsinhji.³⁷

Notably, Mumbai Parsis were the first Indian civil community who had passionately embraced the English sporting pursuit and thereby, “acted as cultural brokers between the British and the Indian society”.³⁸ Parsis were traditionally known as the worshippers of Zoroaster who had migrated from Persia to the Indian subcontinent. They were the merchant classes who had settled in the coastal towns of western India like Surat, Navsari, Bharuch, Ankleshwar etc.³⁹T. M. Luhrmann’s characterization of the socially progressive colonial elite Parsis can be recounted:

*The Parsis appear to have chosen their adoption of British style, education, and political orientation. They accepted the colonial ideology of progress and moral superiority, of westernization as a means to advancement, and of the British as the agents of positive change... Under colonial rule, the attributes of the good Parsi became hierarchized, in part through the adoption of hierarchized British self-description: like the British colonizer, the good Parsi was more truthful, more pure, more charitable, more progressive, more rational, and more masculine than the Hindu-of-the-masses.*⁴⁰

³⁷ Patiala, R. S. & Singh, S. (August 26, 2019). Maharaja Bhupinder Singh’s sporting legacy. *The Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/comment/maharaja-bhupinder-singh-s-sporting-legacy-822845> (Accessed on: October 15, 2020)

³⁸ Cashman, R. (1979). The phenomenon of Indian Cricket. In R. Cashman & M. McKernan (ed.). *Sport in history: the making of modern sporting history*. Queensland : University of Queensland Press, pp. 190-1

³⁹ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p. 11

⁴⁰ Luhrmann, T. M. (1996). *The Good Parsi: the Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 15-16

Western-educated Parsis became closely associated with the European in the late nineteenth century which prompted them to imbibe the spirit of Victorian games ethic. According to a few chroniclers, one of the reasons for which Anglicized Parsis sought to cultivate the attributes of civilised masculinity is that they wanted to increase their proximity with the British community in the interest of trade and thereby proving themselves a loyal citizens of the Raj. In fact, cricketing excellence enabled them to self-differentiate from the Indian community and represent themselves as British Indians. As J.M. Framjee Patel portrayed: “The Parsee owes his cricket prosperity as much to the civilizing and inspiring influence of British Rule as to his own innate vigour and adaptability. He is a fine product of Parsian pluck and English culture – a strong combination, indeed, which may account for his all-round and rapid progress, like Japanese, in fields of human activity.”⁴¹ Prashant Kidambi also tried to unravel the fact why Parsis had taken up cricket enthusiastically: “Cricket was extolled by Victorian ideologues as embodying the distinctively British virtues of courage, endurance, self-discipline, selflessness, loyalty, obedience to rules. For bourgeois Parsis in colonial Bombay, therefore, cricket came to be imbued with a talismanic quality. Demonstrating their devotion to the game became a way of signifying the community’s Britishness; proficiency in playing it, a sign of Parsi manliness”.⁴² By the 1830s, the Parsi youths flocked to the Esplanade ‘Maidan’ in search of entertainment and recreation. They used to play cricket, the noble English game, wearing dhoti and dagli. In order to pursue their passion, Parsis have founded their first cricket club, the Oriental Cricket Club in 1848 and two years later it was replaced by the Zoroastrian club.⁴³ The growth of Parsi cricket was strengthened through the funding coming from the business houses like the Wadis and Tatas. Parsi cricket began to flourish at a rapid speed as a result of which at

⁴¹ Patel, J. M. F. (1905). *Stray Thoughts on Indian Cricket*. Bombay: The Time Press, p. 2

⁴² Kidambi, P. (2019). *Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team*. Gurgaon: Penguin, Viking, p.5

⁴³ Kidambi, P. (2019). *Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team*. Gurgaon: Penguin, Viking, p.8

least 30 Parsi clubs were established by the 1850s and 1860s like Jupiter, Juvenile, Spartan, Mars etc. The prize matches which began in early 1868 also helped in generating interest among the Parsi community by involving monetary awards and prizes in the tournament. According to the description of the Bombay Gazette, thousands of crowds used to gather at those matches to get a glimpse of the players⁴⁴. One of the most intense competitions took place between Zoroastrian Cricket Club and the Mars Cricket Club which enabled Parsis to imbibe the essence of competitive cricket. However, the dispute between Parsis and the European polo players in the late nineteenth century over the piece of land indicated that initially the Parsis' passion for the game was not wholeheartedly accepted by the colonial rulers. Shapoorjee Sorabjee, one of the eminent cricket historians, in his *Chronicle of Cricket among Parsees and the Struggle: European Polo Versus Native Cricket*, documented how Parsis had faced a bitter struggle in the late 1870s to secure a requisite space in Bombay for playing cricket⁴⁵. The conflict began when the European polo players of all-white Bombay Gymkhana invaded the ground of native cricketers and thereby disrupted the cricket pitches. The native cricketers complained against the whites to the Bombay Gymkhana explaining how the Europeans encroached on their field and ruined the cricket turf. But when their case was not taken into consideration, around 460 Indian cricketers petitioned the Bombay Governor on 27 October 1881. Finally, the native players' persistent campaign came out to be fruitful when a new government memorandum in 1882 authorised "the Native Cricketers to use the Esplanade Parade ground when not required by Government for military or other purposes".⁴⁶ However, this victory was short-lived as the previous order was reversed due to the counter petition

⁴⁴ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p. 18

⁴⁵ Sarabjee, S. (1897). *A Chronicle of Cricket amongst Parsees, and the Struggle: Polo versus Cricket*. Bombay: Published by the author.

⁴⁶ Kidambi, P. (2019). *Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team*. Gurgaon: Penguin, Viking p. 23

placed by the polo secretary of the Bombay Gymkhana. This case signalled the beginning of the intense encounters between the colonizers and the colonials which later embodied the anti-colonial struggle of the natives against the empiricists on the sporting field. The Parsi Gymkhana's historic win in 1890 against the visiting English team led by G. F. Vernon can be viewed in this light because "It was the first cricket defeat suffered by the British on Indian soil, and indeed, their first 'defeat' of any kind since they had crushed the War of Independence in 1857⁴⁷. This nationalist assertion of the native cricket was well documented in the *Times of India* which gave an account of the clash between the Parsi team and Lord Hawk's team that toured India in 1892-93 in the following terms:

*The interest usually excited by international cricket matches in Bombay reached its highest point yesterday, when the local champions (Parsees) came forth to defend their laurels against the team which Lord Hawke has brought out from England. The visitors are a fairly strong combination, and amongst them are two or three men who have played first class cricket in England...If therefore the Parsees succeeded in beating them, it was felt they would add a fresh feather in the cap.*⁴⁸

The enthusiastic adoption of cricket by the Parsi communities paved the way for the significant growth of English sports in other cities. As Ronojoy Sen wrote:

The Parsis' success spurred the Hindus and Muslims to stake their claim to their own gymkhanas. A Muslim cricket club had been in operation from 1883, and in 1890 the patrons of the club petitioned the Bombay governor to allot it land. These efforts bore fruit in 1891 when a plot adjacent to the Parsi Gymkhana and one of similar size were allotted to Islam Gymkhana. Predictably, the Hindus also joined the clamor for their own gymkhana and a plot of land. Their wish was granted in 1892 when they were given the same amount of land as the

⁴⁷ About the BCCI – History, Retrieved from, <https://www.bcci.tv/about/history> (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

⁴⁸ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, pp. 38-39

*Parsis and Muslims and on the same terms. This was the genesis of the tournament organized along religious and racial lines that dominated Indian cricket until 1946.*⁴⁹

With the active involvement of Parsis in cricket, the other communities also showed interest to play the game. The Gujarati Muslim family Lukamanis and Tyabjis, played a key role to popularise cricket among the Muslim communities. Besides, Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College immense contributed to the development of Muslim cricket in India. Consequently, the Muslim cricket club was established in 1883. An interesting memoir titled *Aligarh Ka Cricket* vividly portrayed the enthusiasm of the Aligarh students for cricket. As Ramachandra Guha, notes: "... *Aligarh Ka Cricket* speaks of how within a decade and a half of the introduction of cricket it had become a central activity of the college. The most venerated student at Aligarh was the cricket captain. By custom the captain always stayed in the same room – No. 13 S. S. East – room chock-a-block with trophies and cups which was known as the 'Kaba' (shrine) of Aligarh cricket."⁵⁰ Likewise, G. P. Jivandas had an important contribution to set up Hindu cricket club. He donated the sum of 10,000 rupees for the construction of a gymkhana⁵¹. Soon cricket gained popularity in Bengal, Bombay and Madras.

CRICKETING NATIONALISM AND THE BEGINNING OF DECOLONISATION:

Cricket in colonial times also had a nationalistic significance. Several contexts can be addressed where the winning of native teams against the European sides caused a nationwide frenzy and boasted national spirit amongst the natives to attain their goal in their freedom struggle against the imperial power. As Ronojoy Sen noted: "WHEN INDIAN TEAMS FIRST BEGAN

⁴⁹ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking pp.55-56

⁵⁰ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p.45

⁵¹ Ibid, p.61

COMPETING AND OCCASIONALLY defeating British teams, they were regarded as exceptional moments. Not only did these events signal that the British were fallible, but they also were celebrated as milestones in the Indian nationalist movement.”⁵²

The colonial state of Bengal had got prolonged exposure to the British colonial administration since the establishment of British rule in India. Unsurprisingly, cricket became part of Bengalis’ popular culture in urban Bengal-Calcutta. The western educated middle-class Bengalis copiously referred as the ‘Bhadraloks’ embraced the game as they imbibed the Western life-style due to their proximity to their European boss and preferred to distinguish themselves as a distinct group being separated from the rural base. However, it was historically evident that since the consolidation of colonial rule, the Bengalis were being categorically embarrassed and mocked by the British colonial rulers for their physical weakness and indolence. For this reason, the domain of sports was under the exclusive aristocratic preserve of manly white regimental teams as the young Bengali counterparts were averse to any kind of athletic practices. Bengalis lacked much physical valour which was required to match the physical conditions of the colonial rulers. The British categorization of Bengalis as an “effeminate” class was also reflected in several English writings and speeches throughout the 19th century. The effeminacy of Bengalis was also described by T.B. Macaulay, a law member for India in 1830, who remarked that “The Castilians have a proverb that in Valencia the earth is water, and the men women; and the description is at least equally applicable to the vast plain of the lower Ganges. Whatever the Bengalee he does languidly. His favourite pursuits are sedentary. He shrinks from bodily exertion...he seldom engages in a personal conflict, and scarcely even enlists as a soldier. We doubt whether there be a hundred genuine Bengalees in the whole army of the East India Company. There never, perhaps, existed a people so

⁵² Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking p. 113

thoroughly fitted by nature and by habit for a foreign yoke”.⁵³ Amongst many disparaging and degrading British stereotypes of the Bengali people, one that caught eye was that “The physical organization of the Bengalee is feeble even to effeminacy...His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness, for purposes of manly resistance”⁵⁴. Bengalis were treated as a physically inferior class. They were discriminated against and humiliated in every walks of life by the British for the ‘non-martial’ characterization of the former. This was the reason why Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in his novel *Anada Math* ardently advocated the rise of militant nationalism against the British rule to restore the glory of the motherland. To raise their self-esteem, the Bengalis wanted to shake off the ‘effeminate’ identity and hit back at the British in their game. This was one of the reasons the game of cricket received a significant boost amongst the Bengali middle class as a tool of nationalist resistance to counter British supremacy in the sporting field. In this context, Mrinalini Sinha wrote:

In the second half of the century, middle class Bengali's made several efforts to combat the problem of the emasculation of the Bengali male. Roselli (John) has demonstrated the various efforts in the second half of the nineteenth century in Bengal to revive the culture of akharas or gymnasium in order to cultivate and instill a sense of pride in the physical prowess of Bengalis. Prominent nineteenth-century Bengali intellectuals were indeed concerned about the consequences of effeminacy. In the 1860s the famous Tagores of Jorasanko and the organisation with which they were most closely associated, the Adi Brahma Samaj, launched a concerted drive for the physical regeneration of Bengalis. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, one of the most famous Bengali writers, oscillated

⁵³ Macaulay, T. B (1990). *Critical and Historical Essays, Volume 2*. United States: Houghton Mifflin, p.701

⁵⁴ Macaulay, L. (1922). *Warren Hastings*. London: Macmillan & Co., p.18

*between mocking the modern babu and attempting to answer the charge of Bengali effeminacy which he called Bharat Kalanka or the Indian Stigma.*⁵⁵

Although the influence of cricket in Bengali's social and public life and the natives' victory was interpreted by few sports historians as the success and reinforcement of games ethic being provided by the public school system but they hardly consider the fact that British superiority was challenged and nullified in their sports by the colonised people whom they consider so called inferior. This is how cricket developed a nationalist connotation by turning into a symbolic resistant tool. Boria Majumdar writes:

*In the 1880s, nationalist resistance in Bengal was gathering strength and in the absence of an armed uprising, the sporting field contributed in a large measure to challenging British supremacy...Rigorous physical exercise, it was thought, was a way to counter the British stereotyping of effeminacy. The move to playing cricket and football is not a coincidence either. The realization that the masculine strength by participating in indigenous sports such as wrestling and bodybuilding were not enough prompted the shift to cricket and football*⁵⁶

In this light, it is relevant to mention that Natore, a district of the Rajshahi division of Bangladesh, had a close connection with cricket in the undivided Indian subcontinent. The Maharaja of Natore used to encourage sporting culture with heart and soul. From 1900 onwards cricket was promoted in Natore with the active encouragement of Jagadindranarayan Roy who was determined to launch a cricket team of his own to uplift the status of Natore. He was also known as an enthusiastic active committee member of the Calcutta Cricket Club. In this background, it is not out of place to mention that the Town Club was known for its glorious history as being recognised as the oldest Indian sporting organisation in Calcutta. The club was

⁵⁵ Sinha, M. (1995). *Colonial Masculinity: The Manly Englishman and Effeminate Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.21

⁵⁶ Majumdar, B. (2004). Imperial tool 'for' nationalist resistance: The 'games ethic' in Indian history. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21 (3-4): 389, Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360409510547> (Accessed on: July 17, 2017)

founded in the year 1884 under the patronage of the late Kumar Narendranath Rai Manmatha Nath Bahadur, the late Kumar Narendra Nath Mitter, the late Mr. Ganga Prasanna Mukherjee and the late Mr. Raj Chunder.⁵⁷ The club took a keen interest in actively promoting western outdoor games like cricket, hockey and rugby for young Bengali men and produced many talents of state and near-state level. It is documented that Narendranath Dutta, globally known as Swami Vivekananda also represented the Town Club.⁵⁸ Roy was one of the prominent nationalist during the anti-partition movement and an active member of the Indian National Congress. He became the President of Natore Political Association responding to the call of Sir Surendranath Banerjee. He also became a member of Rajshahi Municipality following the path of Banerjee and Anonamohan Bose.⁵⁹ He had built a strong team composed of native cricketers only. Natore had successfully developed a sporting culture under British Raj. The inclusion of native players alone has successfully pulled local support for his team. He built a cricket stadium comprising 45 acres of land at Bondel Road of old Ballygunj in South Kolkata. Cricket became a nationalist tool for the team of Natore as Maharaja Roy's ambition was to take an upper-hand and to beat the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, Maharaja Sir Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur's strong side which was mainly dominated by European players like Joe Vine, Frank Tarrant, George Cox and so many others. Thus, Jagadindranarayan Ray was a prominent figure at that time who had an immense contribution sowing the seed of sporting nationalism on the cricket field as he intended to compete and beat the English at their own game.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Souvenir of the *Town Club Centenary (1884-1984)*

⁵⁸ Souvenir of the *Town Club Golden Jubilee Celebration (December 19, 1934)*, p.4

⁵⁹ Caesar, F. (October 8, 2018). Bangladesh: Natore and its relation to cricket. *Cricket Soccer*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricketsoccer.com/2018/10/08/bangladesh-natore-and-its-relation-to-cricket/> (Accessed on: March 12, 2019)

⁶⁰ Majumdar, B. (2018). *Eleven Gods and a Billion Indians : The On and Off the Field Story of Cricket in India and Beyond*, New Delhi: S & S India, p.479

According to Kaushik Bandopadhyay, “Jagadindra probably wanted to utilize cricket as a cultural arena to challenge the British sense of superiority. Although he never overtly propagated such a ‘nationalist enterprise’ for his cricket venture, the impact of success of his team against top European sides certainly aroused certain extent of nationalist sentiment in Bengal.”⁶¹ In this time, native teams’ triumphs over the European teams came to be regarded as synonymous with the national battle for self-assertion. In this sense, he showed a sense of patriotism by recruiting promising Indian players like J.S Warden, Mani Das, Ganpat Palwankar, P. Vithal, K. N. Mistry, Seshachari, P. Vithal, and Sardaranjan Ray, the father of Indian cricket, and his brothers, Muktidaranjan, Kuladaranjan, and Pramodaranjan in his team to promote a strong native cricket team. For that reason, talented Indian players were recruited into the team to make a strong Indian side where social affiliations based on class or caste status were never a matter of consideration for the selection of the team. For this very reason, Mani Das, a potter’s son, who used to play cricket and football, represented the Natore team from 1909 to 1913. He was the only lower caste Hindu Bengali cricketer in that time. It was believed that Mani Das was given a chance to India’s 1911 tour of England for his cricketing excellence but he did not take part due to the fear of crossing ‘Kala Pani’ or ‘Black Water’⁶². Maharaja Roy expressed: “Among the current lot of Bengali cricketers, Mani Das is one of the very best. I had sent him to open the batting against Gwalior. He wasn’t willing to open and was afraid of performing poorly in front of his more illustrious teammates. Noting the appreciation, I called him and said, “We’re Bengalis! In a predominantly cricket team it is the duty of the Bengalis to take the lead’. Upon hearing this he touched my feet to take my blessings and went

⁶¹ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspectives from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*. New Delhi: Sage, p. 137

⁶² Gangopadhyay, S. (2020). *Cricket Samudrer Dhar Gheshe*. Kolkata: Uttaran, p.103

out to the middle to play an innings that proved invaluable for the team in the end”.⁶³ Natore’s team’s triumph against European dominated team proved to be of immense significance for mass mobilization as “one of the cherished ambitions of the Maharaja was to raise the Bengali youth to such a level of sporting excellence that they could equal and beat the British in all modern sports”.⁶⁴ On this point, Hemendrachandra Ray argued:

*At the time when Natore team dominated Bengal cricket, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar had also formed a quality cricket team. However, we Bengalis could not rejoice at the victories of Cooch Behar side. This was because Bengalis were a marginal presence in the Cooch Behar team and hence the credit for these victories went to the European players of the team.*⁶⁵

Ray further noted:

*Whenever the Natore XI defeated the European teams of Calcutta, our chests swelled with pride. Before the formation of the Natore XI, we, Indians, were losers on most occasions. But with the formation of the Natore XI, Maharaja Jagadindranath turned the tables on the English. Whether it is a fault of ours or not, we do not regard games as something simple, rather, we are affected by the results of these encounters. This is because this is the only arena where we are allowed to compete on even terms with the English. The English have always ridiculed us as ‘effete’. It is on the sporting field that we may counter such false allegations. This is why we justifiably perceive a victory on the sporting field as a ‘national victory’ against the British.*⁶⁶

⁶³Caesar, F. (October 8, 2018). Bangladesh: Natore and its relation to cricket. *CricketSoccer*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricket soccer.com/2018/10/08/bangladesh-natore-and-its-relation-to-cricket/> (Accessed on: February 15, 2022)

⁶⁴Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspectives from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*. New Delhi: Sage, p.138

⁶⁵ Caesar, F. (October 8, 2018). Bangladesh: Natore and its relation to cricket. *CricketSoccer*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricket soccer.com/2018/10/08/bangladesh-natore-and-its-relation-to-cricket/> (Accessed on: March 12, 2019)

⁶⁶ Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards of Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p.34

Most interestingly, Palwankar Ballo, one of the finest left arm Dalit spinners in the first decade of the twentieth century, was recruited in the Natore Team. Recalling his brother Palwankar Baloo's balling brilliance, Vithal regarded that Baloo's incredible cricketing journey made him cemented his place in the Natore XI. While playing for Natore in 1910, Baloo faced Ranji who was playing for the Maharaja's of Jodhpur team and the former finished off the win gracefully. For Boria Majumdar:

*Disregarding the sport's relation to wider factors shaping urban society, factors that influenced cricket's growth and development, historians/commentators have argued that the game did not develop in Bengal as the 'natives did not show great enthusiasm for it. Rather... the Bengalis did not play cricket simply to be like the British and then defeat them on their own turf. Bengali cricket was not simply an act of mimicry. It sought to permeate ideas of self-respect, manliness and self-worth among the people. Educated men from middle-class backgrounds promoted cricket, trying to legitimise physical activity in Bengali society and win respect for the players. The sport emerged as the mirror wherein an Indian/Bengali identity started to reassess itself, and in that sense Bengal cricket was certainly part of nationalist enterprise.'*⁶⁷

Another memorable incident which should not go unnoticed in the history of Bengal's cricketing nationalism was Gostha Pal's indomitable sporting engagement to uphold India's nationalist pride. The world famous cricket writer Sir Neville Cardus once remarked: "We remember not the scores and the results in after years; it is the men who remain in our minds, in our imagination".⁶⁸Gostha Pal, one of the greatest luminary of Mohun Bagan Club and the first ever captain of the Indian National Team, was renowned as the 'Chinese Wall'. But what people are unaware of him is that besides being a legend on the Indian football scene in the

⁶⁷ Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards of Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p.170

⁶⁸ Bhushan, A. (2017). *A Colonial Destined to Lead – A Biography of Col. CK Nayudu – India's first test captain*. Mumbai: StoryMirror, p.13

colonial time, he was also an honoured cricketer. He was also closely associated with the phenomenon of nationalist protest which cannot be ignored in the time when the Indian national movement was gathering steam. When Gandhi's Satyagraha and non-cooperation movement turned into a massively popular campaign amongst the masses, Pal attempted Satyagraha on the cricket field out of sheer disgust. In 1930, one of the most intense cricketing rivalries took place between Mohun Bagan and Calcutta Cricket Club. The historic moment occurred when Paul bagged 2 wickets in 4 balls, but the match had to be abandoned as natives were humiliated for wearing a native cloth called dhoti. Surprisingly a protest was lodged by Calcutta Cricket Club because of the unsuitable cricketing attire worn by a native as a result of which Gostha and Mohun Bagan refused to continue the match. As a result of this bitter incident, the match had to be abandoned and both clubs discontinued playing each other for the next 6 years.⁶⁹The symbolic significance of the match as a medium of protest against white supremacy and the subsequent articulation of nationalist sporting culture in the cricket field cannot be overlooked in the process of India's decolonization. Following this unwanted incident R.B Lagden, the president and captain of Calcutta Cricket Club, wrote to *The Statesman* that it was "imperative to play cricket as it should be played in the kit which is recognised throughout the world as being suitable".⁷⁰Whereas Mohun Bagan's Honorary Secretary protested the racist attitude of whites' by arguing that it must not be considered as an act of insulting the opponent because wearing dhoti while playing cricket was not unusual for the natives in that time.

⁶⁹ Personal Interview with Pal, N. (Dated: May 26, 2021) [Personal Communication, Telephone]. Also mentioned in 'Gusto' Pal lives on, (May 8, 2022). *Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/gusto-pal-lives-on/articleshow/19942148.cms> (Accessed on: May 10, 2022)

⁷⁰ *Times of India*, August 28, 1931. Also reproduced in Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking, p.109

C. K. NAYUDU, THE FIRST INDIAN CRICKET HERO AND THE ANTI-COLONIAL PHENOMENON:

The indigenised adaptation of cricket in colonial India often provided a powerful ground for questioning the imperial organization. The Colonizer's superior identity was culturally resisted by the colonised people in their own game. In that way, cricket emerged as a strong arena of cultural contestation. Native teams' victory against European teams began to be appreciated as a symbol of nationalistic pride because "The goal is to play the game in the same spirit as it is played in England and also if possible to beat the Englishmen at their own game and on their own soil at the game of cricket, England's sunny gift to India!"⁷¹ Their win produced a sort of national imagination and thereby, solidified the basis of national unity in the wake of anti-colonial nationalism all over India. As Partha Chatterjee opined; "The arena of sports was something of an exception to this colonial history. Here too, the sporting clubs were quite strictly segregated on racial lines. But quite early on, perhaps rather serendipitously, a competitive domain was created where European and Indian teams met as rivals. This opened up a sphere of public life in the colonial city that was mixed yet deeply racialized".⁷² There were several circumstances when nationalist aspirations were thrust upon sporting heroes. They were often treated as equal to national heroes. Their fame and accomplishment in the sporting field being achieved by defeating the imperialists contributed to the generation of cultural nationalism. C. K. Nayudu was one of them whose electrifying aura and brand of cricket became the tangible reality of nationalist self-assertion in the colonial context. According to Ramachandra Guha; "It is not so much a history of Indian cricket as a history of India told through cricket and cricketers. It is woven around biographies of men of influence, such as C.

⁷¹ Sarbadhikary, B. (1946). *Presenting Indian Cricket. Preface*. Kolkata: A. Mukherjee & Co.

⁷² Chatterjee, P. (2012). *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, p.479

K. Nayudu, the first truly mass hero of subcontinent sport, each of whose sixes was interpreted as a nationalist answer to British raj.”⁷³Cottari Kanakaiya known as ‘CK’ Nayudu was undoubtedly a legendary all-rounder in pre-independent India who stood apart from his contemporaries. Aditya Bhushan noted:

To understand the significance of that famous innings by CK (as he was fondly called), we need to rewind the clock to an era when cricket was still taking its first step in the country. Although cricket had been introduced to the Indians by the European merchant sailors in the 18th century, India was far from being called a cricketing nation. India had not yet been awarded a test status and the game of cricket was not as popular in the country as it is today. There were only a handful of cricket clubs in some of the major cities. The game was played only in big cities those days and in fact, was regarded as the game of the Maharajas. Thus, it was considered very difficult for a commoner to take up the game of cricket.⁷⁴

After proving his cricketing excellence in school cricket, Nayudu began his promising career with a first class debut in the Bombay Triangular in 1916. He was best remembered for his outstanding performance against the most powerful MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) team led by Arthur Gilligan in 1925-26. The MCC were unbeaten in 12 matches played at Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Ajmer before coming to Bombay Gymkhana. The mighty MCC side consisted of stalwarts in that era such as Maurice Tate, Andrew Sandham and the future England captain Bob Wyatt.⁷⁵ Nayudu became a national icon by smashing 153 with 11 sixes and 13 fours in just 116 minutes. Unsurprisingly, Nayudu was awarded a silver bat by the MCC for his inspirational knock. After this match, Gilligan was convinced that the time had arrived

⁷³ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p. xvii

⁷⁴ Bhushan, A. (2017). *A Colonial Destined to Lead – A Biography of Col. CK Nayudu – India’s first test captain*, p.13

⁷⁵ Varma, A. (March 20, 2010). India’s entry into Test cricket. ESPN.Com. Retrieved from https://www.espn.com/cricket/story/_/id/22573349/india-entry-test-cricket (Accessed on: April 17, 2017)

for Indian cricket to be recognised as a Test-playing nation. According to Amit Varma; “Gilligan, MCC’s captain and an influential figure in English cricket, lobbied for India’s elevation to Test status, which led to the formation of the Indian cricket board in 1928, and India’s first Test match in 1932. Things have come a long way since then – but the first rays of sunshine came through on a winter’s day in December.”⁷⁶ Nayudu’s extraordinary innings for the Hindu team came to be seen as a tangible reality of national self-determination challenging the imperialist hegemony. Boria Majumdar considered this remarkable inning as moment of departure when the cricket field were being politically harnessed for nationalist cause.⁷⁷

*Nayudu’s innings dented the aura of the MCC. It was an assertion of indigenous cricketing prowess against the colonizers; it was a signal that the Indians were legitimately knocking on the doors of world cricket. This innings is now part of Indian cricket lore, and may be regarded as the moment when an indigenous brand of nationalism took shape on the cricket field.*⁷⁸

Nayudu’s extraordinary performance was also significant for mass awakening as people wanted a mass icon at the crossroad when the future of the Non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi seemed uncertain in the backdrop of India’s independence battle.⁷⁹ According to Boria Majumdar “By his exceptional achievements against Gilligan’s team, Nayudu had helped restore confidence in the minds of his countrymen. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to state that

⁷⁶ Varma, A. (March 20, 2010). India’s entry into Test cricket. ESPN.Com. Retrieved from https://www.espn.com/cricket/story/_/id/22573349/india-entry-test-cricket (Accessed on: April 17, 2017)

⁷⁷ Majumdar, B. (2006). *Lost Histories of Indian Cricket: Battles off the Pitch*, Abingdon: Routledge, p.107

⁷⁸ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, pp.45.

⁷⁹ Naha, S. (2013). Brown Man’s Burden?: The Historiography of Cricket and Nationalism in Colonial India. In A. Chatterjee (ed.) *People at Play: Sport, Culture and Nationalism*. Kolkata: Setu, p.35

he successfully galvanised a colonised nation, which was perennially in search of a cultural icon”⁸⁰ In this context, Ramachandra Guha writes:

*With no disrespect to Pavri and Mistry, Botawala and Wazir, Baloo and Vithal, C. K. Nayudu was the first Indian cricketer to be a popular hero, whose appeal transcended the barriers of caste, class, gender and religion. One did not need to have a cultivated interest in the art of cricket to recognize his achievements. Nayudu’s display of fireworks was timed to perfection. To play an innings like that against the English, in 1926, in Bombay, and on the Bombay Gymkhana ground, was to tap into all the sources of nationalist pride. What we know of the man suggests that Nayudu did not have any firm views on Raj and Swaraj. Yet he would become, almost despite himself, an icon for all patriotic Indians.*⁸¹

His aggressive batting and tough physical appearance also challenged the tag of physical inferiority of Indians bestowed by the British. According to Widen’s description: “It was Tall and well proportioned, Nayudu is eminently fitted by nature to be a good cricketer and his doings for the Indian team fully bore out the accounts to him that had come to us by reason of his excellent performances in his own land. Possessed of supple and powerful wrists and a very good eye, he hit that ball tremendously hard, unlike the modern Australian batsman, he hit that ball tremendously hard”.⁸² Seeing Nayudu’s dazzling power strokes at Lahore for the Punjab Governor’s general against the MCC side in 1933-34 in which he ended up scoring 116, Prithvi Raj, one of the cricketers in the crowd commented, “such a display I had never witnessed before in my life and the next day I had to play against Jardine’s team at Amritsar, Nayudu had driven away all fear of the foreigner from my mind”.⁸³ Another cricketer named Prem Bhatia said

⁸⁰ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, p.48

⁸¹ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p.175

⁸² Majumdar, B. (2006). *Lost Histories of Indian Cricket: Battles off the Pitch*, Abingdon: Routledge p.34

⁸³ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p.204

“Every sixer hit by ‘C.K.’ against the visitors’ slow bowler was as good as a nail in the coffin of the British. I remember a shot he hit against James Langridge which sailed over the pavilion at the Lahore Gymkhana ground in what is now called Bagh-i-Jinnah. We madly cheered each shot past the boundary not only as a cricket performance but also as an assertion of our resolve to throw the British out of India”⁸⁴Nayudu was also remembered for being the captain of India’s official maiden test played in Lords in 1932. He was the regular face of first class cricket till 1958. He also became the first-ever Indian cricketer who endorsed a brand – Bathgate Liver Tonic in 1941 to his immense popularity amongst the Indian people.

THE COMMUNAL POLITICS AND CRICKET: THE ROAD TO PARTITION

It is made clear from the previous discussion that colonial politics had deeply penetrated into the domain of cricket in India since pre-independence time. Cricket carried a political symbolism mirroring the socio-political atmosphere of colonial India. It was also discussed in the previous section how cricket was instrumentalised as a cultural resistance tool to challenge the imperial hegemony which resulted in subverting the myth of Victorian superiority. Likewise, the arena of cricket was also being drawn into the politics of communal divisiveness due to its political significance in twentieth century India, having an impact on the socio-political transformations of society. The political connotations of the Bombay Quadrangular also require to be investigated in this light as “the history of cricket in colonial Bombay, studies the sport as a microcosm of the fissures and tensions of a deeply divided society”.⁸⁵ The Bombay Quadrangular, was the most popular tournament in Bombay in colonial India which started with the Presidency matches between European members of the Bombay Gymkhana

⁸⁴ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, 205

⁸⁵ Guha, R. (1998). Cricket and politics in colonial India. *Past and Present* (161): 157. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/651075> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

and Parsis of the Zoroastrian Cricket Club in the 1890s. It eventually converted to the Pentangular tournament with the inclusion of the Hindus (in 1907), the Muslims (in 1912) and the 'Rest' composed of Anglo-Indians and Christians (in 1937). The communal gymkhanas mainly controlled the Bombay Pentangular. It was the most prestigious tournament in colonial India where the most talented young players were recruited from all over India. The tournament turned out to be the biggest carnival in the city attracting huge crowds. The tournament was also being followed through radio and telegraph across the country. According to an observer, "the city was swept by a furious epidemic. For nothing moves the placidity of Bombay as the premier sporting event of India".⁸⁶ Addressing the immense popularity of the tournament, Ramachandra Guha wrote:

Performance in the Quadrangular quickly became an index of a community's strength and social cohesion. The Parsi, Muslim and Hindu teams each had a large following, with fans quick to offer advice and critical comment... The interest in cricket was manifest in a flourishing black-market trade in tickets. The matches were played in the Bombay Gymkhana's portion of the Esplanade, where 'every inch of available space was occupied and the crowd at the tree end was at least ten deep. Every pavilion was full and hundreds more were watching the game from house-tops while some were planted on trees'. Nor was this frenzy of activity confined to those who played or watched the game: '[tailors were] busy with the necessary apparel for their clients; clerks, business-men, old-jobbers pounce upon every opportunity of making a little money either by betting [on the cricket] or having a finger in the pie, [carriage-drivers] and school-boys shout themselves hoarse; grandmother die; offices are empty on account of illness; college rolls are never taken; briefless barristers rush up and down Waudby Road'.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Guha, R. (1998). Cricket and politics in colonial India. *Past and Present* (161): 162. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/651075> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 161-162

Other Quadrangular tournament also took place in other parts of the country based on inter-community or communal lines. For example, Sind Quadrangular began in Karachi in 1916. The Central Province Quadrangular was started in Nagpur in 1920. A triangular tournament which included Hindus, Muslims and the Rests was also popular in Delhi in 1937. A three team tournament also started in Lahore where Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs took part. In the South, Madras Presidency match also caught the attention played between the Englishmen and Indians.⁸⁸ Bose opined that “In those early days, the development of Bombay cricket, and thereby Indian cricket, was due to the different communities sharpening their competitive instincts on the cricket field”⁸⁹.

Until 1930, the Bombay Pentangular ran successfully and as such no debates surfaced over the communal orientation of the tournament which began to be considered a hindrance in the path of idealizing the secular vision of an emerging nation-state. In this regard, one of the observations is mention worthy: “I can only view sport in its national setting and would have time for sport only if it led to a greater national wellbeing-national wealth and, what is far more important in India today, national character. This is no more platitude and is more than a truism. Communalism is indisputably the bane of Indian political life. It would follow therefore, even as two or two is four, that communal cricket is opposed to national cricket”.⁹⁰In addition, in the 1920s onwards the communal cloud had not flared up and the idea of India was unitedly conceived. According to Ganendra Pandey’s observation, “the nation of Indians was visualized as a composite body, consisting of several communities, each with its own history and culture and its own special contribution to make to the common nationality. India, and the emerging Indian nation, was conceived as a collection of communities: Hindu+ Muslim+ Christian+

⁸⁸ Guha, R. (1998). Cricket and politics in colonial India. *Past and Present* (161): 163. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/651075> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

⁸⁹ Bose, M. (2002). *A History of Indian Cricket*. London: Andre Deutsch, p,33

⁹⁰ Sarbadhikary, B. (1945). *Indian Cricket Uncovered*. Kolkata: Illustrated News, pp. 60-61

Parsi+ Sikh, and so on”.⁹¹Further, most strikingly, the Pentangular matches from its inception did not create any significant communal unrest as ‘the tournament has kept the spirit of communalism within reasonable bounds of decency and decorum among the upper classes of the communities concerned’.⁹²As record claims, the Hindus joined Muslims in their victory celebration when the Muslims won the Quadrangular in 1924. It was a critical juncture in the backdrop of the national freedom struggle. It was a momentous time when Gandhi called-off the Non-Cooperation movement which resulted in weakening the Khilafat movement also to some extent. As a result, both the leaders of Congress and Khilafat expressed their dissatisfaction and resentment about Gandhi’s decision. The euphoria of the Hindu-Muslim alliance seemed to be declining. Amidst all these crises, the Hindu’s support for Muslim’s maiden victory was eloquently described by Mohammed Ali Jinnah as nothing but the celebration of Hindu-Muslim unity beyond the boundaries of religious divisiveness: “Even their Hindu brethren would rejoice in the Mohammedans’ success in a spirit of true sportsmanship. The cricket field has many lessons to teach in other walks of life. The brotherly feeling that prevailed throughout the play was no less remarkable and he hoped their Hindu brethren as sportsmen would no less be pleased, but also rejoice at the Mohammendan’s winning the championship”.⁹³ Sir Chunilal Mehta, the ex-captain of Hindus also expressed the similar sentiment: “I do not think, fortunately for us, this communal tensions has expressed itself very acutely so far and it might be said that at least in regard to the two major communities in India, namely the Hindus and Muslims, the feeling has been thoroughly sportsmanlike and

⁹¹ Pandey, G. (1990). *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.210

⁹² *The Bombay Chronicle*, February 28, 1937. Also mentioned in Maitra, J. C. (1965). *Indian Sports Flashback*. Bombay: The Author, p.30

⁹³ *The Bombay Chronicle*, December 12, 1924. Also cited in Guha, R. (1998). Cricket and politics in colonial India. *Past and Present* (161): 186-187. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/651075> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

friendly.”⁹⁴One of the contemporaries believed that “although the tournament is run on communal lines, in cricket there is little or nothing of the communal spirit, and you see a Muslim applauding the hefty hit of Nayudu with the same enthusiasm as any Hindu.”⁹⁵ However, from 1930, the debates over communalization of Bombay cricket were raised. Few from the cricket fraternity believed that the communal basis of the competition would likely intensify the communal tensions in the then political spectrum of India and thereby could widen the gap between the Hindu and Muslim communities. From 1936 onwards, the political atmosphere became critical in Bombay followed by the hit of Hindu-Muslim communal riots. In this scenario, the fear which was cropped up was that any communal violence on the cricket field would tear the communities further apart. Berry Sarbadhikary contends:

*Communal cricket must go by the board and be buried-five fathoms deep. That is as things stand today. There might not have been, at the outset, anything “communal” ...There may not be anything communal about it even today so far as the players and spectators are concerned ... But the fact remains that once the controversy gathered the fierceness and the momentum it did, once communal cricket was dissected and decried or patched up and praised by politicians or cricketers, by the press and public in the manner it was done, communal cricket became communal straightway. Only communal cricket is basically wrong and although synonymous with the cream of Indian cricket once, it has now outlived its usefulness, to say nothing of its being not indispensable to Indian cricket anymore.*⁹⁶

Shaharyar Khan and Ali Khan also addressed the point that cricket has also been inextricably connected with the political atmosphere of that time. At the outset, the competitive rivalries

⁹⁴ *The Bombay Chronicle*, December 15, 1940. Also mentioned in Maitra, J. C. (1965). *Indian Sports Flashback*, Bombay: The Author, pp.34-35

⁹⁵ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, pp. 181-182

⁹⁶ Sarbadhikary, B. (1945). *Indian Cricket Uncovered*. Kolkata: Illustrated News, pp. 60-61. Also cited in Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards of Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p.238

between the English and communal teams have been quite evident which bore a character of anti-colonial struggle. In the 1930s, it turned into an intense communal rivalry by becoming the triangular and quadrangular tournament following which “politics had entered the cricketing domain as the Congress-Muslim confrontation became more acerbic, causing rioting in many other cities”.⁹⁷ The popularity of these tournaments became the centre of attraction for the cricket spectators at the Brabourne stadium.

J. C. Maitra was vocal for the abolition of communal sports divided by religious rivalries and propagated the inclusion of contests based on territorial divisions. He supported the tournament to be organised on zonal demarcation being regulated by and affiliated to the Board of Control of Cricket in India, like North, East, South and West.⁹⁸ In 1934 he said that “if the sale of tickets at the various Gymkhanas is any indication of its popularity among the votaries of the game, communalism has won with all ten wickets in hand”⁹⁹. On this issue, J. C. Maitra further commented on the same line:

Apart from the question of representation of the various communities in the field of cricket, and improvement of the game by each community, we have to consider a bigger thing – a higher ideal. We have to turn India from so many communities into one nation. Instead of showing up our communal colours, we have to present one solid front of united nation. So we need to inculcate the spirit of nationalism among our people, instead of harping on our communal differences. Sport-and cricket of course-does not know any caste, creed, colour or class. It is indeed a shame to Bombay that she makes a distinction which does

⁹⁷ Khan, S. M. & Khan, A. (2013). *Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent Politics of Sport in Pakistan*. Noida: Harper Sport, p.5

⁹⁸ Maitra, J. C. (1965). *Indian Sports Flashback*. Bombay: The Author, pp.34-35

⁹⁹ *The Bombay Chronicle*, November 13, 1934. Reproduced in Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p.228 and in Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking, p.116

*not exist in other parts of the world. The sooner this distinction is removed, the better it would be for the game and the people as a whole.*¹⁰⁰

J. M. Ganguly, one of the renowned sports journalists, also expressed a similar point of view:

*When the Quadrangular matches were conceived and started, times were different; the sports atmosphere was clear and unclouded by communal and sectarian feelings... Victory in the Quadrangular was not taken as a communal victory, but merely as the result of a better performance by the winning side, and which did not leave any rancour or mean jealousy... Those happy days are now gone, thanks to those self seeking leaders who want to gain their ends by ranking up communal fanaticism, and who would not rest on their oars after doing all the mischief they could in the political sphere but would go out in search of new fields and pastures green. Even the sacred field of sport they would not leave unmolested.*¹⁰¹

Other people regarded the Quadrangular as a unified platform for social cohesion and solidarity. Sir Lancelot Graham, the first Governor of Sind, expressed a similar sentiment: “Communal matches bind communities together and foster harmony on and off the field, not only in cricket but in other games. I am in favour of such matches particularly in India which is a land of many communities.”¹⁰² The renowned players like Wazir Ali, C. K. Nayudu, Vijay Merchant were eager to play in the Pentangular and never regarded the tournament as unhealthy for national cricket. For instance, Vijay Merchant has categorically expressed that “Communal feeling between Hindus and Muslims is a product of politics not of sport. Cricket and communal series brought them closer together than any other aspect of life”.¹⁰³ C. K. Nayudu also thought that there is no valid reason to stop the Pentangular tournament and it must be

¹⁰⁰ Maitra, J. C. (1965). *Indian Sports Flashback*. Bombay: The Author, p.31

¹⁰¹ Cited in Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards of Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p. 238

¹⁰² Sarbadhikary, B. (1945). *Indian Cricket Uncovered*. Kolkata: Illustrated News, p. 63

¹⁰³ Tharoor, S & Khan, S. (2009). *Shadows Across the Playing Field: 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, p. 152-153

continued for the interests of Indian cricket. Mushtaq Ali also shared the similar sentiment: “When politics are introduced in sport, which should never be the case, communal feelings are aroused. It is not the game played by persons of different communities, which gave rise to such feelings. As for the Pentangular it has always promoted a very healthy spirit of rivalry and inculcated sporting spirit among players and public.”¹⁰⁴

However, despite several allegations against the communal organization of the Quadrangular, the tournament was expanded in 1937 with the inclusion of the “Others” team and became the Pentangular. The Muslim team clinched the victory that year. Although the Hindu team withdrew from the tournament at the last minute protesting about not receiving a fair amount of tickets, they returned in 1938. In 1939, the Hindus won the tournament by defeating the Muslims in front of spectators of more than 20,000. Since that time, Hindu-Muslim rivalry became the centre of attraction for the crowds surpassing the other rivalries.¹⁰⁵

By 1940, World War II started with worldwide repercussions. It was the time when the Indian National Congress refused to support Britain’s war effort as India was included in the war without the consultation of Indian leaders. In response, Congress demanded complete independence. The British declined. Consequently, the Quit India movement was launched, demanding an end to British rule in India. Many national leaders were imprisoned and the All India Congress Committee was declared unlawful. In 1940, Muslim League’s demand for a separate Muslim homeland was stronger. Jinnah espoused the Two-Nation theory, culminating in the passing of the Pakistan resolution in 1940. The historic Lahore resolution reiterated a sense of independent nationhood for Muslims who were looking for a distinct identity in the twentieth century. In this difficult political atmosphere, the question was raised over the

¹⁰⁴ *The Bombay Chronicle*, November 13, 1941. Reproduced in Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards of Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p.246

¹⁰⁵ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking p. 117

continuation of the Pentangular tournament. K.M. Munshi, a well-known politician and Indian freedom movement activist asked the most pertinent question in this scenario:

When India is denied the right to be a comrade of Britain in War, when 1,500 elected representatives of your country have decided to prefer to be locked up in British jails,...I ask you, will you be able to enjoy the Pentangular? Will not the cricket carnival be exploited by those who are against your country by telling the world that whatever your elected representatives may do the people are so happy and reconciled to their unfortunate lot that they have time to go and enjoy cricket matches?¹⁰⁶

In this context, Gandhi was the most sought-after person whose verdict was invoked so that an amicable solution can be brought in with regard to the future of the tournament. Responding to the question being asked by the Hindu Gymkhana over the continuance of the tournament, Mahatma's message intensified the anti-Pentangular movement. Although he has confessed his ignorance about cricket, he also showed his sympathy for those who wanted to put an end to these matches as, according to him, such amusements must not be craved in a time when the entire civilization is mourning. Ramachandra Guha tried to discover the truth or principle behind Gandhi's opposition to the Pentangular: "The Mahatma's credo was Hindu-Muslim unity: he had fought for it, and he was to die for it. Hindu-Muslim unity necessarily meant the unity of India. Did not the existence of a tournament on lines of community then undermine the idea of an inclusive nationalism? For if the Muslim were allowed a separate cricket team, what was to stop them demanding a separate nation?" Most importantly Mahatma sounded categorical while giving his statement in the following terms:

Numerous inquiries have been made as to my opinion on the proposed Pentangular cricket Match in Bombay advertised to be played on the 14th. I have

¹⁰⁶ *The Bombay Chronicle*, December 3, 1940. Cited in Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books India, p. 269; Bandyopadhyay, K. (2017). *Mahatma on the Pitch: Gandhi and Cricket in India*. New Delhi: Rupa, p. 91

just been aware of the movement to stop the match I understand, as a mark of grief over the arrests and imprisonments of satyagrahis, more especially, the recent arrests of leaders. A deputation of three representatives of the Hindu Gymkhana have also just been consulting me as to what their attitude should be.

I must confess my ignorance of these matches and of the etiquette governing them. My opinion must be, therefore, be taken as of a layman knowing nothing of such sports and the special rules governing them. But I must confess that my sympathies are wholly with those who would like to see these matches stopped.

...Incidentally, I would like the public of Bombay to revise their sporting code and erase from it communal matches. I can understand matches between colleges and institutions, but I never understood reasons for having Hindu, Parsi, Muslim and other Communal Elevens. I should have thought that such unsportsmanlike divisions would be considered taboos in sporting language and sporting manners. Can we not have some field of life which cannot be touched by the communal spirit?

I should like, therefore, those who have anything to do with this movement to stop the match to broaden the issue and take the opportunity of considering it from the highest standpoint and decide once and for all upon banishing communal taints from the sporting world and also decide upon banishing these sports from our life whilst the bloodbath is going on.

I say this in fear and trembling and with apologies to Mr Bernard Shaw and others who think that a nation's amusements and others who think that a nation's amusements must not be interpreted even while its flower of manhood is being done to death and is engaged in doing others to death and in destroying the noblest monuments of human effort.¹⁰⁷

Following Gandhi's proclamation, the Maharaja of Vizianagram also expressed a similar opinion: "It is high time that we gave Pentangular cricket the burial it always deserved". It was believed that other interests seemed to have involved in his decision as he wanted to utilize the

¹⁰⁷ *The Bombay Chronicle*, December 7, 1940, p.1; *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, December 8, 1940, p.11

platform of BCCI for a different power game. The Maharaja of Patiala and the Jam of Nawanagar was in favour of the stoppage of the tournament. They were also not ready to let their play to take part in the tournament which breeds communalism.¹⁰⁸

However, despite Gandhi's verdict reaching the public, the popularity of the tournament remained the same. Although, Pentangular came to a halt in 1942, the resumption of Pentangular was ensured amidst the tensions of Hindu-Muslim riots across India. Moreover, the anti-Pentangular demonstrations had not succeeded to enable the spectators to boycott Bombay's cricket festival. Further, when the resolution was tabled at the Hindu Gymkhana against the continuity of the tournament, only 70 members were in favour of the decisions out of total of 900 members of the Gymkhana¹⁰⁹. Moreover, despite the consistent protest coming from the anti-Pentangular voices followed by Gandhi's verdict with regard to the dropping of the tournament, the fever of the tournament returned in 1943. The crowd attraction towards the Pentangular matches was still at its peak. For instance, in 1944 the final took place between the Muslim and the Hindu team where the former defeated the latter. Around 200,000 crowds were present at the Brabourne Stadium to witness the high voltage match. In contrast, the crowd attendance in the Ranji Trophy matches was not impressive at all. For instance, the crowds turn up in this tournament were around 1,000 in 1935 which became increased to around 4000 in 1944¹¹⁰ Addressing the reason behind the tremendous mass appeal of the Pentangular, Ranojoy Sen remarked that "This incredible popularity of the Pentangular raises the question of whether the love of cricket or communal one-upmanship was at the heart of the tournament. It was probably a bit of both. The players who took part in the communal tournament, whether Hindus, Muslim, or Parsi, thought highly of the tournament not only for the quality of cricket but also

¹⁰⁸ Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards of Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Penguin, Viking, p. 24

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 240

¹¹⁰ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking p. 119

for the camaraderie.”¹¹¹Vasant Raiji also has categorically reported that there was genuine applause that came from the Hindus team for the Muslim team. C. K. Nayudu also expressed his dissatisfaction regarding the abolition of the Pentangular tournament in Bombay. In fact, Gandhi’s statement about the stopping of the tournament also sounded unjust to those who condemned the unnecessary political intervention in the arena of Indian cricket. One of them was Russi Mehta whose comment in this regard can be reproduced:

As for Mr. Gandhi saying that there should be no cricket because of the mourning for the War, I say it is sheer hypocrisy on his part...

None of the past great National leaders as Dadabhoy Naoroji, Gokhale, Tilak or Sir Phirojsha Mehta have ever raised their voice against the Tournament. Furthermore, each community has had for years its own Gymkhana in Bombay and elsewhere where membership is exclusive. A very large and modern swimming pool is in the course of construction for the use of Hindus only. Before you ban the Pentangular Tournaments, I suggest you start at the root of so-called evil by doing away with all exclusive clubs and Gymkhanas.¹¹²

Eventually, the Pentangular tournament, even though it retained the status of the most popular tournament in the country, came to an end when it seemed to be politically dangerous to organize the tournament in a turbulent political situation when communal riots in Bihar, Calcutta or Bombay vitiated the country’s atmosphere. Further, Ranji Trophy was promoted as the country’s premier domestic cricket tournament and was projected as a viable alternative to the Pentangular. There was fear that the communal character of the tournament could have encouraged the communal minds of the masses. According to a few sections’ opinions, the tournament which had a strong communal colour could have deteriorated the tranquillity of the country if it would have stretched anymore. Finally, the anti-Pentangular voices sounded

¹¹¹ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play. A History of Sport in India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Viking, pp.119-120

¹¹² *The Bombay Sentinel*, December 12, 1940, p.1

convincing even to the supporters of the Pentangular tournament like Anthony de Mello and thus, it was just a matter of time to put a death knell on the tournament. As Sarbhidhikary, summed up this point:

*Yes, communal cricket has to go-the sooner, the better – having outlived its usefulness, having given scope for unhealthy rivalry in the field of national cricket, having emphasized the communal elements in games, and having threatened to inoculate young cricketing minds with the communal virus for all time to come.*¹¹³

CONCLUSION:

Summarizing the above discussion it can be said that cricket as an integral part of English identity was introduced in India by the British in the 18th century. The colonists wanted to utilise the platform of cricket to serve their civilizing mission as a part of the ‘Games ethic’. Besides, cricket turned out to be a significant element for the British ruling elites to strengthen the imperialist hegemony in colonial India. As Sandiford elaborated:

*Cricket was much more than just another game to the Victorians. Indeed, they glorified it as a perfect system of ethics and morals, which embodied all that was most noble in the Anglo-Saxon character. They prized it as a national symbol, perhaps because – so far as they could tell — it was an exclusively English creation unsullied by Oriental and European influences. In an extremely xenophobic age, the Victorians came to regard cricket as further proof of their moral and cultural supremacy.*¹¹⁴

However, cricket was appropriated by the natives and turned into a significant weapon to challenge the colonists in their own game. Thus, undoubtedly, cricket had nationalistic implications in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. The historical chronicles of C. K.

¹¹³ Sarbhidhikary, B. (1945). *Indian Cricket Uncovered*. Kolkata: Illustrated News, p.74

¹¹⁴ Sandiford, K.A. P. (1994). *Cricket and the Victorians*. London: Scolar Press, p.1

Nayudu's cricketing aura, or the dominant rise of the Natore cricket team as an indigenous brand of a cricket team, reflected how cricket was used by the colonised people for their cultural regeneration and nationalist assertion. Finally, the last section of this chapter tried to argue that with the pace of time, cricket as a microcosm of Indian society has inevitably hooked up with the fight between secular nationalism and separatist communalism. Keeping in mind the backdrop which led to the partition of India and the consequent emergence of Pakistan, the out-turn of cricket cannot be disregarded. The politicization of cricket in the context of partition politics is aptly summed up by Shaharyar Khan and Ali Khan which deserves a reproduction:

However, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that cricket played a significant role in the foundation of Pakistan that came into being on 14 August 1947. Yet cricket did have an influence – albeit a marginal one – in promoting Mohammad Ali Jinnah's notion of his two-nation theory that became the basis of the movement for Pakistan... The Muslim's, frustrated by Congress's denial to grant them guarantees, began veering closer to Jinnah's two nation concept. At the time, the idea of Pakistan was more a chimera than a geographically defined entity; a bargaining chip for Jinnah, rather than a meaningful option to be pursued at the national level... Naturally the communal teams attracted adverse comment from the Congress party leadership as being against the secular tenets of the party, which claimed to embrace all religious denominations. The Congress leadership saw the community based tournaments as a British attempt to divide and rule in India. More importantly, the Muslim League saw the contests as an example of 'parity' between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Invariably, whenever the Muslims won a tournament, Jinnah would send a congratulatory message to the captain as the Muslims has helped to promote their credentials in Jinnah's two-nation theory.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ See Khan, S. M. & Khan, A. (2013). *Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent Politics of Sport in Pakistan*. Noida: Harper Sport, pp. 6-8

CHAPTER FOUR

CRICKET AS A NATIONAL OBSESSION IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN: INDIA V PAKISTAN - A LITMUS TEST OF NATIONAL LOYALTY IN THE POST-COLONIAL PERIOD

Cricket was imported by the British to the Indian subcontinent in the eighteenth century as a part of the colonial project. Although the game was glorified by the Victorians at the beginning of the crown rule as evidence of their cultural supremacy, later the game was adapted by the natives and was deliberately used as a resistance tool to challenge the domination of racially proud imperialists. When India was in desperate need of a national platform which can bind its people with the growing nationalist sentiment, cricket provided them the cultural space for national imagination. Thus, cricket has given a purpose in Indian's life before it gained political independence. As Appadurai observed: "It is probable that cricket nationalism and official nationalist politics were rarely wedded in conscious public debates or movements, but that they affected the lived experience of play, skill, space, and rights for many young Indians in the small towns and playing fields of preindependence India".¹ This reflects how cricket magnified the socio-political reality of the country since the colonial time. Thus, cricket was not unfamiliar to the Indians before the partition and soon became indigenised under the patronage of princely classes. The Bombay Pentangular tournament was the most popular and foremost domestic tournament in the colonial period which had successfully produced many renowned Indian cricketers such as Amir Elahi, CS Nayudu, SN Banerjee, VM Merchant, Mushtaq Ali, Wazir Ali, Mohammad Nissar Ali, HR Adhikary, RS Modi, Gul Muhammad, VS Hazare, MH

¹ Appadurai, A. (2015). Playing with Modernity: The decolonisation of Indian Cricket. *Altre Modernita*, (14): 10. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/5911056.pdf> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

Mankad, N H Colah and many more. As Shashi Tharoor notes: “These stars became household names and spectators across the country would make long trips to Bombay by train to witness and support their teams. The Pentangular not only drew huge crowds but cricket between communal teams became a money spinner. Mass appeal for Indian cricket began with the Bombay Pentangular”.² Simultaneously, the Ranji Trophy, the leading first class cricket tournament, largely regional in nature, was started off with the name of The Cricket Championship of India by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 1934³. The tournament turned into the focal point of Indian cricket history. The large participation of teams like Central Province and Berar, Southern Punjab, Sindh, and Western India, Bombay, Maharashtra, Baroda, Northern India, North West Frontier Province, United Provinces, Hyderabad, Holkar, Gwalior, Nawanagar (Kathiawar), Patiala, Bengal, Bihar, Mysore, Madras, Baroda, had paved the way for the local patriotism of cricket in India. James Astill writes in this context:

By the time the British left India, there was little doubt that Indian cricket would continue to thrive. As an elite game, it retained a certain British quality – including a sense, beloved by the well-to-do Indians who mostly played it, that cricket was a morally superior game.

Yet Indian cricket was now a century old and had its own character and traditions. It was also immensely popular. Cricket was written about in newspapers, played in the street and gossiped about at home and around chai stalls across the subcontinent. And cricket’s roots were deepest in India’s most populous and fastest-growing cities including Bombay and Madras...

Indian cricket had also, by the time the British left India, a fairly well-developed institutional structure. There was the BCCI, its constituent state cricket

² Tharoor, S. & Khan, S. (2009). *Shadows Across the Playing Field: 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, p.99

³The Ranji Trophy: A Brief History of the Ranji Trophy, Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/the-ranji-trophy-261615> (Accessed on: July 10, 2022)

*associations and hundreds of gymkhana, school and company cricket teams. Most had never had much to do with the British, so it made little difference to them that the British were gone.*⁴

However, following the horrific partition, Indian cricket has received a major blow. The emergence of two Independent nations, India and Pakistan, has given birth to two separate national teams. India's entry into Test cricket was confirmed in 1932. It is interesting to note that many Muslim players who got their fame in India during the pre-independence time had migrated to Pakistan. As K. S. Wadhwaney writes: "...Pakistan has provided as many internationally renowned players as India or any other country. Had there been no division of the country, it is doubtful if so many players from Pakistan would have donned India's colours."⁵ Pakistani cricketers like Amir Elahi, Abdul Kardar, Gul Mohammad have represented both India and Pakistan. Gul Mohammad was the attacking left-handed middle-order batsman as well as a great bowler and fielder who represented Baroda (1943-44 to 1950-51) and Hyderabad (1951-52 to 1954-55) in the Indian domestic circuit before moving to Lahore. He became a big name in school cricket by scoring a double hundred against Watan Islamia High School in the Punjab school tournament. He also got his for his brilliant innings of 232 in the early 1940s for Islamia College against the government college, Ludhiana. He was known for his remarkable partnership of 577 with Vijay Hazare, where he secured 319 runs against Holkar in the final of the 1946/47 Ranji Trophy. He played 8 tests for India from 1946 to 1955 and also represented Pakistan in one Test against Australia in Karachi in 1956. Most interestingly, he played for India when Pakistan first came to India in 1951-52. His courageous partnership of 104 along with Zulfiqar Ahmed for the last wicket which took Pakistan to a total of 344 is still remembered. Amir Elahi was also one of the handfuls of players

⁴ Astill, J. (2013). *The Great Tamasha: Cricket, Corruption and the Turbulent Rise of Modern India*. Bloomsbury USA (1st ed.) (EPUB version) : 62-63

⁵ Wadhwaney, K. R. (2000). *India-Pakistan "Ashesh" (1952-99)*, New Delhi: Har-Anand, p. 12

who had played Tests for India against Australia in 1947 and later on, represented Pakistan in 5 tests. He was best known for his witty leg breaks and googlies which often kept the crowd mesmerised. His career stretched to almost two decades which ended in the Calcutta Test at the age of 44. In Ranji Trophy he was known for his outstanding wicket taking ability (193 wickets) mostly for Baroda. Another famous name was Abdul Hafeez Kardar, the first cricket captain of the Pakistan national cricket team in 1948. He made his debut for India in 1946 at Lord's against England.

Similarly, Pakistan also has a fascinating cricket history. In the pre-partition period, Muslims like Hindus, Parsees or Christians also adopted the sports from the British colonists. They came out to be one of the strongest teams in the Quadrangular tournament in colonial India. The British came to the territory which presently falls under Pakistan through conquest and not through trade. Bengal was the exception in the east. It didn't happen in other parts of India. Hence, until 1840, cricket was not familiar to this region (the Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh and North West Frontier Province, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province of Pakistan along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border) of modern Pakistan due to the lack of British influence.⁶ Cricket entered Sindh, Punjab and Afghanistan when British troops invaded this territory.⁷ *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* carried a report referring to the game of cricket in the Punjabi town of Ferozepore (Firozpur) in October 1842: "Parades and Cricket seem to be the order of the day".⁸ The Khyber Pass was delimited by a frontier after the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849. In the same year, *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* took account of a cricket match among the garrisoned forces: "A cricket match occasionally comes off among the offices and men of the artillery and other corps. This in itself is an excellent amusement for the men;

⁶ Osborne, P. (2014). *The Wounded Tiger: The History of Pakistan Cricket*. London: Simon & Schuster, p.43

⁷ Ibid, 44

⁸ Osborne, P. (2014). *The Wounded Tiger: The History of Pakistan Cricket*. London: Simon & Schuster

the games are well played and becoming more frequent.”⁹ There were also reports of cricket matches in Karachi, Lucknow, Lahore and Peshawar before 1850. Infantry Cadet Gordon Davidson during his posting at Sabathu, Himachal Pradesh (a hill station near east Lahore) wrote to his family about cricket: “the weather up here is very agreeable and we very often play at cricket. We have no good ground, the parade is the only place that we can play upon and that is far from level, but we manage to get up a capital game”.¹⁰ Further, by the early twentieth century, educational institutions like the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, Muslim College, Aitchison boy’s college, Islamia collage, Punjab University etc. also encouraged cricket in their educational curriculum and achieved high standards in cricket.¹¹ These colleges had produced many Pakistani cricketers. The first-ever international cricket match took place in Karachi between Sind and Jack Ryder’s Australia on 22 November 1935.¹² According to the report of the Sydney Morning Herald, the attendance of the match was 5000.¹³ However, Pakistani cricketers felt rootless after the partition took place as they were strongly tied to the Indian domestic structure of cricket which more or less dominated by the distinct popularity of Bombay cricket. The Northern Indian Cricket Association which was a regular participant in the Ranji Trophy faced the backlash of the India-Pakistan division. Most importantly, when India retained the membership of the Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC) holding a Test status, Pakistan was struggling hard to affirm its own cricketing identity. Thus, after independence, Pakistan cricket could have been turned into a “kind of satellite cricketing

⁹ Osborne, P. (2014). *The Wounded Tiger: The History of Pakistan Cricket*. London: Simon & Schuster

¹⁰ Ibid, p.45

¹¹ Wagg, S. (2018). *Cricket: A Political History of The Global Game, 1945-2017*, New York: Routledge, p.111

¹² Scorecard of the Australia tour in India and Ceylon 1935/36. *CricketArchive*. Retrieved from <https://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/15/15636.html> (Accessed on January 5, 2022)

¹³ Dailey Sydney Morning Herald (November 23, 1935)

nation”¹⁴ being alienated from the first-class cricket of pre-independent India. Certainly, this was not the case. Pakistan cricket survived despite facing numerous difficulties. As Ali Khan remarks:

*‘A hard country’, ‘paradox’, ‘decent into chaos’, ‘on the brink’ – these are just some of the adjectives that have been used to describe Pakistan. A sense of endemic disarray seems to have persisted from its difficult birth in 1947 when a million people perished in the violence accompanying Partition and a further 20 million were displaced. How did Pakistan even survive in 1947 amidst floods of refugees, a threadbare government machinery, a loss of qualified personnel and finance, and barely any industry and international support is a fascinating question to ask. But against all odds, it not only survived but has had periods of relative prosperity as well. The story of its cricket is similar. A country that had no domestic cricketing structure won a Test match in its very first series against India in 1952. Two years later, on its first tour to England, Pakistan registered a win against the country that had introduced the game to them.*¹⁵

It is worth mentioning that the first-class cricket was started in the newly independent Pakistan with the Punjab v Sind match at Lahore in December 1947¹⁶. Pakistan also played unofficial Tests with West Indies and Ceylon in the 1948-49 cricket season. The Commonwealth XI cricket team also toured Pakistan in 1949-50. The Board of Control for Cricket in Pakistan (BCCP) was established on 1 May 1949.¹⁷ Although ICC dismissed the Pakistan board’s submission for membership in 1948 and 1950 but eventually on 28 July 1952, BCCP’s right as the national organising body was acknowledged and its full membership was awarded by the

¹⁴ Osborne, P. (2014). *The Wounded Tiger: The History of Pakistan Cricket*. London: Simon & Schuster, p.17

¹⁵ Khan, A. Y. (2022). *Cricket in Pakistan: Nation, Identity, and Politics*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, Introduction- p. xii - xiii

¹⁶ Scorecard of the First-Class matches in Pakistan 1947/48: Punjab v Sind, *CricketArchive*. Retrieved from, <https://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/18/18331.html> (Accessed on January 5, 2022)

¹⁷ Bowen, R. “Some dates in Pakistan cricket history”. *ESPNCricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/152363.html>. (Accessed on January 5, 2022)

International Cricket Conference (ICC) on the recommendation of Anthony de Mello, the then president of Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI).¹⁸ Pakistan emerged as the seventh Test-playing country. During the composition of BCCP, there were representations from Punjab, Sindh and North West Frontier Province but Balochistan and East Pakistan had no representatives in the management of the board. Further, cricket by no means was well developed in Pakistan before 1947. Cricket was mainly spread among the urban classes in Lahore and Karachi. As a result, the newly independent country was suffering from weak administrative expertise, infrastructural facilities and financial resources. There was no first-class cricket in the country. There was a scarcity of turf wickets – just two in Lahore and none in Karachi. As Pakistan’s former cricket captain Imran Khan lamented: “shocking...I would even go so far as to say that there is no domestic cricket at all”.¹⁹ According to Richard Cashman, there was also the disproportionate number of players coming from two provinces Punjab and Sindh and two cities, in particular Lahore and Karachi, which hindered the steady growth of cricket in this country.²⁰ In this regard, Chris Valiotis comment is noteworthy:

Domestic cricket in Pakistan has encountered many organisational and structural problems. These range from an initial absence of substantial infrastructure and funding to a later conflict of opinion over the direction the game would take and the type of leadership it was to have. Pakistan found itself in the unusual position of playing official Test matches in 1952 before it had developed a recognised domestic structure. This frustrated early attempts to

¹⁸ Valiotis, C. (2005). Cricket in a ‘nation imperfectly imagined’: Identity and tradition in postcolonial cricket, In S. Wagg (ed.) *Cricket and National Identity in the Post-Colonial Age: Following On*. New York: Routledge, p.112

¹⁹ Cashman, R. (1994). The Paradox that is Pakistan Cricket: Some Initial Reflections. *The Sports Historian*, 14 (1):26-27, Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17460269409446839> (Accessed on: January 10, 2021)

²⁰ Ibid, p.23

*develop the playing talent of local cricketers and inhibited the growth of the game nationally.*²¹

However, the first domestic first class tournament, the Quaid-i-Azam-Trophy was held in 1953-54 after the country played a Test match. The trophy followed the model of the English county championship²² which featured seven provincial and department teams in its inaugural edition; Bahawalpur, Punjab, Karachi, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, Combined Services and Pakistan Railways. Bahawalpur, under the leadership of Khan Mohammad, came out to be the first winner of the prestigious tournament by beating Punjab by eight wickets at the KGA ground in Karachi.²³ This premier domestic tournament of the country was named after the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah. His name was associated with the trophy so that it could validate BCCP as the national body. For Valiotis, “The BCCP sought to further justify its national image by making the head of the state for Pakistan its chief patron, thereby associating its position with the official nationalist discourse”.²⁴ When West India first visited Pakistan in 1948/9²⁵ just after the independence nobody had any clue that Pakistan would be a powerful cricketing nation within a few years. In 1949, Pakistan beat Ceylon in Colombo in ‘unofficial’ tests in their inaugural overseas tour.²⁶ In 1951, Pakistan thrashed the visiting Nigel

²¹ Valiotis, C. (2005). Cricket in a ‘nation imperfectly imagined’: Identity and tradition in postcolonial cricket, In S. Wagg (ed.) *Cricket and National Identity in the Post-Colonial Age: Following On*. New York: Routledge, p. 112

²² Wagg, S. (2018). *Cricket: A Political History of The Global Game, 1945-2017*, New York: Routledge, p.113

²³ Quad-e-Ajam Trophy, the Jewel in Pakistan domestic’s cricket crown. *Pakistan Cricket Board*, Retrieved from <https://www.pcb.com.pk/press-release-detail/quaid-e-azam-trophy-the-jewel-in-pakistan-domestic-cricket-s-crown.html> (Accessed on: May 5, 2022)

²⁴ Valiotis, C. (2005). Cricket in a ‘nation imperfectly imagined’: Identity and tradition in postcolonial cricket, In S. Wagg (ed.) *Cricket and National Identity in the Post-Colonial Age: Following On*. New York: Routledge, p.113

²⁵ West Indies in India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, 1948/49, Cricket Scorecard, *Pakistan Cricket Board*. Retrieved from <https://www.pcb.com.pk/west-indies-in-india-pakistan-and-ceylon-194849/match/43.html> (Accessed on: May 5, 2022)

²⁶ Pakistan in Ceylon 1948/9, Cricket Scorecard, *Pakistan Cricket Board*. Retrieved from <https://www.pcb.com.pk/tournament->

Howard's MCC side.²⁷ Pakistan's India tour in 1952 for their first ever Test series seemed to be a memorable series as it allowed them to face India and to project the uniqueness of the newborn country. For Seigneur Margaux, "The adoption of cricket by Pakistan was certainly a way to reinvent itself and more particularly assert its national identity within a post-colonial context as well as its independence vis à vis India".²⁸ They became the only team who marked a win on its maiden tour to England. Pakistan became one of the strongest team in their home as no team had beaten Pakistan on their home soil until 1959-60.²⁹ From the 80s, Pakistan emerged as one of the robust cricketing nations to reckon with. Pakistan's World Cup victory in 1992 has brought the highest glory to its country's people. Seigneur Margaux also notes: "This triumph played a singular role in the appreciation of the Pakistan cricket and indeed the recognition of its country. It also marked the considerable emergence of the influence of Pakistan. The imposition of English norms as well as India's influence has been contested and resisted by the Pakistani team which incarnated ability, excellence, and victory. The 1992 victory became the fertile ground to reinforce the national identity of Pakistan in which its citizens gathered themselves in the pride of their nationality".³⁰ Needless to say, when Pakistan has been suffering from numerous political and economic crises, cricket has given them the opportunity to elevate national prestige.

[reports.php?action=tournament_matches&tournament_id=15&tpi=&country_id=7](#) (Accessed on: July 15, 2021)

²⁷ The Rise of Cricket in Pakistan, *Wisden Cricket Almanack*, 2021. Retrieved from **<https://www.espncricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/152362.html>** (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

²⁸ Margaux, S. (2021). *Cricket in Pakistan. A Mean to Assert its National Identity*, Munich: GRIN Verlag, p.3.

²⁹ The Rise of Cricket in Pakistan, *Wisden Cricket Almanack*, 2021. Retrieved from **<https://www.espncricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/152362.html>** (Accessed on: February 15, 2022)

³⁰ Margaux, S. (2021). *Cricket in Pakistan. A Mean to Assert its National Identity*, Munich: GRIN Verlag, p.3

As Nadeem Farooq Paracha, one of the renowned Pakistani satirists and cultural critics notes:

The element of cricketing passion has gotten more pronounced in Pakistan, mainly due to the vicious spat of religious and sectarian violence that has engulfed the country, triggering a sense of isolation, confusion and desperation in the strife-ridden society.

Ever since the early 1980s, when Pakistan, under a reactionary military dictatorship, plunged into the Afghan Civil War (at the behest of the US and Saudi Arabia), the country's achievements in the fields of science, arts, culture and sports, have been steadily eroding.

Cricket was suddenly the only thing that Pakistanis were still proud of.

In an environment in which this once promising country found itself being increasingly treated as some kind of secluded banana republic ravaged by religious extremism, cricket became that one vital link that the country still had with the international community.³¹

Following this backdrop, the next section of this chapter tries to explore how cricket has transformed into a nationalist tool in both India and Pakistan and why the India-Pakistan rivalry has been considered more than a competitive match echoing the geo-political tensions brewing between them since the horrific partition has taken into action.

THE NARRATION OF SPORTING NATIONALISM AND THE ROLE OF CRICKET IN REINFORCING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN:

For E.J. Hobsbawm, sports is a “uniquely effective medium for inculcating national feelings”.³²

Sports as a constitutive element of popular culture often acts as a significant facilitator for

³¹ Paracha, N, F. (n.d). Cricket in Pakistan – More than just a game. DW. Retrieved from <https://learnerman.dw.com/en/blog-cricket-in-pakistan-more-than-just-a-game/a-18323932> (Accessed on: December 5, 2021)

³² Hobsbawm, E. J. (1990), (2nd ed.). *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.143

national identity and thus, contributes to the understanding of the imagined community. As perceived by Benedict Anderson, “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”.³³ In this sense, the understanding of nation even goes beyond the physical boundaries of any country where people can identify themselves with national community as belonging to the same nation-group tied with a common consciousness and shared identity. Notwithstanding, the episodic phenomenon of cultural nationalism has been explicitly influential in connecting the sentiments of a nation to the wider community and thereby redefining the perception of nationalism on a larger context. Following this point, it is imperative to note that sports manifests the very essence of cultural nationalism. In other words, the symbolic identity of sports fosters a sense of collective belonging and a feeling of togetherness by representing a unifying image of the nation based on shared values, norms, traditions, heritage or culture. Cronin and Mayall think that “Sports cannot win territory or destroy an opposing ideology or religion which the nation seeks to demonise. It can only support the construction of a nation which has been imagined.”³⁴ Sporting nationalism due to its competitive nature also validates the categorisation of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ based on people’s allegiance to the national team. In this regard, McClancy contends that “sports... help to define moral and political community. They are vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and a way of classifying themselves and others”.³⁵ Further, each sports person representing their national teams becomes a symbol of his nation. Sporting heroes are regarded as national heroes, embodied as representatives of the nation for

³³ Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, p.6

³⁴ Cronin, M. & Mayall, D. (1998). ‘Sport and Ethnicity: Some Introductory Remarks’. In M. Cronin and D. Mayall (ed.) *Sporting Nationalism: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation*. London: Frank Cass, p.2

³⁵ McClancy, J. (1996). Sport, Identity and Ethnicity. In J. McClancy (ed.) *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, Oxford: Berg, p.2

their service to achieve national glory. To a larger extent, their fight in sporting battles largely evokes national consciousness amongst the national populace. Needless to say, sporting spectacle constructs an intertwining cohesive association between the 'nation' and its 'people'. This is the fundamental reason why sports competitions, especially on the international stage, are seen to be driven by nationalistic overtones. National anthem being sung, national flags being waved or national team jerseys being worn by the players during any sporting events which usually match the colour of the flag of the country they are representing, seem to act as a powerful unifier in terms of catalyzing a sense of national unity which not only raises the morale of the players but also binds the people of the country with national pride and a common bond to each other. The players and spectators feel a sense of identity and cohesive commonality in line with their love of homeland. Crawford thinks that sports "allows followers...access to certain groupings, and can help confer a level of social acceptance and even respect"³⁶. Thus, the sporting domain has always been significantly involved in shaping an individual's social psyche activating a feeling of sameness and thereby, aligning individuals with strong national feelings.

Following this background, cricket's invincible role in terms of fostering collective psychology in the sub-continental scenario cannot be denied. In this regard, Kausik Bandyopadhyay contends that India or Pakistan still lives under the shadow of partition. India-Pakistan relations emanate from that. Hence, it was obvious that the dynamic influence of partition politics would also have a deep impact on India-Pakistan cricketing relations. He also thinks that the famous Ashes also involves the question of the nationalist dimension between England and Australia but India-Pakistan face-off goes above all such rivalries because of South Asia's aggressive

³⁶ Crawford, G. (2004). *Consuming Sport: Fans, Sport and Culture*. London & New York : Routledge, p. 107

and unique cricket fanaticism adopted by the countries like India or Pakistan.³⁷ Cricket nationalism goes extreme, especially during the India-Pakistan rivalry. If any sports historian writes “cricket is nationalism by other means”, the narrative is arguably best suited to the socio-political milieu of India and Pakistan.³⁸ Cricket came to be conflated with patriotic virtue in India or Pakistan where a good cricketer is admired to be a patriotic citizen of the country.³⁹ On this point, John Major’s comment can be cited which addressed West Indies’ most successful England tour and its electrifying impact on its people: “This is a classic illustration of the power of cricket. It can uplift whole communities – whole nations even – or cast them down. And because cricket is played largely in the mind and reflects the society from which cricketers spring, it can imprint the character of that nation indelibly upon the minds of those who watch the way in which a national team plays”.⁴⁰ This phenomenon has widely been evident in the context of India and Pakistan where cricket acts as a metaphor of nationalism. Naturally, India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry has developed a nationalistic connotation due to their common colonial past. Arunabha Sengupta pointed out that India-Pakistan cricketing duel has always been regarded as a way of finding and reinforcing their own identity. While ostensibly it was getting closer to each other and meeting one’s long lost friends, relatives and so on, it was also a way to find an identity by beating each other in sports. It somehow always

³⁷ Personal Interview with Bandyopadhyay, K. (Dated on Feb 18, 2022) [Personal Communication, Email]

³⁸ Sengupta, R. (May 12, 2018). Game of Competing Loyalties: Sporting Nationalism and Nit Srinagar. *The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/article8585637.ece> (Accessed on: March 18, 2020)

³⁹ Crick, E. (2007). Cricket and Indian National Consciousness. *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies research papers*, New Delhi: India, p.4. Retrieved from http://www.ipcs.org/issue_briefs/issue_brief_pdf/560458831IPCS-ResearchPaper9-EmilyCrick.pdf (Accessed on: March 19, 2020)

⁴⁰Tharoor, S. & Khan, S. (2009). *Shadows Across the Playing Field: 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, p. 95

carried more sentiment than any other sports when the two countries met.⁴¹ On this point, Seigneur Margaux comments:

Indeed, the level of nationalism is far more intense during cricket games between Pakistan and India. Sports relations between India and Pakistan are eminently representative of the deep rivalry of the two countries that have arisen since the creation of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state, independent of its Indian identity in 1947. Traditional diplomatic attempts by the two countries have been chased away from conflicts such as the Kashmir conflict, religion, ethnic conflicts, etc... Thus in the context of such tension, cricket was not only a game where it was important to participate. Cricket was identified as a veritable weapon whose bullets were supposed to destroy the feeling of superiority of the 'other'.

In time of dramatic crisis and wars (four in total between the two countries), tournaments were not contemplated as simple victory or defeat but as a messenger bearing proof national superiority.⁴²

In this backdrop, Pakistan's all-time legend Hanif Mohammed's touring experience in India in 1952 can be recalled to perceive how India-Pakistan matches create a do-or-die situation by escalating tensions surrounding the match and in what way the national identity has been renewed across the borders through this intense rivalry. The tour was full of excitement and drama bearing an overwhelming significance for Pakistan. The superstar Hanif was well known for accomplishing remarkable innings against all odds through his single-minded dedication to the game. The pride of Pakistan, the "Little Master" was one of the Wisden Almanack's "Five cricketers of the Year" in 1968 and was also featured in cricket's first Hall of Fame, inaugurated at Lord's in 1999. He had a deep connection with India as he was born in Junagadh in the Kathiawar Peninsula of undivided India and coached by a Hindu Jaomal Naomal in his early

⁴¹ Personal Interview with Sengupta, A. (Dated March 1, 2022) [Personal Communication, Email]

⁴² Margaux, S. (2021). *Cricket in Pakistan. A Mean to Assert its National Identity*, Munich: GRIN Verlag pp. 3-4

days. Soon his exceptional talent came to the notice of Master Abdul Aziz, the Sindh Madrassa School coach. Within no time, Hanif became famous in school cricket by accomplishing a record 305 on Karachi Goan Association cricket ground in seven and half hours at the crease against Church Mission School. During Pakistan's inaugural tour of India, the 16 years Hanif lived up to his reputation by scoring a hundred in each innings, 121 and 109 in the opening game of the tour against North Zone at Amritsar. Soon Hanif became one of the nuclei of the Pakistan national team along with other icons like Abdul Hafeez Kardar or Fazal Mahmood who built a strong foundation of Pakistan cricket after independence along with other icons. When Hanif made his next tour in India, Bal Thackeray, the founder of Shiv Shena, the right-wing Hindu nationalist party wrote of the legendary batting feats of Hanif as "the biggest stumbling-block to India in the coming series".⁴³ The drama gearing around the tour reached its peak with an incident when Hanif got a sharp cut in his fingers by a ring while handshaking with a fan during a tour match in Baroda. This incident was suspected as an intentional act of putting the Pakistani hero out of the side. Another drama happened when Hanif had to remain at the highest against India by adding an immaculate 160 on board despite having a severe toe infection. In this regard, one of his interviews can be reproduced to clarify why cricket heroes in India and Pakistan have been admired as nothing but warriors and how the national aspirations are being met by their success on the field who can go to any extreme to save their motherland's image against the arch rival.

I had developed an infection in my toes which was severe. I was operated on and my toe-nails were removed. Naturally I thought I was out of the series. But such was the intensity of the Indo-Pak encounters that captain Fazal actually wanted me to play! I told him that I could not even put my shoes on. So I suggested that if the captain was so keen they should get a special shoe made

⁴³ Guha, R. (August 13, 2016). Hanif Mohammad (1934-2016): The Pakistani Indians Loved. *Scroll*. Retrieved from <https://scroll.in/field/813925/hanif-mohammad-1934-2016-the-pakistani-indians-loved> (Accessed on: July 13, 2019)

or cut the toe section of the cricket boot. The doctor said we were crazy and forbade me to play on the grounds that a yorker could destroy either foot.

But the captain was insistent and worked on my mother, to whom he knew I could not say no. They bandaged my feet and got a shoe from Wallis Mathias, whom he knew I could say no. They bandaged my feet and got a shoe Wallis Mathias, who had bigger feet than mine. I had a forty five-five minute net before the test and at the end of it my socks were red with blood. But I played in the first test at Bombay without toe nails. My mother said I owed it to Pakistan. She also told me that rumours will start that I withdrew because I am a mohajir from India. Such as the passion which got aroused when the two neighbors met.

The manager, Dr. Jehangir Khan, did not want me to play. I played none the less. My innings in that test was the finest. I have played although the least remembered. It was like batting with nails piercing your feet. I was a cricketing crucifixion. But I got ninety runs and then had a severe cramp. The Indian captain, Contractor, refused the request for a runner, probably because he thought that this was a ruse and that this was an injury sustained before the game. Technically he was right to refuse the runner.

I was then in the odd position of not being able to run a single nor having the energy to hit boundaries. But I lasted till the end of the day and was taken to hospital, where they worked on the cramp and my feet. I resumed my innings the next day and was run out on 160. My friend Manjrekar was at third man and normally he would underarm his throw, because of a shoulder injury, but on this occasion he threw overarm for the chance to run me out. I made it to the crease and to this day I remind him that I was in. But anyway I was given run out. But this was slightly irrelevant. I had done my job. I felt drained but very proud.⁴⁴

Without a doubt, the unmatched popularity of the game between these two sub-continental nations drives their people to spontaneously come together in support of their national team, thereby forming a strong national identity. It does not seem to be an exaggeration to admit the

⁴⁴ Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p. 110

fact that the waves of nationalism tend to create craziest hike during the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry along with a steady downfall as soon as the match ends. The cricketing tradition in India and Pakistan has become a compelling agent of national solidarity. As Saad Shafqat and Nadir Bharucha remarked:

Like marmalade, tweed jackets, and other things English, cricket is an acquired taste, which makes it slow to pick up but impossible to let go of. Introduced to the subcontinent in the 1880s, by the 1920s it was commanding great popularity in colonial India. In 1932 India became a Test playing country and, five years after the partition of 1947. Pakistan followed suit. In a cheerless, gloomy existence towards the bottom end of health and economic indices, the two nations found joy in cricket. It is easy to see why. Cricket provided a global forum for Pakistan and India to demonstrate talent and spirit, and defeat more advanced nations such as England and Australia. Naturally enough, it cast a spell on the masses, became the embodiment of national self-esteem, and turned cricket players into icons and celebrities.⁴⁵

The cricket crazy population in both India and Pakistan always erupts with joy expressing nationalistic feelings during their team's success. Their hope and aspirations get manifested in the national team's glory, setting aside their differences and mistrust through which the national imagination gets solidified. Gayeti Singh remarked:

Cricket, then, is perhaps the biggest, albeit the struggle it still may have in incorporating the entire country. While sport involves an armchair variant of patriotism, where the love for your country is measured in terms of runs scored, and where spectators could be completely apolitical and ignorant of the country's larger problems, it does provide a measure of unification unseen in

⁴⁵ Shafqat, S. & Bharucha, N. (2004). Is cricket the magic glue that unites South Asia? *BMJ* 328 (7443): 843. Retrieved from <https://www.bmj.com/content/328/7443/843>
(Accessed on: January 15, 2020)

*other arenas. It should be said that the unification element is short-lived and dissipates after matches until the next great victory presents itself.*⁴⁶

Hence, cricket is deeply rooted in the socio-political history of India and Pakistan and proves to be a viable mechanism in the long run due to its tremendous credibility in structuring and assisting the evolutionary national building process. When the massacre of horrific partition led both India and Pakistan to face the bitter blow of integration crisis and sectarian violence, cricket came into prominence to ease their pain and provided a solid cultural foundation seizing the national emotion. In other words, cricket created the ground for both India and Pakistan where national representation seems attainable. Syed Mushtaq Ali, one of the inspiring superstars who played for India from 1930 to the early 1950s, once said that “One cannot be a successful cricketer unless he accepts the game as a religion”.⁴⁷ Thus, cricket turned out to be a symbolic element of national integration by transcending the social, cultural or linguistic differences. For this very reason, cricket has emerged as an arena of political manipulation by both the governments of India and Pakistan. In this fashion, cricket vocalises the national ideology encompassing the social, cultural and political arrangements of the country. For instance, the difference in political visions and ideological blueprints of the day-to-day polity of both the newly born nations was clearly projected in the commemorative cricket souvenirs of the 1960-61 series issued by both the Board of Control during Pakistan’s visit to India. Ramachandra Guha throws light on this point. Whereas the national star-a red star- was meticulously projected in Pakistani souvenir in larger font size along with the National Anthem printed in Urdu and English in its preliminary pages and the display of the photograph of the ‘Father of the Nation’, M. A. Jinnah and the President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan,

⁴⁶ Singh, G. (August 4, 2011). The Nationalist Impact of Cricket in India. Retrieved from <https://www.mic.com/articles/278/the-nationalist-impact-of-cricket-in-india> (Accessed on February 18, 2020)

⁴⁷ *Anandabazar Patrika*, (June 19, 2005)

the Indian souvenir, on the other hand, had no such nationalist elements with no national anthems printed or a photo of Gandhi. There was an advertisement of BOAC emblazoned on the latter's cover. It showcased that there was a conscious attempt from Pakistan to assert their national identity through the platform of cricket. To be more specific, the portrayal of the national strength is emphasised in Pakistani souvenir, because, according to Guha, "This might have been because Ayub's dictatorship did not enjoy quite the legitimacy within or outside his country that Jawaharlal Neheru's Government did."⁴⁸ When the militarization of Pakistan was perceptible under Ayub's regime, cricket was politically maneuvered to earn civil support to consolidate his military rule which bolstered the nexus between Pakistan cricket and Pakistani nationalism.⁴⁹ For Shashi Tharoor, "If the two countries had once been one, the 1960-61 series marked the definitive parting of the ways, both on and off the field".⁵⁰

It is further interesting to note that nationalist discourse also raises the enduring dichotomy between civic and ethnic nationalism wherein the former focuses on the association of people and a shared sense of civic and political rights primarily based on state citizenship, while the ethnic counterpart has to do with shared ethnic or cultural identity. This distinction of two contrasting paradigms tends to be eased in sporting nationalism. Cricket fandom is equally linked with this perception. Cricket is in the blood of Indians and Pakistanis. Jayanta Sengupta contends: "At present, cricket engenders an extraordinary amount of popularity and serves as a vehicle of nationalism. The importance of cricket to postcolonial India and Pakistan is most evident during the Cricket World Cup when these teams have an opportunity to assert

⁴⁸ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of British Sport*, Gurgaon: Penguin Book India, p.389

⁴⁹ Tharoor, S. & Khan, S. (2009). *Shadows Across the Playing Field : 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*, New Delhi: Lotus Collection, 32

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.33

themselves, and their nations, on a world stage.”⁵¹ Both India and Pakistan have a huge vibrant fan base worldwide. The national consciousness of a country’s diaspora reaches its peak during any tournament when they come to cheer for their national team in their overseas match across the borders of nation-states which reflects their true attachment and allegiance to their country of ancestry. The massive turnouts of Non-Resident cricket fans of both countries always make the national team players feel like at home even if they play abroad. Thus, despite not being governed by the rule of law of home countries, the passionate diaspora always feels a sense of rootedness by showing a significant amount of support to the cricket teams of their homeland. On this essence, Hansen’s observation on the term ‘diaspora’ is mention worthy: “The term ‘diaspora’ not only transmits a certain sense of shared identity and predicament, but also an inherent will to preservation and celebration of the ancestral culture, and an equally inherent impulse towards forging and maintain links with other migrant groups as well as the ‘old’ country”.⁵² In this essence, cricket plays an instrumental role in inducing the Indian and Pakistani Diasporas to strive to maintain a link with their ancestral homeland, thereby reinventing and reproducing their cultural and ethnic identity as a consequence of their commonly shared love for cricket. Thus, cricket creates a social space for emotional and cultural sameness through which the scattered diasporas of India and Pakistan can feel a national connection, maintain a tie with their home territory. In this way, cricket not only acts as a unifier for the domestic population within the country but also integrates the overseas citizens with their motherland beyond the geographic limitations of national territories.

⁵¹ Davis, C. P. & Upson, G. P. (2004). ‘Spectatorship, fandom and nationalism in the South Asian diaspora: The 2003 Cricket World Cup’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21: (3-4): 631. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523360409510559> (Accessed on July 5, 2019)

⁵² Cited in Lin, Y. (2006). “Cricket is in the blood” (Re)producing Indianness: Families negotiating diasporic identity through cricket in Singapore’ (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, University of Canterbury), p. 21. Retrieved from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.918.7346&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (Accessed on: July 12, 2020)

Following this point, Pamela Devan's remark on the passionate engagement of the Indian diaspora with their national cricket teams can be remembered:

*Cricket is, therefore, important in maintaining Indian communities overseas...Cricket is part of popular culture, and is an easy and convenient way to 'be' and 'feel' Indian. It is much easier for these Indians, who are not steeped in direct Indian culture, to feel Indian simply by following cricket, as one becomes part of a much larger global Indian community.*⁵³

Pamela further added:

*Cricket has been a crucial vehicle for the formation of Indian identity both within India and in Indian overseas communities. Cricket has managed to walk the fine line between nationalist sentiments, and ethnicity and culture. It has ensured that Indians continue to remain connected to India, but without overt and compromising nationalist feelings that would jeopardize their situation as citizens of other countries. It has managed to maintain links between the Indian diaspora and the Indian culture, and preserve Indian communities around the world.*⁵⁴

Cricket has equally become the emblem of post-colonial national pride for the migrated Pakistanis who are residing abroad. Cricket connects Pakistani people across the globe by creating 'homing desire' in diasporic imagination as opposed to the desire of owning a 'homeland', a physical territory or returning to a place of 'origin'. To illustrate this point more clearly, the significant observation of Thomas Michael Walle in this regard requires to be taken into consideration:

The notion of Pakistan that is invoked through watching cricket in the diaspora, represents a dream about what Pakistan could be or should have been. The men who are standing up for Pakistan's honour on the cricket field represent not the

⁵³ Devan, P. (2012). 'Cricket and the global Indian identity'. *Sport in Society*, 15 (10): 1421. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2012.744210>

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 1423

nation that is economically and militarily surpassed by its big neighbour to the east, nor the migrant population that typically occupies the lower strata of the Western societies that they live in, but the utopian ideal of the great Pakistani nation able to defeat both its political rival and India and their former colonial masters. Watching such matches thus connects people in the diaspora to Pakistan as an idea, more than Pakistan as the material reality that they grew up in or know from visits to their country...Pakistan, as it presented by the national team's play, bodily component, and success is seen as the 'homeland' of their imagination. This 'homeland' is not something that needs to be created – that was done over 60 years ago – but neither is it one that people can return to, as this homeland exists mainly as an idea.⁵⁵

Following this backdrop, the next section of this chapter attempts to explore a few questions; how cricket becomes the national obsession in both India and Pakistan? What are the potential factors which paved the way for the dissemination of cricket in these countries? Why cricket often instigates hyper-nationalism and extremism during the India-Pakistan cricket match? Let's seek the answer below:

CRICKET – A NATIONAL OBSESSION IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN.

Cricket has massively disseminated in both India and Pakistan. It is imperative to explore how the game has become a national obsession in both the countries surpassing the other games. Although both the countries have faced several socio-political, ethno-cultural and economic crises, but cricket has given them the platform to attain their national desire. Following this context, it is important to trace how cricket has evolved from a British pastime to a mass sports in both India and Pakistan and the major factors which have paved the way for the flourishing growth of the game.

⁵⁵ Walle, T. M. (2013). Cricket as 'utopian homeland' in the Pakistani diasporic imagination. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 11(3): 307. Retrieved from, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2013.820483> (Accessed on: August 10, 2018)

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*If nationalism by definition is the collective voluntary expression of national identity, the fleeting nationalism of cricket achieves this to a far greater degree than the fractured nationalism of politics or cultural nationalism of Indian cinema. The true flag of India is not saffron, white, and green, but rather blue.*⁵⁶

There is no doubt that cricket has become more than just a sports in India which has significantly shaped Indian identity in the complex socio-cultural milieu. As Berry Sarbadhikary remarked: “Cricket is a fascinating subject but Indian cricket is more so because of the peculiar traits of the Indians who play it...To point this out is not to extol the Indian at cricket as against others, just as Gandhiji’s loin cloth does not necessarily constitute the ideal in the Indian national dress nor example to the rest of the world. Yet, both are significant; they reveal the nation through the game or through the kit – for the better or for the worse”.⁵⁷ Cricket is best suited to the Indian reality. Cricket as a pre-industrial sports has developed a link with the rhythmic essence of agrarian culture being accommodated through the cosmetic time scale rather than clock time which fits well in the Indian society. Thus, despite the British origin, the game was made to be accustomed with a long period of time which was spontaneously embraced by the Indians because “Indians have no difficulty aimlessly filling up the hours”.⁵⁸ Shashi Tharoor portrayed how cricket has deeply entrenched in Indian civilization:

I have often thought that cricket is really, in the sociologist Ashish Nandy’s phrase, an Indian game accidentally discovered by the British. Everything about the sport seems suited to the Indian national character: its rich

⁵⁶ Singh, G. (August 4, 2011). The Nationalist Impact of Cricket in India. Retrieved from <https://www.mic.com/articles/278/the-nationalist-impact-of-cricket-in-india> (Accessed on February 18, 2020)

⁵⁷ Sarbadhikary, B. (1945). *Indian Cricket Uncovered*. Calcutta: Illustrated News, p. 1. Also cited in Bose, M. (2006). *The Magic of Indian Cricket: Cricket and Society in India*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, p. XII

⁵⁸ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of British Sport*, Gurgaon: Penguin Book India, p.337

*complexity, the infinite possibilities and variations possible with each delivery, the dozen different ways of getting out, are all rather like Indian classical music, in which the basic laws are laid down but the performer improvises gloriously, unrestrained by anything so mundane as a written score. The glorious uncertainties of the game echo ancient Indian thought: Indian fatalists instinctively understand that it is precisely when you are seeing the ball well and timing your fours off the sweet of the bat that the unplayable shooter can come along and bowl you. It is almost, as has also been observed, a pastime in which the Bhagavad Gita is performed in the guise of a Victorian English morality play.*⁵⁹

Looking back at the history of Indian cricket, it is important to note that Indian cricket was not considered a cricketing giant to reckon with right after independence. India made their Test debut in 1932 against England at Lords after getting the recognition as a Test-playing nation. The squad was led by The Maharaja of Porbander. Although England had won the match by 158 runs, but India's remarkable performance had rattled the English soil. The Birmingham Post wrote: "The all India cricket team has administered a few shocks to the dignity and confidence of England today. If there were among the 24,000 spectators at Lords some who imagined that the granting of a Test match by the MCC to the tourists from the Indian empire was merely an amicable concession, then they had a very rude awakening before the close of play..."⁶⁰ Unfortunately, it took 20 years to register its second victory in 1952 against England at Madras (now Chennai). To reminisce about the magnificent victory over a country who has subjugated India for a long time, Pankaj Roy, the former national team captain recalled: "It was one of the best moments of my life. Our first Test victory and that too against the country which

⁵⁹ Tharoor, S. (April 5, 2008). Cricket: The Nationalist Game. *Open*. Retrieved from <https://openthemagazine.com/cover-stories/cricket-the-nationalist-game/> (Accessed on: January 5, 2029)

⁶⁰ The First Cricket Test (Feb 4, 2022). *Outlook*. Retrieved from <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/the-first-cricket-test/285731> (Accessed on: March 15, 2022)

had been our master till five years before, the victory had a special significance for every Indian.”⁶¹ Nonetheless, India was still considered a backwater in world cricket. Although the team had proved its potential by winning few series in home against the teams like Pakistan (1952/53 by 2-1 margin), New Zealand (1955/56 by 2-0 margin and 1964/65 by 1-0 margin) and England (1961-62 by 2-0 margin) but India had consistently been unsuccessful in securing victories in the overseas Test series. In the first fifty years of international cricket, India could manage winning only 35 out of 196 Test matches. Notwithstanding, Indian cricket started to gain strength when Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi took the captaincy of the team in 1961. Before his arrival, the Indian cricket team had no such settled captain because of the selection problems occurred due to the shallow regional politics. For instance, when West Indies came to India in 1958-59, India had four captains for the five Tests – Polly Umrigar (1st Test), Gulam Ahmed (2nd and 3rd Tests), Vinoo Mankad (4th Test), Himu Adhikary (5th Test). Pataudi had played a leading role to change the complexion of Indian cricket under whom India unearthed a plethora of brilliant spin bowlers like – Erapalli Prasanna (49 Tests and 189 wickets), Bhagwat Chandrasekhar (58 Tests and 242 wickets), Srinivas Venkataraghavan (57 Tests and 156 wickets), Bishan Singh Bedi (67 Tests and 266 wickets). Before Pataudi’s regime, India only won 5 games out of 78 but under Pataudi’s leadership, India clinched 8 victories over a decade along with an overseas series victory against New Zealand by 3-1 in 1967. The charismatic Tiger Pataudi wanted to instill a spirit of collective ‘Indianans’ in his team. Bedi’s remark about Pataudi needs a mention: “He was the first Indian captain who told us, “Ok, you are not playing for Delhi or Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, Mysore, no, you’re playing for India. So think India”. Tiger was by far the best captain I played under.”⁶²

⁶¹ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, p. 113

⁶² Astill, J. (2013). *The Great Tamasha: Cricket, Corruption and the Turbulent Rise of Modern India*. Bloomsbury USA (1st ed.) (EPUB version), p.56

Indian cricket turned out to be a mass sports from the 1970s onwards. India's remarkable victories in 1970-71 against mighty England and West Indies and that too in their home soil seemed to be the watershed moment in Indian cricket because these thrilling twin wins had drastically changed how the world sees India. India's series win in 1971 in the Caribbean had lasting implications and holds a special place in the heart of every Indian cricket lover because India had beaten the most feared team in the world. Following this point, it is important to note that till then India could not manage a single win against the West Indies as they lost 12 out of the total 23. India's humiliation continued in 1962 having been whitewashed by the West Indies by 5-0 margin. Thus, this win was a landmark moment for Indian cricket as nobody from the cricket fraternity believed that the Indian team would be able to challenge the ruthless domination of West Indies in world cricket. It was India's maiden Test series victory over West Indies. Although the first Test at Kingston ended up in a draw, but in the second Test at the Port of Spain India's triumph was secured by 7 wickets. The outstanding performances of Dilip Sardesai with a score of 112 in 1st inning, Gavaskar's debut with a robust score of 65 in the 1st inning and 67 not out in the 2nd inning or Erapalli Prasanna's impressive bowling with 54/4 must not be forgotten in that Test, which resulted in India's greatest victory since independence. Although according to few sections, it was not the strongest West Indies side as they missed few of the quality fast bowlers like Wes Hall and Charlie Griffith but one must not forget that the team was led by Sir Garfield Sobers and star batsmen like Clive Lloyed, Rohan Kanhai, or Roy Fredericks were the part of the team. The magnitude of this euphoric win was felt back in Bombay (currently Mumbai) when thousands of fans turned up at Santacruz airport to welcome Wadekar and his men. Another glorious moment came in 1971 when India pulled off their first ever series win in England at the Oval under the captaincy of Ajit Wadekar. B. S. Chandrasekhar, the match-winning leg-spinner of the team was very much influential in the tour who scripted the sensational victory by picking up 6 wickets for 38 runs in a spell of 18.1

overs. Farokh Engineer, a notable player in the team, said in a conversation: “Do people still remember that victory? I’d like to think that we put India on the cricketing map. 1971 was a great year for Indian cricket. Earlier that year, we beat the West Indies in their own den for the first time”.⁶³ According to Ronojoy Sen, “From the 1970s, India’s performance on the cricket field was important enough to merit discussions in Parliament, giving cricket the imprimatur of the nation’s most important sport”.⁶⁴ Thus, the year 1971 was a golden era in India which had brought a renaissance in Indian cricket. As Boria Majumdar and Gautam Bhattacharya remarked in their book *1971: The Beginning of India’s Cricketing Greatness*:

As the idea of the real India continues to be mutilated in the fight for television ratings, stories about the victories achieved by the Indian men’s cricket team in 1971 can make a difference. At least we believed they can. In 1971, did the people of India care about the religion or economic background of the cricketers who made the national team? Perhaps not. Instead, each time Gavaskar scored a century, all of India collectively celebrated his and the team’s feats. Political parties across the spectrum enjoyed the success of Ajid Wadekar and his boys, and corporate India, most likely for the first time, came together to applaud the new champions. The national rhetoric despite the war of Bangladesh, was one of achievement and success about what India could do rather than what was wrong with the country⁶⁵.

India’s historic World Cup victory in 1983 was seen as another watershed moment in the annals of Indian cricket which had wider implications on Indian masses. Without a doubt, despite the limitations, the Indian national team had successfully fulfilled the national aspirations by achieving the highest feat in the arena of world cricket. Since then, a rapid tide of cricketing

⁶³ Flashback: We put India on the cricketing map, says Farokh Engineer (August 21, 2021). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/cricket/india-in-england/flashback-we-put-india-on-the-cricketing-map-says-farokh-engineer/articleshow/85506159.cms> (Accessed on: April 20, 2022)

⁶⁴ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play*. Gurgaon: Viking, Penguin Books, p. 261

⁶⁵ Majumdar, B. & Bhattacharya, G. (2021). *1971: The Beginning of India’s Cricketing Greatness*. Noida: Harper Sport, p. xii

culture was clearly evident. India's memorable World Cup victory of India in 1983 against the strongest West Indies had marked a paradigm shift of cricket in India. The emotional connect of this win that millions of Indians felt in that moment was unimaginable. It was brilliantly depicted by Nikhil Naz in his book *Miracle Men*:

*Team India was in its first-ever World Cup final. They were the minnows of the cricketing world – so much so that the bookmakers were offering 66:1 against India winning the title. Yet despite the odds stacked against them, Kapil Dev's inspirational captaincy took a bunch of no-hopers to World Cup glory. As Dev held the trophy in his hands on 25 June that year, India ushered in an era during which cricket would go on to dominate all sporting activity in the country and the men who played the winning innings would be venerated as demigods*⁶⁶

Thus, the stunning victories of 1971 and 1983 had changed the face of Indian cricket. As Boria Majumdar further notes:

*After the World Cup win in 1983, cricket in India was no longer a pastime; it was life itself. It was a career, and a very perceptible symbol of Indianness. India's cricketers were demigods, torchbearers of the nation's hopes. The World Cup win in 1983 was followed by another major win in the Benson and Hedges World Championship of cricket in Australia. And though India lost to England in the semi-finals of the 1987 World Cup at home, its organization on subcontinental soil initiate the shift in the balance of commercial power from the West to East.*⁶⁷

Most importantly, the winning teams of 1971 and 1983 had showcased the diversified and inclusive nature of Indian cricket reflecting the unified essence of Indianness. For instance, the 1971 team had Hindus as well Muslims along with a Parsi and a Sikh. Likewise, the 1983 side

⁶⁶ Naz, N. (2019). *Miracle Men: The Greatest Underdog Story in Cricket*. (Kindle Version) Gurugram: Hachette, p. 116

⁶⁷ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, p.170

had players with three faiths except Parsi as well as a Christian.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Indian cricket had produced two inspirational superstars Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev whose charismatic aura and cricketing excellence had an immeasurable influence to increase the popularity of cricket among the masses in the 70s⁶⁹ superseding the hockey craze in the nation which had been achieved through the five Olympic gold medals between 1948 and 1980. Along with them, many cricket legends like Mohinder Amarnath, Syed Kirmani, Krishnamachari Srikkanth, Dilip Vengsarkar, Ravi Sashtri had emerged in this period. They became the aspiring role model of the country. From the 1990s, cricket has become the single national obsession in the country. The satellite television revolution has played a monumental role to telecast cricket in the country, thereby helping the game to reach a bigger audience in India. The phenomenal growth of cricket has been preeminent when cricket has become synonymous with nationalism and cricketers have become national heroes. As Ramachandra Guha wrote:

*India will never be a tiger to match the other Asian tigers. India ranks at about 150 in the World Development Report, just below Namibia and just above Haiti. It is cricketers, and they alone, who are asked to redeem these failures, to make one forget, at least temporarily, the harsh realities of endemic poverty and corrupt and brutal politicians.*⁷⁰

Players like Sachin Tendulkar, Mohammad Azharuddin, Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble, Saurav Ganguly, V.V.S Laxman have inspired the youth generation to take cricket as their career. Sachin Tendulkar, widely known as master blaster, the greatest cricketer of all time became the collective pride of the nation who has inspired millions of Indians. Many domestic and

⁶⁸ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of British Sport*, Gurgaon: Penguin Book India, p.348

⁶⁹ Personal Interview with Bhattacharya, G. (Dated: February 15, 2022) [Personal Communication, Telephone]

⁷⁰ Guha, R. (August 20, 2021). Batting For India. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2002/aug/31/cricket.comment1>

international cricketers took up the sports just because of him.⁷¹ Apart from that, Saurav's aggressive style of captaincy heralded a new phase in Indian cricket. India's remarkable Test series victories by 2-1 against the strongest Australia or India's stellar performances abroad followed by Test victories in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, West Indies, England and Australia along with a mind-blowing Test series victory against Pakistan in 2004 are considered to be the milestones for the growth of Indian cricket. A bunch of new talents like Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Yuvraj Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Mohammed Kaif, Irfan Pathan, L Balaji, and many more emerged as the world class cricketer in this phase who brought new hope for the cricket enthusiasts in the new millennium. The greatest Natwest Trophy win in 2002 defeating England or India's incredible performance in 2003 World cup resulted in reaching the final are the biggest turning points in Indian cricket under Saurav-led India. It ensured the resurgence of Indian cricket. Finally, Indian cricket has further progressed as soon as MS Dhoni took the charge of the team. Dhoni's supremacy has made India the top ODI and Test team. He has won all major ICC trophies starting from 50 World Cup, T20 World Cup to Champions Trophy. The Ranchi born Dhoni's success in the national team not only has helped India to become a cricketing superpower but also transformed the power dynamics in Indian cricket. According to Krishnamachari Srikanth: "When somebody like Dhoni made it to the national side, the powerhouses of Indian cricket started to change, a cricketer from Ranchi was a masterstroke... Post Dhoni-era, we have seen a lot of players from small towns making the cut. This legacy will be very huge and it is a testament to Dhoni. The team has handed over in the right way to Virat".⁷² Following this brief discussion about how Indian cricket has evolved

⁷¹ Personal Interview with Roy, P. (Dated on February 28, 2022) [Personal communication, Telephone]

⁷² Mudgal, P. (April 19, 2020). MS Dhoni's inclusion into the Indian team was a masterstroke, claims Kris Srikanth. *Sportskeeda*. Retrieved from <https://www.sportskeeda.com/cricket/ms-dhoni-s-inclusion-into-the-indian-team-was-a-masterstroke-claims-kris-srikanth> (Accessed on: February 17, 2021)

over a period of time since independence occupying a central part of Indian's life, it is imperative to highlight the factors which paved the way for massive growth of cricket as a national obsession in India:

First, it is already mentioned in the previous chapter that princely promotion of cricket had a huge influence on the growth of native cricket in India. The names like KS Ranjitsinhji, Maharaj of Porbander, Maharaja of Patiala, Maharaja of Viziangram, Kumar Shri Duleepsinhji, Hanumant Singh, Nawab of Pataudi Sr and Nawab of Pataudi Jr etc. are immortalised in the history of Indian cricket who had a royal link. They were not only the enthusiastic cricketers but also the major figures who patronised some of the best cricketers since the time of pre-independence. Some big names emerged in the arena of Indian cricket just because they are employed by princely states. The legendary C. K. Nayudu was one of the deserving names who was brought to Indore in 1920 by the ruler Tukoji Rao. C. K. Nayudu took Holkar cricket to four Ranji Finals from 1940 to early 1950. Apart from star Nayudu, other leading cricketers like Vinoo Mankad (Nawangar), Vijay Hazare (Baroda), and Mushtaq Ali (Holker) were recruited by princely states. The Baroda team which bagged the Ranji Trophy for the fourth time in 1957/58 had 5 members who are employed by Maharajas.⁷³ But during the post-independence time, the reduction of princely patronage of cricket created a vacuum in the supply line of Indian cricket. In this period, the company tournament and company teams became the substitute of princely support of Indian cricket. The corporate backing of cricket injected professionalism in Indian cricket. This was largely evident in Bombay cricket. For instance, Times of India's Challenge Shield tournament turned out to be the most prestigious tournament in the city replacing the Pentangular. James Astill noted: "The rise of corporate patronage reasserted Bombay's primacy in cricket. Because the city was home to India's

⁷³ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play*. Gurgaon: Viking, Penguin Books, pp. 226-27

biggest companies, its players had the best chance of a decent job, ensuring that talented cricketers moved to Bombay in search of one. For a staggering 15 years, between 1958 and 1973, a third of India's Test players came from Maharashtra, the state of Bombay."⁷⁴ K. M. Rangnekar who played for India in 1947 said that "Bombay cricket was built on the Times of India Shield".⁷⁵ In this time, state companies and corporate agencies came in prominence as the modern sporting promoters to carry the legacy of cricketing investments in India. Corporate cricketers used to employ cricketers as their assets to maintain the company's goodwill as well used the star image of the cricketers for the purpose of the company's advertisement. In 1977, Salim Durani joined Century Rayon and Ajit Pai represented Bank of Baroda. Amarnath were recruited by the Delhi office of Air India.⁷⁶ Nari Contractor was another big name who joined Western Railway in 1957. Nari joined the Tata Company in 1960 with a starting salary of Rs 1300 per month. Tata was strongly committed to cricket and recruited top caliber cricketers like Bapu Nadkarni, Naren Tamhane, Farokh Engineer, Umesh Kulkarni, Nari Contractor, Ramnath Parkar, Dilip Vengsarkar.⁷⁷ The Tatas built a formidable team by winning the Times Shield ten times between 1947 and 1977 after marking its first shield win in 1937.⁷⁸ Tatas had a strong commitment towards the promotion of sports with broader socio-political goals. Tatas were regularly featured in the sports pages of daily newspapers for their achievements. Government agencies like Customs, Bombay Electric Supply and Tramways Company (B.E.S.T), Bombay Port Trust are the added attractions of competitive cricket in India who have actively employed cricketers. Associated Cement Corporation (A.C.C) were another

⁷⁴ Astill, J. (2013). *The Great Tamasha: Cricket, Corruption and the Turbulent Rise of Modern India*. Bloomsbury USA (1st ed.) (EPUB version), p.65

⁷⁵ Cashman, R. (1980). *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, p. 49

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.50

⁷⁷ Cashman, R. (1980). *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.53

⁷⁸ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play*. Gurgaon: Viking, Penguin Books, p.230

leading names who won the Times Shield for four times from 1952 to 61. Cricket stars like Polly Umrigar, Bapu Nadkarni, Ramakant Desai, Dilip Sardesai, Ajit Wadekar were recruited by this company.⁷⁹ Apart from that, State Bank of India (SBI) was one of the leading state-run companies who has won Time Shield for four times. The 1967 Indian team touring England had 13 players who were SBI employees. Besides, several tournaments like Sport and Pastime Trophy, Buchi Babu tournament in Madras, Moin-Ud-Dowla Gold Cup were the topmost cricket tournaments in the country which paved the way for the growth of cricket across the country.⁸⁰

Second, Radio and Television played a pivotal role in creating the mass audience for Indian cricket. Before television was taking root in India, radio was the most sought after gadget for every Indian. Radio commentaries successfully created the new fan base of cricket across the country. Radio became the invincible medium invoking the space for boundless imagination of cricket enthusiasts in India. Along with English and Hindi commentaries, regional commentaries like Bengali in West Bengal, Marathi in Maharashtra and Tamil in Tamil Nadu have further backed the game to “attract an even broader mass following in urban India...well beyond the mass confines of the English-educated urban middle class to other social groups”.⁸¹ Radio broadcasting began in a few parts of the country when Test matches were played in India for the first time in 1933.⁸² The phenomenal growth of radio was evident when the number of radio sets escalated to 150,000 in a decade later from the year 1947 when the number of sets was only 3000. The magic of ball-to-ball commentary, getting the audience closer to the game

⁷⁹ Cashman, R. (1980). *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp. 56-57

⁸⁰ Ibid. p.141

⁸¹ Ibid, 146. Also see Ugra, S. (2005). Play together, live apart: religion, politics and markets in Indian cricket since 1947, In S. Wagg (ed.) *Cricket and National Identity in the Postcolonial Age: Following on*, p. 80 Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

⁸² Guha, R. (2008). *India after Gandhi*. London: Harper Perennial, p.739. Also discussed in Sen, *Nation at Play*,p.255

by mesmerising words immensely helped to form a strong public opinion about Indian cricket. In the 1948/49 state broadcaster, All-India Radio (AIR) made cricket centre of attraction by covering the India-West Indies Test series. Further, India's historic win against England in 1971 lifted the spirit of every cricket lover in India as the match was covered on radio. Reminiscing India's landmark series, Ravi Sastri recalled: "I remember that game to the tee. I was nine years old. I was listening to it on the BBC Test Match Special (TMS). There were some big names there [in commentary], who led me to my next profession in broadcasting".⁸³ Cricket's reach through radio was further realised during India's Test against West Indies in 1978 when 60 percent of radios in Bombay listened to the cricket match⁸⁴. BBC's and ABC's running commentaries being relayed by Radio Ceylon also attracted large audience to cricket in India.⁸⁵ Radio is still an effective mass medium especially in spreading the aura of cricket to the rural audiences. In 2019, the Board of Control for Cricket in India has ensured two years rights arrangements with All India Radio to provide the live commentary of India's domestic as well as international matches and to enhance the coverage of Indian cricket reaching out to millions of listeners.⁸⁶ Boria Majumdar remarked the massive impact of radio and television upon the nationwide popularity of cricket:

Radio, and more particularly television, has made (cricket) the most popular game in India. It has acquired tremendous mass appeal. Men, women and children who had no interest in the game earlier have now become its ardent

⁸³ ENG vs India: Ravi Shastri recalls India's historic 1971 win at the Oval (September 2, 2021). *Indiatvnews.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatvnews.com/sports/cricket/eng-vs-ind-ravi-shastri-recalls-india-s-historic-1971-win-at-the-oval-731134> (Accessed on: July 10, 2022)

⁸⁴ Sen, R. (2015). *Nation at Play*. Gurgaon: Viking, Penguin Books, p. 257

⁸⁵ Bose, M. (2006). *The Magic of Indian Cricket: Cricket and Society in India*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, p.141. Also discussed in Ghosh, M. Nationalism, Television and Indian Cricket in Global Mediascope: Where has the local gone? p.74. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/5504327/Nationalism_television_and_Indian_cricket_in_Global_mediascope_Where_has_the_Local_gone

⁸⁶ BCCI partners with AIR to provide live radio commentary (Sept. 11, 2019). *BCCI*. Retrieved from <https://www.bcci.tv/articles/2019/news/130557/about>

fans- all because of its broadcast by radio and television. This has also attracted the attention of business and commerce. They see an excellent opportunity of advertising their products and wares...Previously, their income depended mainly upon ticket money. Now, it probably does not count at all. The real income comes from the advertisements both in-stadia as well as the spot advertisements over radio and television. The value of in-stadia advertisement has increased enormously on account of its constant exposure on television during the progress of the game.⁸⁷

Besides, the rapid expansion of television in India from the 1990s has immensely contributed to the commercialisation of Indian cricket. The widening effect of television in terms of creating national audiences has begun to be witnessed when India's remarkable victory against England in 1971 and its greatest World Cup win in 1983 at Lords was telecasted across India. Most importantly, the satellite revolution has dramatically transformed cricket into an easily accessed and cheapest commodity for Indians. Prior to 1993, Indian cricket was telecasted by the state-owned media organization Doordarshan channel which charged a substantial amount of money for each live telecast from the BCCI for maintaining a monopoly over broadcast rights of cricket matches in India. In 1992 Doordarshan demanded 5 lakh from the BCCI for its exclusive service. But this situation was drastically changed when BCCI sold television rights to Trans World International (TWI) for the 1992-93 England tour of India for US\$ 600,000⁸⁸ and compelled Doordarshan to pay TWI \$ 1 million⁸⁹ for the telecast rights which helped the board to overcome its economic doldrums suffocating Indian cricket from 1987 to 1992. But the standoff over the broadcasting process of cricket in India arose when Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) handed over the broadcasting rights to a private broadcasting agency, TWI, for telecasting the 1993 Hero Cup to commemorate their diamond jubilee

⁸⁷ Majumdar, B. (2004). *Twenty-Two Yards to Freedom*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.365

⁸⁸ Haigh, G. (2011). *Sphere of Influence: Writings on Cricket and its Discontents*. (EPUB version). London: Simon & Schuster, p.19

⁸⁹ Ibid.

celebration. But Doordarshan and its parent body, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, strongly voiced their reservations against this decision claiming it as the violation of the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 if any foreign broadcaster telecast the match uplinking signals from the Indian territory. The dispute escalated when the matter went to court and Doordarshan was determined to boycott matches, also preventing All India Radio from broadcasting live commentary. However, the rest of the matches in the tournament were telecasted due to Supreme Court's intervention overruling the government's decision. In 1995, the Supreme Court came up with a landmark judgment in favour of BCCI, declaring that airwaves could no longer be the subject of state monopoly.⁹⁰ This decision marked the beginning of liberalisation in Indian cricket which opened up many lucrative deals. According to the former CEO of Neo Sports, Sashi Kalathil, "This was also the time when the economy was opening up in a big way and several foreign brands were entering India. Even Indian companies were entering new segments and launching new products. They all needed a vehicle to reach consumers. Being a mass medium, television was emerging as a favourite platform for these brands."⁹¹ The marriage between Indian cricket and global media became visible BCCI made a deal with Prime Sports, formerly ESPN, for 5 million for the period 1995-1999. This was followed by other crucial endorsements which had ensured the rise of BCCI as the richest board of the world. In 2004, Zee TV came up with an ambitious bid \$ 260 million for TV rights. After the disqualification of Zee, Nimbus Communications acquired the rights for \$ 612 million.⁹² Summing up the above discussion about how BCCI's dominance was established in

⁹⁰ For details see Supreme Court Judgment on Airwaves (9.2.1995). Retrieved from, <https://mib.gov.in/document/supreme-court-judgement-airwaves> (March 5, 2021)

⁹¹ Shukla, A. (Sep. 4, 2011). Why everyone wants a slice of the BCCI pie. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/why-everyone-wants-a-slice-of-the-bcci-pie/841182/2> (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

⁹² Ibid.

the global market economy and the significant role played by television in making cricket the most entertaining product for every Indian households, Boria Majumdar commented:

It needs to be remembered that the Prasar Bharati was created under Supreme Court directives and that it was largely born out of a dispute between the government and the BCCI over telecast rights. The role of cricket in the Indian context thus goes far beyond the sporting domain. Even when the government, despite its claims to liberalize the economy, was failing to do so, cricket, because of its market appeal, successfully attracted foreign investors to India. The only Indian sporting federation to survive without government subsidy, the BCCI took the lead in marketing the sport globally and used the financial harvest to retain its status as a major player on the world cricket.⁹³

Third, the birth of the Indian Premier League in 2007, a franchises based T20 league has revolutionised the whole dynamics of Indian cricket. India's memorable World Cup win in the first T20 World Cup, staged in South Africa has helped India to realize the massive potential of T20 cricket in India. BCCI's the then Vice-President and the brain behind the foundation of IPL, Lalit Modi stated about the philosophy of this commercially viable high profile franchise based league:

The IPL has been designed to entice an entire new generation of sports fans into the grounds throughout the country. The dynamic Twenty20 format has been designed to attract a a young fan base, which also include women and children

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Amit Gupta contends that cricket has become secondary in England. Australia despite being a top cricketing nation also doesn't possess the vast demographic base which can commercialize viewership opportunities as India did. Consequently, Indian cricket turned into the epicenter of

⁹³ Majumdar, B. (2006). *The Illustrated History of Indian Cricket*, New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, p. 198

⁹⁴ Alter, J. (Sept 13 2007). Franchise for Boards new Twenty20 League. *Espnricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espnricinfo.com/story/franchises-for-board-s-new-twenty20-league-310819> (Accessed on: August 5, 2010)

global cricket by absorbing the vast audience from South Asian countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or Nepal. As Paul Kelso remarked in *The Guardian*: “Theatrical, widely hyped and hugely lucrative, the auction was a watershed moment for the IPL and the international game. In the last month, before a ball has been bowled, the league has raised US \$ 1.8 billion, more than the ICC will receive for its next two World Cups. It has exposed the ICC’s commercial limitations...”⁹⁵ The league came out to be a billion dollar cricket empire which made IPL “the biggest Make in India brand” in the world.⁹⁶ The tournament started with 8 founding franchise; Mumbai Indians, the Chennai Super Kings, the Royal Challengers Bangalore, the Deccan Chargers (Hyderabad), the Delhi Daredevils, the Pubjab XI Kings, the Kolkata Night Riders, the Rajasthan Royals. It has formalised right set of incentives to encourage cricketers as well as broadcasters, franchise owners and various cricket boards. In 2014, IPL turned into the most attained cricket league across the globe with its tremendous mass appeal and commercial success. Star India won the global television and digital rights for the Indian Premier League for the 5 year period, from 2018-2022. Star India bagged the biggest right sale in cricket history with a bid of US \$2.55 billion.⁹⁷ IPL is the massive source of BCCI’s earning which made the board the richest cricket board in the world. The board earned Rs 4000 crore as revenue from IPL 2020. In addition, TV viewership also increased by 25 percent in

⁹⁵ Kelso, P. (February 21, 2008). After Spending \$ 42 million on players in a frenzied day, cricket’s new princes take aim at a global fan base. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2008/feb/21/cricket.indianpremierleague1> (Accessed on: August 5, 2020)

⁹⁶ Global Interest for new teams shows IPL is biggest ‘Make in India’ brand: Arun Dhuma (Oct 28, 2021). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/cricket/ipl/top-stories/global-interest-for-new-teams-shows-ipl-is-biggest-make-in-india-brand-arun-dhumal/articleshow/87337834.cms> (Accessed on: November 17, 2021)

⁹⁷ Gollapudi, N. (Sep 4, 2017). Star India wins IPL rights for US \$2.55 billion. *ESPNCricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/star-india-wins-ipl-rights-for-us-2-55-billion-1119351> (Accessed on: August 17, 2020)

2020 as compared to the IPL 2019.⁹⁸ Most importantly, according to the data provided by BCCI and compiled by KPMG Sports Advisory Group, IPL has contributed 11.5 billion (\$ 182 million) to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015.⁹⁹ Boria Majumdar wrote:

India's position as the new nerve centre of world cricket has been strengthened in recent times thanks to the impact of the Indian Premier League. The IPL, played for seven weeks between April-May for five seasons now has been a success by most yardsticks, so much so that there was a talk of withdrawal syndrome among cricket fans once the spectacle was over in Season I and II. In most metropolitan cities across India, the world with a large Indian diaspora, watching the IPL auction has become a craze. As the clock strikes 8.00 IST, it is IPL time. Spread over a month and a half, the tournament has been full of moments of drama, spectacle, ecstasy and agony. As the cost of giving favourite soaps and serials a miss, entire Indian families have been converted to the heady mix of cricket and entertainment on office, a package unprecedented and one that transformed the face of Indian cricket for all time to come...After years in existence, the tournament has indeed become a part of Indian households and is no longer the innovation it was in 2008 or 2009¹⁰⁰

IPL has opened the door for young cricketers to showcase their abilities who never played for the national team. Most preeminently, IPL has democratised Indian cricket as Indian cricket is no more restricted to metro cities like before. Cricketers from small cities are also being opted along with major national and international stars in this league. Hence, IPL has built the highest platform for the aspiring cricketers to justify their talents and get an entry into the national teams. Cricketers like Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal,

⁹⁸ BCCI earned Rs 4000 crore from IPL 2020, TV viewership increased by 25 per cent, says Arun Dhumal. (November 23, 2020). *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/cricket/story/bcci-ipl-2020-revenue-rs-4000-crore-tv-viewership-25-per-cent-1743244-2020-11-23> (Accessed on: July 3, 2021)

⁹⁹ Tiwari, M. (January 22, 2018). IPL economy: What the cash-rich league adds to India's GDP. *Financial Express*. Retrieved from <https://www.financialexpress.com/sports/ipl/ipl-economy-what-the-cash-rich-league-adds-to-indias-gdp/1025063/> (Accessed on: August 15, 2021)

¹⁰⁰ Majumdar, B. (2015). The Indian Premier League: the Future of Indian Cricket. In P. Trivedi & S. Chaudhuri (ed.) *Fields of Play: Sport, Literature and Culture*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, p.128

Rishabh Pant, and many more, are the prominent names who fixed their spot in the national team after establishing their names in the IPL. For instance, Suresh Raina who represented India as well as Chennai Super King has come from a small town of Uttar Pradesh. Ishan Kishan who reached to the epitome of fame by becoming the most expensive cricketer in IPL auction 2022 with a bid of 15.25 crore also started his journey from Ranchi, a state where cricketing facilities and standard is not so high.¹⁰¹ Former Indian cricketer Sanjay Bangar said: “Nowadays, it is not only the national selectors who select talents from national camps, but talent scouts like us from different teams travel to different parts of the country to unearth talents and that I think is one of the most beautiful aspect of the IPL. That’s why you find a 30-year old Varun Chakraborty getting picked to play in the World Cup rather than playing First-Class cricket for a long time. IPL has democratised cricket and that I think is IPL’s biggest contribution to the sport”¹⁰².

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAKISTAN

*If all its human resources were developed, Pakistan would be one of the greatest nations in the world. Cricket unites Pakistan and makes its talents bloom. It has no barriers between rich and poor. Cricket teaches people how to leave their loves in this world. It makes you a better human being.*¹⁰³- Wasim Bari.

Like India, cricket has become an important cultural component in Pakistani society. Undoubtedly, cricket has strengthened the construction of Pakistani national identity. Pakistan

¹⁰¹ Narula, C. (February 15, 2022). The rise of Ishan Kishan: From small-town boy to the most expensive cricketer in IPL 2022 mega auction. *Firstpost*. Retrieved from <https://www.firstpost.com/firstcricket/sports-news/the-rise-of-ishan-kishan-from-small-town-boy-to-the-most-expensive-cricketer-in-ipl-2022-mega-auction-10375181.html> (Accessed on: July 18, 2022)

¹⁰² De, C. (March 5, 2022). IPL has democratized cricket and that I think is the League’s biggest contribution to the sport: Sanjay Bangar. *myKhel*. Retrieved from <https://www.mykhel.com/cricket/ipl-has-democratized-cricket-and-that-i-think-is-the-league-s-biggest-contribution-to-sport-bangar-185497.html> (Accessed on: July 19, 2022)

¹⁰³ Osborne, P. (2014). *Wounded Tiger: The History of Cricket in Pakistan*. London: Simon & Schuster, Preface, p. xxiii. Former captain of Pakistan team gave this statement about the role of cricket in uniting the people of Pakistan.

has successfully produced many renowned international cricketers and also has achieved international fame due to its national team's achievements in the arena of international cricket. Although the chaotic nation has taken severe blow due to the high threat of terrorism and socio-political instabilities, and endless corruptions but it is the cricket which always gives hope for Pakistani people from grass roots to upward level to bridge their differences. Cricketing success has immensely helped Pakistan to avoid international isolation. The popularity of the game and Pakistan's success in this game has built a firm stage where the collective aspirations of Pakistani people can be fulfilled. As Muhammad Bilal and Rafiullah Khan illustrated:

Whenever Pakistan is playing an important cricket match the heart rate of every individual in Pakistan is racing. They feel the thrill, the rush, the fervor. The live telecast brings in information and news of every second. It keeps people on their toes, with their hearts in their throats. This glues them in oneness. Not only that, people are so enthusiastic that they climb high trees around the stadium in case they cannot afford the ticket, just to glimpse what the excitement is all about. Moreover, it's almost as if it's a part of their culture or traditions to gather around a single television set at "dhaba" or tea shop. They look and cheer when their team scores. It has always been the street culture of Pakistan where children go out and find anywhere to play cricket. A passerby would gesture throwing a ball even as one walks the street. They would run to catch a ball and bring it back to the playing actors on the street and stand to watch them play even. They don't hesitate to play cricket in narrow streets, slums, roadsides, greenbelts, and even between buildings and in small parking lots. Cricket can be called as the "de facto" national game in Pakistan because of the emotions with which Pakistani masses worship their cricketing icons and their cricket team.¹⁰⁴

Since the birth of Pakistan, the country has faced several ups and down due to its multifarious socio - political fissures and violent conflicts. It happened mostly due to the reason that the

¹⁰⁴ Bilal, M. & Khan, R. (April 5, 2021). Cricket and Nation-Building in Pakistan. SSRN. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3840382> (Accessed on August 19, 2022)

country found it difficult to integrate its population against the pull of cultural, ethnic and sectarian fragmentations. As a result, the biggest challenge for Pakistan was to harmonise its sub-groups and sects bearing various regional cultural or linguistic identities or sentiments and to construct a united national identity. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, known in Pakistan as “Quaid-e-Azam” (The Great Leader), the founder of Muslim-majority state of Pakistan dreamt of creating an Islamic state as perceived by “Two Nation Theory”, whose basis would not be of common language or ethnicity, but religion. However, it was largely unsuccessful to materialize a smooth nation-building process after the independence. Although it was believed that the ideological power of Islam and the imposition of Urdu language would be the binding force and mobilization factor for its people to assimilate into national community but this process failed to eradicate the differences between diverse groups and to hold the Pakistanis together. For instance, despite being the minority language which accounted for only 7% of the total population, Urdu was solely declared as the official state language overlooking the existent 54% Bengali speaking population in United Pakistan.¹⁰⁵ Jinnah’s speech in 1948 at Race Course, Dhaka needs to be reproduced in this backdrop: “Let me make it very clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function. Look at the history of other countries. Therefore, so far as the state language is concerned, Pakistan language shall be Urdu”.¹⁰⁶ The imposition of Urdu as a political instrument of establishing hegemony was also advocated by Pakistan’s new Governor General Khwaja Nazimuddin whose government had given the nod for the

¹⁰⁵ Fathema, K. (Feb 21, 2019). Why was there a battle of Urdu – Bangla? *NewAge*. Retrieved from <https://www.newagebd.net/article/65472/why-was-there-a-battle-of-urdu-bangla> (Accessed on: September 20, 2021)

¹⁰⁶ Jinnah, M. A. (1976). *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches as Governor General of Pakistan 1947-48*. Karachi: Pakistan Publication, p.86. Jinnah delivered this speech, “National Consolidation”, on March 21, 1948 in Dhaka.

educational reforms based on six years educational program to encourage Urdu as a unified and holy state language.¹⁰⁷ Besides, this one size fits all Urdu formula which sought to integrate its federating units with Islamic cultural allusions at the expense of provincial autonomy was also not accepted by the regional and local ones like Sindhis, Baloch or Pashtuns. Unsurprisingly, this racially discriminatory policy has sparked a massive resistance movement from East Bengalis who had been severely oppressed by the West Pakistani ruling elites. Further, the consistent economic exploitation of the East Pakistan, the prolonged power centrism of martial dictatorship being dominated by the western wing and the alienation of Bengalis in the political representation and most importantly, the demeaning attitude of the West Pakistani government towards the socio-cultural life of East Pakistanis have provided the impetus for the growth of Bengali nationalism in the eastern province. The political and cultural gulf between West and East Pakistan which triggered a severe political turmoil across the country has finally led to the birth of Bangladesh liberation movement and the subsequent emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation in 1971. Thus, due to the lack of political planning and arrangements, Pakistan has faced secessionist movements within its territory since its formation. The eruption of Baloch and Pashtun ethno-political nationalist movements in Pakistan and the government's repressive policy under its 'One Unit' plan to subdue the sectarian chaos and tensions in these provinces ending in large atrocities made it clear how ethno-linguistic crises have been the biggest threat for the national security and stability since Pakistan's existence as a sovereign territory. Thus, Pakistan's national integration is in jeopardy with popular dissatisfaction with democracy, the intersecting fault lines between the military and the civilians, poor governance, widespread corruption and the erosion of credible

¹⁰⁷ Jabeen, M., Chandio, D. A. A. & Quasim, Z. (2010). Language controversy: impacts on national politics and secession of East Pakistan. *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 25 (1): 108. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/Mussarat%20Jabeen%207.pdf> (Accessed on: July 24, 2021)

state system to control spawning extremism and insurgencies which left its citizens permanently vulnerable. Pakistan ranks 29th in the Fragile States Index 2021.¹⁰⁸ Despite suffering from these difficulties and challenges, it is cricket which turns out to be a unifying force for Pakistan since its birth as a separate nation after partition. Describing the socio-political significance of cricket, Muhammad Bilal and Rafiullah Khan stated:

Pakistan was created in the name Two Nation Theory which implied that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations, each needing separate homeland for itself. After the creation of Pakistan the state was in need of a nation. In order to build nation out of diverse ethnic groups comprising Pakistan, communal Muslim identity was presented as a national identity of Pakistan. Apart from communal Muslim identity, Urdu, Political centralization and Indian threat were also utilized to construct a nation which can fit the state of Pakistan. All of the above tools possess shortcomings and failed to hold Pakistan integrated. Cricket plays significant role as a national unifier in the nation building process of Pakistan. Unlike other four factors, cricket helps in national cohesion cutting across the ethnic, lingual and sectarian divides.¹⁰⁹

Pakistan's remarkable performances at home and abroad gave them recognition on the international map. Cricket is considered as the most popular mass sports in Pakistan. Cricket is just not a game in Pakistan, it has become an inseparable part of Pakistani's life. The rising popularity of the game has paved the way for Pakistan's national self-assertion and to craft a progressive post-colonial identity. As Nadeem Farooq Paracha opined:

It is true that the Pakistani state has begun to retaliate with forces against terrorists and religious extremism, and enterprising young Pakistanis have taken it upon themselves to revive the country's cultural scenes and industries.

¹⁰⁸ Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021, *The Fund For Peace*. Retrieved from <https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/fsi2021-report.pdf> (Accessed on: August 26, 2022)

¹⁰⁹ Bilal, M. & Khan, R. (April 5, 2021). Cricket and Nation-Building in Pakistan. *SSRN*. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3840382> (Accessed on August 19, 2022)

But cricket remains the one activity that still connects the emaciated country to the outside world.

This is why when the national cricket team fails to deliver, a sense of panic, depression and anger runs across the nation. Fans feel betrayed and even more isolated. So to prevent suffering such feelings, acts of superstition, hyper-nationalism and even religion are often evoked during important cricket games.¹¹⁰

Having a glance at the birth period of Pakistan cricket, the name Abdul Hafeez Kardar, must be credited for introducing Pakistan as a formidable cricket playing nation in the world of cricket for the first time. Kardar was Pakistan's first cricket captain. He was known for his extremely capable and indomitable character for his commitment and devotion to Pakistan cricket. When the newly independent Islamic country did not even possess headed notepaper, Kardar who captained in their first 23 Tests not only had ensured Pakistan's Test status but also made Pakistan cricket a strongest force at home as they were not beaten at Karachi until 2000/01¹¹¹. Ramachandra Guha remarked:

Kardar had a deep commitment to the idea of Pakistan, and a robust pride in the Muslim contribution to the sub-continent's history. He could also turn a decent a decent phrase: every word in the books that appeared under his name was written by himself. Like that other Oxonian, Douglas Jardine, he commanded the absolute loyalty of his players. But Kardar was a nationalist in a way that Scot was not. Jardine wished to win for himself and, at one remove, for his team. The Pakistani had a mere elevated view of his responsibilities. Cricket was for him a means of consolidating the unity and identity of his new vulnerable nation. From his sporting career one could have foretold that he

¹¹⁰ Paracha, N, F. (n.d). Cricket in Pakistan – More than just a game. DW. Retrieved from <https://learnrgerman.dw.com/en/blog-cricket-in-pakistan-more-than-just-a-game/a-18323932> (Accessed on: January 15, 2022)

¹¹¹ Ricquier, B. (2010). *The Pakistani Masters*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, p.3

*would become a senior state official and a minister in the government of Pakistan's most powerful province, the Punjab.*¹¹²

Hanif Mahammad, Pakistan's W. G. Grace, took an account of Kardar's heroic involvement in the national team and his role in constructing the national consciousness through cricketing success. Kardar used to give patriotic speeches in front of the players to awaken them with nationalistic fervour. This urge translated into the Pakistan's epochal win over England in 1954 at Oval under the daunting leadership of Kardar which enabled the Pakistani government to realize the potential of cricket to create a strong national identity. Pakistan's famous overseas victory has helped the newly formed Pakistan in expunging the colonial burden in this region.¹¹³ According to Leslie Smith, "In the cricket history of Pakistan the date, Tuesday, August 17, will live long. On that day at Kennington Oval, Pakistan became the only side to win a Test Match on a first visit to England... For England, humiliating though it was at the time, defeat really meant little, but for Pakistan the win had far-reaching effects. It was estimated that interest in the game in that country would be doubled and that thousands of youngsters, inspired by the unexpected result, would become active cricketers. The outcome of this may well be seen in when Pakistan next tour England in 1962."¹¹⁴ To emphasise the central importance of cricket in the culture of Pakistan and its steady rise in the present-day scenario, Kaushik Bandopadhyay writes:

¹¹² Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of British Sport*, Gurgaon: Penguin Book India, p.370

¹¹³ Paracha, N. F. (March 30, 2017). Sports are known for matches, but rarely for how they are used as political expressions. *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1323588#:~:text=Cancel-.Sports%20are%20known%20for%20matches%2C%20but%20rarely%20for%20how%20the%20v.fields%20of%20South%20American%20countries> (Accessed on: July 16, 2021)

¹¹⁴ Smith, L. Pakistan in England, 1954. Wisden Almanack 2021. *ESPNcricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/155167.html> (Accessed August 18, 2022)

Cricket such pre-eminence in Pakistani life has also led to its construction and interpretation in terms of political transition, social tension, economic transformation, diplomatic relations or cultural development.

Cricket has always remained an emblem of national pride in Pakistan since its birth in 1947... the story of Pakistani cricket offers an interesting repertoire of stunning performances including both exemplary success and appalling defeat, mass worshipping of its cricketing icons, public wrath against the national cricketers and politicization of cricket for diplomatic purposes... With cricket's intense professionalization, commercialization and mediatization since the 1990s, Pakistani cricket began to face the changing order of the global game. More importantly, in twenty-first century Pakistan, where democracy begs place in the sun and where dissent is more powerful than cohesion, cricket provides a cultural space where all the dissents can converge for a Pakistani feat. While cricket has already served a metaphor for the assertion of Pakistani identity, expression of cultural nationalism or feeling of emotional commonality...it must emerge as a marker of the nation's international status as well as an instrument for flexing its economic muscle in the new century.¹¹⁵

However, it is imperative to note that Pakistan cricket was mostly dominated by elitism in the first two decades. The English-speaking foreign educated big names were being overvalued in the national side. These players being referred as 'The Oxford Complex'¹¹⁶ continued to exert influence on Pakistan cricket by controlling the Pakistani cricket administration. As Rahul Bhattacharya claims: "This reflected, more than anything, the marginalization of the politician in Pakistan... where the Indians hid behind 'democracy' (i.e. vote-bank politics) and a unique 'honorary' altruism (i.e part-time amateurism) to play out their power games, in Pakistan cricket was apparently still a matter of Anglicised cultivation, with lines drawn accordingly".¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2007). *Playing Off the Field*. Kolkata: Towards Freedom, pp. 121-122

¹¹⁶ Bhattacharya, R. (2012). *Pundits from Pakistan: On tour with India, 2003-2004*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.45

¹¹⁷ Bhattacharya, R. (2012). *Pundits from Pakistan: On tour with India, 2003-2004*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p. 44

The greatest cricketers like Abdul Hafeez Kardar, Majid Jahangir Khan, Imran Khan, Javed Burki had a link with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Pakistani legendary cricketer Javed Miandad in his autobiography 'Cutting Edge' expressed similar dissatisfaction regarding the dominating tradition of privileged cricketers with a foreign background in the Pakistan cricket team:

There has been a tendency in Pakistan cricket in which players with an Oxford or Cambridge background have been overvalued, and players far removed from such a background have been undervalued. It is an injustice that was part of our cricket from the earliest days, and was kept alive well into my playing years...In recent times the Oxford Complex in Pakistan continues to exert its influence, albeit in a different form. The modern version exists in the value placed on the ability to speak English. It is no secret that English-speaking skills are an important consideration in appointing the Pakistani captain. This is a sad and deeply misplaced attitude...Certainly, an ability to speak English should never be considered as a reason to deny someone the Pakistani captaincy.¹¹⁸

But with the emergence of charismatic Javed Miandad in the national side who was widely considered as the most popular sport star in the country, this situation started changing and cricket turned out to be the great leveler in Pakistani society. Omar Noman has re-emphasised the similar point: "Miandad had many of the characteristics of a pugilist. He did not play cricket, he fought it. It was a contest of skill and temperament, in which the demons of mind had to be mastered...Miandad's symbolic role has been underestimated. He became part of the 'Pakistani dream'-an urban rags-to-reach story. A man from the lower middle class who owed his achievements to hard work, not patronage, his voice is that of an urban Pakistan craving for merit rewarded and a going beyond the distorting patronage mechanism so prevalent in

¹¹⁸ Miandad, J. & Shafqat, S. (2003). *Cutting Edge: My Autobiography*. Karachi: Oxford University, p.319-320

society”.¹¹⁹ Many homegrown talented cricketers despite belonging to lower and middle class backgrounds were recruited in the Pakistan Team purely on cricketing merits and hardships, not being encouraged by favouritism. Cricketers like Inzamam Ul Haq, Wasim Akram Saeed Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Shoaib Akhtar, Waqar Younis, Mohammad Yusuf and many others who reached their pinnacle in the world of cricket due to their cricketing excellence. Further, cricket has become a symbolic determinant of national cohesion in vibrant Pakistan by binding its diversified population together. According to Khan, “Perhaps cricket reflects a nation’s character and touches a deeper nerve than any other sport... In Pakistan it is the strongest unifying force amongst its people, young and old, rich or poor, man or woman, Shia or Sunni, Pathan or Sindhis. It brings a unity in peacetime only achieved in times of war”.¹²⁰ For this very reason, cricketers from minority groups were also given chance to represent their national Teams. For instance, Imran Khan, the strongest pillar of Pakistan cricket and the World Cup winning captain in 1992, the current Prime Minister belonged to a Pashtun family in Lahore. Pakistan’s all-time favorite Shahid Afridi, widely considered as the most destructive and fearless cricketer in the world, is a Pashtun. Sarfarz Ahmed the most popular wicket keeper-captain in all formats is a Sindh cricketer. Danish Kaneria who got his fame as the most impressive Pakistani leg-spinner was a Hindu cricketer. Following this context, few factors can be highlighted to know how cricket becomes national passion in Pakistan and the way it has developed its sporting heritage over the years.

First, the geographical and ethnic factors had a special significance for the rise of cricket in Pakistan. Whereas Northern Pakistani players were known for their strong physicality, Southern cricketers are comparatively short. Pakistan national team has benefitted from this

¹¹⁹ Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.25

¹²⁰ Khan, S. (2005). *Cricket: A Bridge of Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.viii

north-south mix and their diversities in the team. When north has produced some devastating world class fast bowlers due to their physical advantage, south has supplied some outstanding batsman and wicketkeepers as their short and lean figure were best suited to their job.¹²¹

Second, the incentive structure in Pakistan cricket acted as a major stimulator for the growth of Pakistan cricket. In the initial years, strong incentives and financial rewards have given birth to many aspiring cricketers and later, the incredible benefits coming from the sponsorship deal has promoted the cricketing career as a lucrative career option. Cricket became the platform for the young cricketers for their upward social mobility. As Arif Abbasi remarked:

*If you reach the top, of course, you become a millionaire. When we hold junior tournaments, the most surprising aspect is the number of parents who came to push their children. This is very different from the 1950s, when respectable parents would try and prevent their sons from entering the financially insecure environment of cricket.*¹²²

Third, Pakistan's youth policy in case of team selection has produced some exceptional cricketers whose contribution in the team aided Pakistan to lay a strong foundation in the future. Players like Hanif Mohammad (1952 at 17 years), Haseeb Ahsan (1958 at 19 years), Nasib-Ul-Ghani (1958 at 16 years), Saeed Ahmed (1958 at 21 years), Ijaz Butt (1958 at 21years), Mushtaq Mohammad (1959 at 16 years), Shafqat Rana (1964 at 21 years), Asif Iqbal (1964 at 21 years), Majid Khan (1964 at 18 years), Wasim Bari (1967 at 19 years), Aftab Baloch (1969 at 16 years), Imran Khan (1971 at 18 years), Wasim Raja (1973 at 21 years), Liqueat Ali (1975 at 20 years), Javed Miandad (1976 at 19 years), Saleem Malik (1982 at 18 years), Wasim Akram, (1985 at 18 years), Waqar Yunis (1989 at 17 years), Shahid Afridi (1998 at 18

¹²¹ Personal interview with Daljit, S. (Dated Jan 31, 2022) [Personal Communication, Telephone]. This is also discussed in Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, pp.44-45

¹²² Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p. 43

years) and many more were the Test-debutants of Pakistan cricket team who took the world by storm.

Fourth, Administrative giants of Pakistan cricket also had immense contributions to take Pakistan to the heights of international fame. Among them the name of Hon'ble Justice Alvin Robert Cornelius should be acknowledged as the founding figure of Pakistan cricket for determining the fortune of the game in the country in its formative years. He is remembered for his unwavering love for Pakistan cricket. His pioneering contribution to the growth of Pakistan cricket can be found in his determined effort to sow the seeds of the Board. He had an association with Lahore Gymkhana Cricket Club. He became one of three Vice-Presidents (1948-53) of the Pakistan Cricket Board (BCCP) and the Chairman of the working committee. When Pakistan was going through a turmoil period after the partition, he, as a patron of cricket, served the Pakistan cricket by maturing basic structure of cricket in Pakistan. He wanted Pakistan cricket to ensure international recognition. For this reason, he played a crucial role to facilitate overseas tour in Pakistan. When West Indies team was visiting India in 1948 he has successfully formed the cricket board in Pakistan with the support of Dr. Jahangir Khan, Agha Ahmed Raza Khan, Mian Mohammed Saeed, and Syeed Fida Hossain with a well-crafted plan to invite the same international team in Pakistan¹²³. He was the main figure to found the Pakistani Eaglets, an informal club consisting of young Pakistani cricketers, which toured England in 1952-53 for training and acquiring the cricketing knowledge.¹²⁴ This experience helped them to prepare for the full Test tour of England in 1954. Many of the renowned cricketers like Asif Iqbal, Mushtaq Mohammed, Majid Khan flourished through representing the Eaglets.

¹²³ Latif, N. (November 14, 2020). Justice Cornelius, Father of Pakistan Cricket. *Scoreline*. Retrieved from <https://www.scoreline.org/justice-cornelius-father-of-pakistan-cricket/>

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Another big name was Abdul Hafeez Kardar who had a numerous contribution to Pakistani cricket not only as a cricketer but also as a visionary bureaucrat. After retiring from international cricket as a cricketer he also made a distinguished career as a bureaucrat with considerable cricket experience and stronger resilience. He was the president of the BCCP in 1972-73. He played a significant role in the reorganization of the domestic cricket in Pakistan by involving leading companies like Habib Bank and Pakistan International Airlines as sponsors. He felt the need of providing strong financial support to Pakistan cricket. His innovative ideas led to the establishment of 'Cricket House' in Lahore, whose revenues would give a sounder financial base to the BCCP. He advocated the introduction of neutral umpires and limitation of bouncers in the game. He also questioned the power centrism of the veto system in the hands of England and Australia. Under Kardar, Lahore's Gaddafi stadium was turned into the headquarters of cricket.¹²⁵

Arif Abbasi former PCB chief was also one of the leading administrators who has brought the Pakistan Cricket Board in line with modern times. His role was crucial to ensure financial revolution in Pakistan cricket. When cricket was run previously through the support of government patronage during Kardar's time, Abbasi with his administrative farsightedness sought to exploit the private capital to transform the financial base of Pakistan cricket by improving its financial operations. According to Munir Hussain, the urdu commentator, "All sponsorship deals have his signature".¹²⁶ Abbasi became the honorary member of MCC for his devotion to cricket. He was the man of caliber who brought the 1996 World Cup in Pakistan for the first time. Recollecting his memory about this incredible achievement, Abbasi remarked:

¹²⁵ Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.52

¹²⁶ Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.56

They wanted to shift matches away from Karachi in view of the difficulties. But I was determined to hold matches there, no matter how challenging. It was an important signal to give. Holding cricket matches was an important part of resuming normalcy in Karachi. Despite all the obstacles we succeeded and Pakistan carried off the World Cup reasonably well. There were glitches and problems occasionally off political patronage but we pulled it off under very difficult circumstances. I was particularly proud of the fact that we managed to hold matches in strife-torn Karachi and a final under floodlights in Lahore. I keep telling my administrator colleagues from countries such as England and Australia that they should try and organize such tournaments under conditions of electric power cuts and civil wars! They have grown to appreciate our efforts and much of the media, international and domestic, was very supportive of our efforts in both 1987 and 1996.¹²⁷

Malik Nur Khan Awan, the former Air Marshal and the chief of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and the former Chairman of the Pakistan International Airline (PIA) also had numerous contributions to the domain of sports like hockey, cricket or squash in Pakistan. His dynamic personality and management skills as an effective administrator has transformed the face of Pakistan cricket. Nur Khan with his visionary zeal played a significant role in providing Pakistan the stage to leave a footmark in the international management of cricket. Nur became the President of Board of Control of Cricket in Pakistan (BCCP; presently known as Pakistan Cricket Board) and headed from 1980-1984. He is known for his remarkable achievement in bringing the 1987 World Cup in the subcontinent for the first time outside England.¹²⁸ He also played a pivotal role to set the stage for Asian Cricket Conference, a key moment for the rise

¹²⁷ Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.56

¹²⁸ Mathur, A. (Dec 21, 2014). The World Cup Leaves England. *ESPNcricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/amrit-mathur-on-the-1987-world-cup-the-world-cup-leaves-england-812593> (Accessed on: May 17, 2021)

of Asian block in the world of cricket¹²⁹. He was a man of high caliber and cricketing intellect. He had an active involvement in reforming the Pakistan team with commanding leadership. He was the key administrative figure who strongly backed the appointment of the younger players like Miandad and Imran Khan as captains. It was the unsettled time when Pakistan faced a humiliating loss in India under Asif Iqbal's leadership and thus, the team was in need of firm leadership. Most importantly, he was the mastermind behind the introduction of neutral umpiring for the sake of greater transparency and integrity of the game. His long awaited dream turned into reality when the Pakistani legendary cricketer Imran Khan pursued his vision by inviting Indian professional umpires V K Ramaswamy and Pilo Reporter to ref the match in the Test against West Indies in Lahore in 1986.¹³⁰ This unilateral step to use overseas umpires in the home series seemed to have profound influence upon international cricket which has enhanced Pakistan's international standing about the game. This idea was furthered in 1989 John Hampshire and John Holder from England was called for officiating the home series against India in 1989-90¹³¹. These steps enabled ICC to bring professionalism and the spirit of fairness in the game and to rule out the possibilities of unfairness and fractious matters concerning umpiring in international cricket. His visionary outlook can be traced in his statement during his visit to Lord for the International Cricket Conference:

I could not understand why this game was run on such an amateur basis. Its international management was way behind other professional sports. Some rather incompetent and second-rate people at Lord's were in charge of the

¹²⁹ Samiuddin, O. (Dec 18, 2011) Nur Khan: A Man who expanded the sport's boundaries. *The National*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenationalnews.com/nur-khan-a-man-who-expanded-the-sport-s-boundaries-1.590689> (Accessed on: May 20, 2021)

¹³⁰ Mukherjee, A. (Sep 23, 2016). Pilo Reporter: Umpiring was fun for me. *Cricket Country*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricketcountry.com/articles/pilo-reporter-umpiring-was-fun-for-me-241104> (Accessed on: August 5, 2020)

¹³¹ 'You must win fair and square': How PM Imran Khan introduced neutral umpiring in cricket (Nov 9, 2020). *The News*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/741306-you-must-win-matches-with-fairness-how-pm-imran-khan-changed-the-face-of-cricket> (Accessed on: July 10, 2021)

*sport. I raised the issue of why the game did not have neutral umpires, which was the case in all major field sports. I got evasive and unsatisfactory answers, which confirmed my poor opinion of the international administrators.*¹³²

Fifth, History of cricket in Pakistan also tells that radio commentary also had a large role to spread the game amongst the masses. Omar Kureishi was widely known as a distinguished cricket columnist and commentator who began his career in Radio Pakistan in 1950s and 1960s.¹³³ He also joined as a news editor in the newspaper The Pakistan Standard.¹³⁴ He became famous for his art of commentary whose mesmerizing ball by ball analysis has brought Pakistanis closer to the game. He popularised the name of Hanif Muhammad as “Little Master” and made the name familiar to the fans. He had been a regular voice in the commentary box during Pakistan’s early tours to England along with Jamsheed Marker. Omar was called as ‘the Voice of Asian Sport’¹³⁵ for his significant contribution to popularize cricket not only in Pakistan but also in the subcontinent. Jamsheed Marker was also a renowned and extremely knowledgeable commentator on the airwaves in Pakistan who brought class to the game. Marker, who came from a progressive Parsi family of Karachi, became a strong voice in English-Language commentary and became famous in Radio Pakistan partnering Kureishi.¹³⁶ He began his career in the broadcasting world from Bagh-e-Jinnah. Describing legendary cricketer Hanif Mohammad’s outstanding cricketing skills, he once magnificently remarked,

¹³² Noman, O. (1998). *Pride and Passion: An Exhilarating Half Century of Cricket in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, pp. 53-54

¹³³ Omar Kureishi’s voice lives on in many a heart (March 13, 2011). *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/612997/omar-kureishis-voice-lives-on-in-many-a-heart> (Accessed on: August 17, 2020)

¹³⁴ Faridi, S. (Dec 20, 2020). Doyen of cricket commentary and a man for all seasons. *The News*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/761140-doyen-of-cricket-commentary-and-a-man-for-all-seasons> (Accessed on: August 15, 2021)

¹³⁵ Omar Kureishi’s voice lives on in many a heart (March 13, 2011). *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/612997/omar-kureishis-voice-lives-on-in-many-a-heart> (Accessed on: August 25, 2021)

¹³⁶ Qureshi, A. A. (July 1, 2018). Well played Mr. Marker. *The News*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/565809-well-played-mr-marker> (Accessed on: March 2, 2020)

“Since lunch the only thing to unsettle Hanif is the pigeon flying perilously close to his cap”.¹³⁷ Iftikar Ahmed and Chisty Mujahid were other big names in the commentary box who was well known for their thrilling style of commentary. Ahmed was the first cricket commentator whose voice was linked with Richie Benaud, Tony Greig and other distinguished commentators on Australia’s Channel 9 during Pakistan’s tour of Australia in 1981. Another name whose name must be recognised as the legend of Urdu cricket commentary was Munir Hussain.¹³⁸ He was also the President of Karachi City Cricket Association (KCCA). He had a fan following of his own from early 1970s who brought cricket to the masses in their native language. He was the first to introduce Urdu in the cricket commentary. His sensational commentary during the World Cups between 1975 and 2003 has paved the way for the increasing popularity of the game in Pakistan. He was also the founder of the first Urdu cricket magazine called Akhbar-e-Watan.¹³⁹ He was conferred with the prestigious Best Urdu Commentator of the Decade Award (1985-1995) from PTV, the ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ from the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and the PCB’s World Cup Legend Award presented on the 10th anniversary of Pakistan’s victory in the World Cup in 1992. According to Nzam Sethi, the former chairman of PCB, “He was an informed, easygoing and affordable personality”.¹⁴⁰ Mujahid, Ahmed and Munir had great contributions to the popularity of cricket from generations after generations.

¹³⁷ Qureshi, A. A. (July 1, 2018). Well played Mr. Marker. *The News*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/565809-well-played-mr-marker> (Accessed on: March 2, 2020)

¹³⁸ Paracha, N. F. (August 28, 2014). Calling on the game: History of cricket commentary in Pakistan. Dawn. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1128357> (Accessed on: March 5, 2020)

¹³⁹ Farooq, U. (July 29, 2013). Urdu Commentator Munir Hussain dies. ESPNcricinfo. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/urdu-commentator-munir-hussain-dies-at-83-656237> (Accessed on: July 15, 2020)

¹⁴⁰ Farooq, U. (July 29, 2013). Urdu Commentator Munir Hussain dies. ESPNcricinfo. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/urdu-commentator-munir-hussain-dies-at-83-656237> (Accessed on: July 15, 2020)

Their fame reached its peak during the coverage of Sharjah Cup in the mid-80s which continued to endear many fans in the subcontinent.

TOXIC NATIONALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA-PAKISTAN CRICKETING RIVALRY: A GAME OF MEASURING NATIONAL LOYALTY.

Following the above discussion which analysed how cricket turned into a national obsession both in India and Pakistan, it is imperative to put a spotlight on the fact that cricket is deeply infused with the dilemmas of the subcontinent being triggered by the troubled political history of partition. As portrayed by William Dalrymple, “The polarization of Hindus and Muslims occurred during just a couple of decades of the twentieth century, but by the middle of the century it was so complete that many on both sides believed that it was impossible for adherents of the two religions to live together peacefully.”¹⁴¹ Following the painful memory of India-Pakistan geographical division which coexisted with terrifying outbreak of mutual genocide; with Hindu and Sikh on the one side and Muslim on the other, the immediate priority of both the newly independent nations was to accommodate the post-partition refugees and to overcome the religious tensions involving Hindu-Muslim identity conflicts which seemed to be the major hindrances in their national unification process. For Ayesha Jalal, this historical event is “A defining moment that is neither beginning nor end, partition continues to influence how the peoples and states of postcolonial South Asia envisages their past, present and future”.¹⁴² The colossal waves of migration and mass casualties which had displaced around 14 million people, with majority of Muslims fleeing to Pakistan and Hindus to the opposite direction, is still haunting India and Pakistan and their relations. Hence, the bloody legacy of

¹⁴¹ Dalrymple, W. (June 22, 2015). The Great Divide: The violent Legacy of Partition. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple> (Accessed on: September 18, 2020)

¹⁴² Jalal, A. (2013). *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, p.4

partition is still felt and continues to be the root cause of tensions between them. Further, the question of national identification of the minorities in Hindu dominated India or Muslim dominated Pakistan has always been a matter of great importance for both India and Pakistan. It has been the subject of national populist discourse post the partition. Religious minorities have persistently been stigmatised as anti-national elements in their societies. As a result, people belonging to minority religious community find themselves vulnerable to the majoritarian assertion of nationalism. This narrative of “otherization” of minorities caused by majoritarian extremism is very much dominant in India-Pakistan cricketing relations. For instance, Pakistan cricket team captain Shoaib Malik, brought a communal hue in the game when he publicly thanked Muslims all over the world after losing the T20 World Cup in 2007 against India. His gratuitous thanks to Muslims for supporting Pakistan cricket team seemed to have equally disapproved the existence of his own side’s Hindu leg-spinner, Danish Kaneria, which was a reflection of religious chauvinism and radicalisation of Pakistan cricket. Malik said “I want to thank everyone back home in Pakistan and Muslims all over the world. Thank you very much and I am sorry that we did not win, but we did give our 100 percent.”¹⁴³ His remark claiming the sole ownership of Muslim fans across the world was also an insult to the loyal Muslim citizens of India. The question of cricket historian Mukul Keshavan concerning this issue cannot be ignored in this regard: “Why would Shoaib think, then, that the Muslims of the world were collectively rooting for the Pakistan team or that they felt let down by its defeat? Did he stop to think of how Danish Kaneria, his Hindu team-mate, might feel hearing his Test skipper all but declare that Pakistan team is Muslim team that plays for the Muslims

¹⁴³ Kidwai, R. (Sep 26, 2007). When Sport does become a religion – Sorry Shoaib in global gaffe. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/when-sport-does-become-a-religion-sorry-shoaib-in-global-gaffe/cid/973199> (Accessed on: July 3, 2019)

of the world?”.¹⁴⁴ This incident is also a reminder of a similar context in 1978 when Pakistani cricketer Mustaq Mohammed treated the series win of Pakistan over India as a “victory of Muslims all over the world over the Hindus”¹⁴⁵. Shashi Tharoor tried to seek the motivation behind this “explicit evocations of religious mission”¹⁴⁶ in the backdrop of India-Pakistan cricketing clashes. He argues: “The basic challenge to ‘normal’ cricketing relations lies in the nature of partition, which carved a Muslim state out of India. In Pakistan, cricket is expected to bear a particularly heavy burden as the embodiment of national pride against the larger (and more powerful) neighbour from which it seceded...The instrumentalisation of cricket in the service of a militarised nationalism, especially against India, is a feature of Pakistan cricket.”¹⁴⁷ This trend remained persistent in the contemporary scenario which often turned the India-Pakistan sporting battle into a religious war. Recently, Pakistan Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid’s shocking statement in a video message on Twitter regarding Pakistan’s victory over India in the T20 World Cup, 2021 is also noteworthy in this consideration. Rashid in his message claimed that the win against India must be considered as the ‘victory of Islam’. His remark was nothing but a reflection of Islamicisation of cricket in Pakistan. Congratulating his team’s 10 wickets for a comfortable win, he said: “For us, it was the World Cup final. It is a victory for all those who follow Islam in the world. Congratulations. Pakistan Zindabad, Islam Zindabad”. “The emotions of All Muslims including the Muslims of India were with the Pakistani team. Congratulations to all who follow Islam. Pakistan Zindabad, Islam

¹⁴⁴ Don’t mix cricket with religion, urge fans. (Sep 25, 2007). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/dont-mix-cricket-with-religion-urge-fans/articleshow/2402726.cms> (Accessed on: March 2, 2020)

¹⁴⁵ Mishra, J. (August 6, 2020). Boycotting Pakistan in sports didn’t alter its state behaviour. India can try policy shift. *The Print*. Retrieved from <https://theprint.in/opinion/boycotting-pakistan-in-sports-didnt-alter-its-state-behaviour-india-can-try-policy-shift/476290/> (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

¹⁴⁶ Tharoor, S. (2017). Cricket’s burden of diplomacy. In S. Menon (ed., 5th edition) *Wisden India Almanack*. (EPUB version). New Delhi: Bloomsbury, p. 64

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Zindabad”¹⁴⁸. These above-mentioned incidents showcased how partition wound has impacted the cricketing relations between India and Pakistan and revives the crisis of minority identity in the postcolonial societies of the sub-continent. In this regard, Salim Parvez believes that Pakistan could have done better than what they have done to promote both diversity and inclusivity in Pakistan cricket. However, looking back at the history, there are no glaring example to say that a non-Muslim player was dropped only because of his religion.¹⁴⁹ Following this context, it is further important to note that the ground of cricket has repeatedly been used in harbouring allegiance to the nation. Following this issue, the famous “Tebbit Test”, a controversial term uttered by the British Conservative politician and the member of House of Lords in 1990, can be taken into consideration. Tebbit coined this controversial cricket Test in the background of measuring the loyalty of South Asian and Caribbean immigrants to Great Britain where they grew up or living in. The point is to clarify the allegiance of the immigrants to the Britishness and their degree of assimilation in the British society. He meant to say that these ethnic minorities cannot be British until they show their support to England team rather than their native teams at cricket. Tebbit, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, commented: “A large proportion of Britain’s Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It’s an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you come from or where you are?”¹⁵⁰ This issue is equally relevant in the sub continental scenario. Cricket matches have often been considered as the litmus test for the minority players as well as for the citizens in both India and Pakistan in which they are asked

¹⁴⁸ Ahmed, S. R. (Oct 24, 2021). For us, it was World Cup final. It is a victory for all those who follow Islam in the world. Congratulations. Pakistan Zindabad, Islam Zindabad...[Tweet Post], Twitter
https://twitter.com/ShkhRasheed/status/1452326637664706560?t=jjUYyYLCvvWFScFdO_dhSg&s=08 (Accessed on: August 10, 2022)

¹⁴⁹ Personal Interview with Parvez, S. (Dated March 7, 2022) [Personal communication, Telephone]

¹⁵⁰ Howe, D. (July 3, 2006). Tebbits Loyalty test is dead. *New Statesman*. Retrieved from <http://www.newstatesman.com/200607030029> (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

to reassert their loyalty to their nation especially when India Pakistan cricket team faces each other. The high voltage India-Pakistan face-off often sets the scene for hyper nationalism cleaving their fans to what George Orwell called as “the lunatic habit of identifying with larger power units, and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige”.¹⁵¹ Cricketing hyper nationalism has become synonymous with the India-Pakistan rivalry where sports based loyalty has repeatedly been sought from the minority groups which exist outside the national mainstream to reinforce their assimilation and integration into the dominant national values or sentiments. In this case, supporting one’s national team and hating the rival teams safeguards the minorities from becoming the victim of national chauvinism and religious extremism. For instance, during the 1990s, Bal Thackeray, the most renowned Hindu extremist leader and founder of Shiv Shena, wanted to use India-Pakistan match as a parameter of proving Muslim’s loyalty towards India instead of being mere sympathizers of Pakistan: “It is the duty of Muslims to prove they are not Pakistani”. “I want them with tears in their eyes every time India loses to Pakistan”- He further added.¹⁵² It has also been witnessed that the underperformance of any player in this match led to the premature death of his career. They are publicly maligned, socially boycotted and often categorised as “anti-national” for tarnishing the country’s image against the neighboring rival. With this insight, Roshni Sengupta writes:

The symbolism of team sport being a simulated war of a kind tends to appropriate collective public imagination, providing the fundamentally explosive atmosphere with a bulwark – that of nationalism. A citizen’s loyalty to India (or Pakistan) comes to be measured by the visibility and vociferousness of support for the respective team. Muslims in Gujarat and elsewhere in India, for instance, have been summarily accused and stereotyped – as a monolithic

¹⁵¹ Menon, S. (March 18, 2016). Ind v Pak: No holds barred cricket. *Sportstar*. Retrieved from <https://sportstar.thehindu.com/t20-worldcup-2016/ind-v-pak-no-holds-barred-cricket/article17219803.ece> (Accessed on: March 20, 2019)

¹⁵² Astill, J. (2013). *The Great Tamasha: Cricket, Corruption and the Turbulent Rise of Modern India*. Bloomsbury USA (1st ed.) (EPUB version), p.186

*group devoid of internal fractures in terms of caste, sect, region, or occupation – of being ‘Pakistan supporters’, often culminating in communal violence.*¹⁵³

Abbas Ali Baig’s dramatic end of career from international cricket can be brought in focus in this context. Abbas Ali Baig, once the prince charming cricketer in the 1960s and 1970s, also faced religious hatred for being unsuccessful against the arch rival Pakistan. The Oxford undergraduate made the headline by becoming the youngest centurion for India on his debut in Test cricket at Old Trafford in 1959. In this time, Indian cricket was not the strongest team in the world. When the touring Indian team in England was in need of a saviour, the British press was vocal for the inclusion of Baig in the Indian team; “Don’t be vague, ask for Baig”¹⁵⁴ for his outstanding Oxford record (he had scored 221 not out and 87 in a match) which ensured his dream debut as a replacement for the injured Vijay Manjrekar.¹⁵⁵ He also made his mark by credibly playing well, adding 50 and 58 for his side in the third Test in Bombay Brabourne stadium against the powerful Australia under Richie Benaud in 1959-60.¹⁵⁶ His impressive performance was rewarded by a kiss from a girl on an open field during the middle of the match. As statistics go, the classy right handed stroke player played 10 Tests and also scored 12,367 runs in first-class cricket. However, he remained as a tragic figure in Indian cricket as his promising career was believed to have shattered due to his poor performance in Pakistan Test managing to score 1, 13, 19 and 1 in four innings. As a result, he was also dropped in the subsequent series and played just two more. It was also said that he had received hate male

¹⁵³ Sengupta, R. (May 12, 2018). Game of Competing Loyalties: Sporting Nationalism and Nit Srinagar. *The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/article8585637.ece> (Accessed on: March 18, 2020)

¹⁵⁴ Tharoor, S. & Khan, S. (2009). *Shadows Across the Playing Field: 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, p.36

¹⁵⁵ Mukherjee, A. (June 15, 2016). Abbas Ali Baig: From Oxford University to a Test debut hundred at age 20. *Cricket Country*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricketcountry.com/articles/abbas-ali-baig-from-oxford-university-to-a-test-debut-hundred-at-age-20-24217> (Accessed on: August 12, 2021)

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

with a vicious charge that he, as a Muslim, poorly performed against the fellow Muslims proving his disloyalty to the nation. According to the portrayal of magazine *Current*, “Confidence was further shaken by a terrorist of poison pen letters, telephone calls and telegrams. He opted out of the Indian team after the Kolkata Test”.¹⁵⁷ As Sashi Tharoor observed: “The Indian team featured three Parsis, a Christian and a Sikh, but Baig was the only Muslim picked during the series, and he was dropped after the third Test. Many thoughtful Indians lamented the whisper campaign against him; but with Pakistan overtly identifying its cricketing fortunes with Islamic pride, the lot of a Muslim player on the other side, just thirteen years after partition, had become invidious indeed”¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, how India’s Mohammad Shami faced the outrages of Indian fans for poorly performing against Pakistan in recent Twenty20 World Cup 2021 and the way he was severely abused by derogatory and hateful comments and social media trolls for his religious identity and associating it with humiliating defeat to Pakistan is a clear reflection of senseless religious intolerance fuelled by India-Pakistan cricket. From politicians to past and present cricket greats came out in support of Shami, after the latter was targeted by vicious online abuse. In the same World Cup India took the knee in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. Expecting similar gesture from Team India speaking out loudly for their Muslim teammate, Omar Abdullah, a former chief minister of Kashmir, said on Twitter: “#MohammedShami was one of 11 player on the field. Team India your BLM knee taking counts for nothing if you can’t stand up for your team mate who is being horribly abused and trolled on social media”¹⁵⁹. Irfan Pathan also twitted condemning the

¹⁵⁷ Cited in Bose, M. (2011). *Conflicting Loyalties: nationalism and religion in India Pakistan cricket relations*. In A. Bateman & J. Hill (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion of Cricket*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, p.206

¹⁵⁸ Tharoor, S. & Khan, S. (2009). *Shadows Across the Playing Field: 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, p.37

¹⁵⁹ Abdullah, O. [@OmarAbdullah] (October 24, 2021). #MohammedShami was one of 11 player on the field. Team India your BLM knee taking counts for nothing if you can’t stand up for your team mate who is being horribly abused and trolled on social media. [Tweet] Twitter, <https://twitter.com/omarabdullah/status/1452514813960237063?lang=en>

online attacks faced by Shami: “Even I was part of #IndiavsPak battles on the field where we have lost but never been told to go Pakistan! I am talking about India of few years back. THIS CRAP NEEDS TO BE STOPPED”¹⁶⁰. Verender Sehwaḡ also took to twitter backing the pace bowler: “The online attack on Shami is shocking and we stand by him. He is a champion and Anyone who wears the Indian cap has India in their hearts far more than any online mob. With you Shami. Agle Match mein dikado jalwa”¹⁶¹. Similar kind of incident also occurred in Pakistan in the most recent year. Pakistani die-hard fan of Virat kohli, named Umar Draz, a tailor by profession, from the Okara district of Punjab province of Lahore was arrested on January 2016 by the Saddar police on a complaint that he had waved the Indian tri-colour flag on his rooftop as a tribute to the cricketer. He also covered all over his wall of the house with poster size photographs of his idol. It was the occasion when India clinched a victory over Australia in the playing series at the Adelaide Oval on the Republic Day. He was detained under section 16-Pakistan’s Maintenance of Public Order Act and section 123-A of Pakistan Penal Code. The section 123-A denotes the act of damaging the sovereignty of the country¹⁶². Expressing his unawareness of the committed crime, Draz said to the reporters: “I am a big fan

¹⁶⁰ Pathan, I [@IrfanPathan] (October 25, 2021). *Even I was part of #IndiavsPak battles on the field where we have lost but never been told to go Pakistan! I am talking about India of few years back. THIS CRAP NEEDS TO BE STOPPED.* [Tweet] Twitter, <https://twitter.com/IrfanPathan/status/1452578575433945095> (Accessed on July 10, 2022)

¹⁶¹ Sehwaḡ, V. [@virendersehwaḡ] (October 25, 2021). *The online attack on Shami is shocking and we stand by him. He is a champion and Anyone who wears the Indian cap has India in their hearts far more than any online mob. With you Shami. Agle Match mein dikado jalwa.* [Tweet] Twitter, <https://twitter.com/virendersehwaḡ/status/1452564093349494792?lang=en> (Accessed on July 15, 2022)

¹⁶² Nath, J. P. (May24, 2017). Virat Kohli Fan in Pakistan Gets 10 Years In Jail For Waving Indian Flag On Rooftop. *Indiatimes*. Retrieved from, <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/sports/virat-kohli-fan-in-pakistan-arrested-for-hoisting-indian-flag-on-his-rooftop-249897.html#:~:text=%22I%20am%20a%20big%20fan,cricketer%2C%22%20Draz%20told%20reporters.&text=Draz%20said%20he%20had%20no,urged%20authorities%20to%20pardon%20him> (Accessed on: July 10, 2020)

of Virat Kohli. I support the Indian team because of Kohli. Hoisting of Indian flag on the rooftop house only shows my love for the Indian cricketer”¹⁶³

CONCLUSION

Coming to the end of this chapter, it can be argued that undoubtedly cricket has acquired a central place in the popular culture of both India and Pakistan echoing the collective emotions of their society. Therefore, cricket has significantly shaped the national identity of India and Pakistan by promoting a symbolic identity of the nation in the post-colonial period. Today, both India and Pakistan are internationally acknowledged as the greatest force in the arena of world cricket. However, India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry often evokes toxic nationalism and religious fanaticism where sports based loyalty is considered as one of crucial parameters to prove national loyalty. It is for this very reason, the India-Pakistan rivalry has always been reviewed as more than a competitive match in which the support for national team has repeatedly been verified from the minorities to validate their moral and ideological allegiance to their national team. This phenomenon clearly reflects that although partition happened 75 years before but its wound has never healed.

¹⁶³ Nath, J. P. (May24, 2017). Virat Kohli Fan in Pakistan Gets 10 Years In Jail For Waving Indian Flag On Rooftop. *Indiatimes*. Retrieved from, <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/sports/virat-kohli-fan-in-pakistan-arrested-for-hoisting-indian-flag-on-his-rooftop-249897.html#:~:text=%22I%20am%20a%20big%20fan,cricketer%2C%22%20Draz%20told%20reporters.&text=Draz%20said%20he%20had%20no,urged%20authorities%20to%20pard on%20him> (Accessed on: July 10, 2020)

CHAPTER FIVE

INDIA-PAKISTAN RIVALRY AND THE ROLE OF CRICKET IN EASING TENSIONS AMIDST CONFLICT

If every cricket match between India and Pakistan can be played without a ring of machine guns and troops to keep the onlookers from rioting, then I feel the prestige attaching to the game is great - Walter Hammond¹.

INTRODUCTION

India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry has never been detached from the changing trajectories of India-Pakistan relations. The bloody division based on sectarian lines has split the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. But, within a few years of this tragedy, Indian and Pakistani cricketers showed their sporting brotherhood amidst the cloud of horrific partition. The cricketing friendship between the two countries just after the partition was well evident. For example, Lala Amarnath, had tremendous popularity in Pakistan during his playing days as he spent his childhood days and learnt cricket in Lahore. The Hindu youngster was a part of the Crescent Cricket Club (CCC) in Lahore. Whenever Amarnath toured Pakistan, his reception was extraordinary. He once said in an interview: “If I ever fought an election in Pakistan, I’d win! I am really proud of the great regard and respect the people there have for me”.² Further, Indian and Pakistani players jointly represented the Ceylon, India and Pakistan Combined XI in a

¹ Cited in Osborne, P. (2014). *Wounded Tiger: The History of Cricket in Pakistan*. London: Simon & Schuster, p.105

² Khan, A. Y. (2022). *Cricket in Pakistan, Nation, Identity, and Politics*: Karachi: Oxford University Press, p. 140

special Test match against the Commonwealth XI in 1950³ and 1951⁴ at the P. Saravanamuttu Stadium in Colombo. When cricketers from British Commonwealth countries toured India to play a series of first-class and unofficial Test matches in 1951⁵, the big name Pakistani stars like Fazal Mahmood, Imtiaz Ahmed, Khan Mohammed warmly accepted the invitation of the BCCI to play for the Prime Minister's XI against the Commonwealth team⁶. India also wholeheartedly welcomed the Pakistan national team in India on their debut tour in 1952. Waqar Hasan, a member of Pakistan's inaugural Test squad, recalled the memorable moments of the 1952 tour: "The partition of India in 1947 saw a lot of bloodshed, especially in my home province of Punjab, which was divided. We were apprehensive when the Pakistani team went to India in 1952-53. But as we crossed into India at Wagah by bus, we were given a rousing welcome by the Indian board officials. The warm hospitality continued in every Indian city. It seemed all the enmity of 1947 had fizzled out. Sports can do wonders where politicians can't deliver. The 1952-53 tour of India was my most memorable. Pakistan were very well received

³ Scorecard of the Test Match: Ceylon, India and Pakistan Combined XI v Commonwealth XI (1949/50). *CricketArchive*. Retrieved from <https://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/19/19196.html>. (Accessed on: February 5, 2020). Indian players played for the Combined XI: MH Mankad, DG Phadkar and Pakistani players played for the Combined XI: RN Dinshaw, Munawar Ali Khan.

⁴ Scorecard of the Test Match: Ceylon, India and Pakistan Combined XI v Commonwealth XI (1950/51). *CricketArchive*. Retrieved from <https://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/19/19643.html>. (Accessed on: July 19, 2021). Indian players played for the Combined XI: Imtiaz Ahmed, VS Hazare, CD Gopinath, SN Banerjee, Gul Mohammad and Pakistani players played for the Combined XI: Imtiaz Ahmed and Khan Mohammed. Gul Mohammad was one of the cricketers who represented both India and Pakistan. He represented India before migrating to Pakistan. He represented India against Pakistan in the first two Tests of Pakistan's first series in 1952-53.

⁵ The Cricket Association of Bengal (November 30-December 4, 2007). *War of the Willows: India-Pakistan at Eden Gardens, Official Souvenir*, p.29

⁶ Scorecard of the Tour Match: Prime Minister's XI v Commonwealth at Bombay, (3-6 Mar, 1951). *CricketArchive*. Retrieved from <https://cricketarchive.com/Archive/Scorecards/19/19648.html>. (Accessed on: March 12, 2020). Indian players played for the Prime Minister's XI: SN Modi, S Mushtaq Ali, VL Manjrekar, SN Banerjee, CS Nayudu, VM Merchant and Pakistani players played for the Prime Minister's XI: Fazal Mahmood, Khan Mohammad, Imtiaz Ahmed.

when they entered the Test area. Also, because I was the highest run scorer in the series.⁷ In his welcome note on Pakistan's tour to India in 1952, former President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad stated:

*Sports provide happy recreation for friendly contacts between people of different countries and help in the promotion of better understanding among the nations. I am, therefore, happy that the Pakistan Cricket Team is touring INDIA. I have no doubt that their tour would not only prove a great sport event but would also help in bringing Pakistanis and Indians into more intimate contact and friendly relations.*⁸

The statement of J. C. Mukherjee, President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India can also be mentioned to understand how graciously the Pakistan team was welcomed by India on that particular tour:

It is my pleasant duty to offer on behalf of the Board of Control for Cricket in India a hearty welcome to the Pakistani Cricket Team composed as it is of some very promising players. This is the first time that we are afforded the pleasure of receiving a Cricket team from Pakistan. Their Captain, Abdul Hafeez Kardar, is well known to us. We have no doubt that the gallant band of cricketers under his leadership will be able to endear itself by their performances and gentlemanly behaviour in the hearts of the sporting public in India. We are confident that everyone in India will extend to the Pakistan Cricketers a generous hospitality during their stay in this country. Promotion of good feelings and a sense of fellowship through sports between the two countries is a matter of great importance at the present juncture. Through cricket we can render invaluable service to both the countries. We offer to the Pakistan team

⁷ Chaudhry, I. (November 11, 2012). Pakistan's first tour of India was my most memorable. *The Cricket Monthly*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecricketmonthly.com/story/588831/-pakistan-s-first-tour-of-india-was-my-most-memorable> (Accessed on: January 10, 2018)

⁸ The Board of Control for Cricket in India (1952). *Official Souvenir of Pakistan Tour in India*.

*our cordial greetings and wish them an enjoyable stay in this country and also extend to them our hand of friendship.*⁹

The 1952 tour set the benchmark for India-Pakistan cricketing bonhomie. As Amarnath recalled:

*During the Test, the two teams were invited to the Rashtrapati Bhavan for a party. The players mingled and joked with each other, leaving the tension of the match behind at the ground. For a majority of the Pakistanis, it was a sort of homecoming, though officially they were in another country. But it did not matter, as most carried happy memories of India. The tourists utilised the tour to meet their old friends, cricketers and relatives who had stayed back in India. Smiles and tears were common to such reunions. "I could empathise with them and felt sad watching them dear ones".*¹⁰

India also toured Pakistan during the 1954-55 season. Despite the dullness of the first two Tests, huge crowd gathered at the Bagh-e-Jinnah ground in Lahore for the Third Test. Thousands of Indian spectators crossed the match to witness the match. Special trains were arranged and motor vehicles permits were issued for the spectators. According to the Tribune, it was surprising "to see the Mall Road and Anarkali Bazaar crowded with Indians and Pakistanis greeting each other with embraces, some with tears in their eye, reviving all memories of their days together".¹¹ The tour had a far reaching impact on the common people's mind of both sides of the border. It was a nostalgic trip for all the returnees who had got chance to revisit memories after a brief sojourn in their ancestral home. One blind man could not hold back his emotions when he found his former house which he had to leave facing the brunt of tragic partition.¹² The opening of bilateral negotiations and communication lines between the two neighbours at the beginning of the 1960s also encouraged the Pakistan tour of India 1960/61.

⁹ The Board of Control for Cricket in India (1952). *Official Souvenir of Pakistan Tour in India*

¹⁰ Amarnath, R. (2004). *The Making of a Legend: Lala Amarnath Life and Times*. New Delhi: Rupa, p. 190

¹¹ Cited in Osborne, P. (2014). *Wounded Tiger: The History of Cricket in Pakistan*. London: Simon & Schuster, pp.107-108

¹² Ibid. p.108

The series was started on a good note with a welcoming message from the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru:

*I am glad that the Pakistan Cricket team is coming to India on a tour of this country. They are a fine team and have distinguished themselves in the field of cricket. Their coming here is welcome, and I hope that the Test Matches in India will draw out the best of both teams in the true spirit of cricket.*¹³

The India-Pakistan cricketing bond in that series echoed in West Bengal's Chief Minister Bidhan Chandra Roy's welcoming statement for the visiting Pakistan team's 3rd Test match in Calcutta:

*International Sports provide happy occasions to foster the spirit of amity and goodwill and help in the promotion of better understanding among the nations. I am, therefore, glad to learn that the Pakistan Cricket Team is visiting Calcutta to play Third Test Match. I have no doubt that not only they will provide interesting Cricket to the lovers of the game who will flock in their thousands but will also help in bringing Pakistan and India into more intimate contact and friendly relations.*¹⁴

The heartwarming message of M. A. Chidambaram, the former President of the BCCI, on the arrival of the Pakistan team is also noteworthy:

The Pakistani Cricketers are now amidst us and we have already seen at Bombay and Poona, the evidence of their great popularity in our country... I am confident, before they return home, they would have won the hearts of all cricket loving public in the country, for, they are such a fine band of cricketers. Calcutta has always been a very fine Test Centre and almost all the Test Matches played there have been exciting. The public in Calcutta, I am sure, can look forward to a very interesting match.

¹³ The Board of Control for Cricket in India. (1960-61). *Official Souvenir of Pakistan Cricket Tour of India.*

¹⁴ Cricket Association of Bengal (1960-61). *Official Souvenir of Third Test Match, India vs Pakistan.*

*I wish the Cricket Association of Bengal all success*¹⁵.

However, India-Pakistan relations were going through their worst phases during the 1960s and 1970s. The India-Pakistan war in 1965 over the unresolved Kashmir disputes dampened their bilateral relations. But, amidst the political catastrophe, Indian and Pakistani star players agreed to play together at lords for the Rest of the World XI against all-England XI in the Rothmans World Cricket Cup in 1965. Hanif Mohammed (Pakistan), and Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi (India) were seen in a single frame. The whole team of the Rest of the World XI sent a cable to the President of Pakistan and Prime Minister of India as a gesture of goodwill, urging them to resolve the longstanding disputes peacefully. The text of the cable needs a reproduction: “we world cricket team wish express deep regrets war between India Pakistan. Coming from different countries, backgrounds, races and religions, we find unity on cricket field by reaching for common objectives. Fervently hope both countries can meet and find amicable solution.”¹⁶ As Hanif recounts: “Text of the cable hit the headlines in the newspapers, radio and television the next day, and Pataudi and I were asked to sign the hotel register together, which we did”.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the stalemate between the two sides came to an end following the implementation of the famous Tashkent Declaration, a peace agreement between India and Pakistan signed on 10 January 1966 to resolve the India-Pakistan war of 1965.¹⁸ The Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri and the President of Pakistan Ayub Khan agreed to withdraw their armed personnel to restore normal relations between them. They had agreed to make efforts to encourage economic, trade and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Despite the negotiations between the two governments, there was a wide gap between the ministerial level

¹⁵ Cricket Association of Bengal (1960-61). *Official Souvenir of Third Test Match, India vs Pakistan*.

¹⁶ Mohammed, H. (2002). *Hanif Mohammed: Playing for Pakistan*. Karachi: Hamdard Press, p.147

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Tashkent Declaration, India-Pakistan (January 10, 1966). *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*. Retrieved from, <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5993/Tashkent+Declaration> (Accessed on: June 17, 2020)

agreement and public opinion on the Kashmir issue. A full-scale war between India and Pakistan in 1971 further widened the gulf between the two countries. Eventually, the Simla Agreement was signed between the government of India and Pakistan on July 2, 1972 “to put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations”.¹⁹ Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto agreed to take necessary measures to settle their difference by peaceful means. India-Pakistan relations were further improved since the mid-1970s when the dialogue process was revived by India and Pakistan, from the ministerial level. The India-Pakistan bilateral series was resumed in a spectacular manner after a 17 year-long-gap when the Indian team toured Pakistan in 1978. For Ajay Mankotia, “This was a momentous breakthrough in cricketing relations, given the fact that there was no contact for 16 years for various reasons, including the wars of 1965 and 1971. Not only did it create immense excitement in India and Pakistan, but the international press also evinced a keen interest”.²⁰ The former Pakistani Lt.-Gen. K. M. Azhar Khan expressed his hope about the positive outcome of the resumption of India-Pakistan cricketing ties after long years:

After a lapse of 17 years, the Indian and Pakistani Boards mutually agreed at a meeting held in Hyderabad on 25th August, 1978, to restart the regular exchange of visits between the teams of the two countries. This agreement, which is to the benefit of both India and Pakistan as a step in the right direction. The tremendous enthusiasm that was generated on both sides of the border during the India team’s visit to Pakistan in 1978 is ample proof of the correctness of this decisions.

¹⁹ Simla Agreement, India – Pakistan (July 2, 1972). *United Nations Peacemaker*. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IN%20PK_720702_Simla%20Agreement.pdf, p.1 (Accessed on: June 25, 2020)

²⁰ Mankotia, A. (June 16, 2017). Ahead of India Pakistan cricket final, remembering the historic 1979 Test series. *DailyO*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/india-pakistan-final-champions-trophy-1979-test-tour-17853> (Accessed on: January 15, 2021)

The enthralling cricket that was played during this series and the friendly atmosphere and the sporting spirit in which this series was conducted, augur well for the future of cricket in this subcontinent. Now the Pakistan national team is going to pay a return visit to India, for the first time after 19 years. I as a Chairman of the BCCI and a lover of this gentlemanly game, sincerely hope that the spirit displayed during the last series will continue during the coming visit. While I am confident that the coming Tests and other matches will be as closely contested as the last series was, I earnestly hope that the cordial and friendly atmosphere that was created during the Indian team's visit to Pakistan will prevail and nothing untoward will be done that could sour the atmosphere and jeopardize the future exchange of visits of not only the cricket teams but also teams of other games, between our two countries.

I sincerely hope and pray that the coming series will be a joy to watch for both the connoisseurs of cricket as well as the ordinary lovers of the game and nothing will be done to mar the occasion and pollute the friendly atmosphere. Only in the cordial atmosphere can the players of two sides, no matter how proficient, give out their very best to the everlasting enjoyment of other cricket fans.²¹

The India-Pakistan friendship also bloomed in the arena of cricket when Asif Iqbal, the legend of Pakistan cricket received a standing ovation in his farewell Test at the iconic Eden Garden in 1980. This historic moment was nothing but a manifestation of India-Pakistan friendship on the field which won the hearts of millions of Indian and Pakistani fans. Wisden India portrays the historic international match “as memorable as they come”.²² Former Ranji winning Bengal captain Sambaran Banerjee is on a nostalgic spree alluding to the mesmerising atmosphere of Indi-Pakistan harmony surrounding the Kolkata Test: “Ask Asif Iqbal. The kind of farewell that the Pakistan captain received at the end of the series-ending Test here in 1979, brought tears to his eyes. The former Pakistan Captain could not have asked for a better send-off from

²¹*The Hindu Souvenir*, Pakistan Tour of India (1979-80), p.13

²² Basu, A. (March 19, 2016). When Eden gave standing ovation to Pakistani great Asif Iqbal. *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1246504> (Accessed on: July 24, 2020)

Test cricket as the entire Eden rose to its feet to bid him adieu.”²³ Ashish Nandy also comments on this memorable match:

*Nowhere in the world could Asif Iqbal have got the emotional standing ovation he got on the last day of his last test from 85,000 cricket fans at Eden Gardens in Calcutta. It was particularly noticeable because Iqbal was the captain of Pakistan and India's cricket tests with Pakistan often denigrate into war-like rituals, given the relationship between the two countries. Certainly the farewell Iqbal got exceeded the ovation Don Bradman got on his exit in England in 1948 or Clive Lloyd on his in Australia in 1985. Again, I cannot imagine Sobers arousing in any other country the deep feelings of affection he aroused in India. He was very much a part of the pantheon of cricket in India.*²⁴

India-Pakistan cricketing bond showed further maturity when one single team was formed combining the players both from India and Pakistan to play a World Cup match against Sri Lanka in the 1996 edition. During that critical time, Sri Lanka was the most unstable nation due to a long-sustained civil war. It happened when Australia and West Indies refused to play in Sri Lanka in the league matches citing security reasons. However, a joint team was sent to Sri Lanka by the co-hosts India and Pakistan. The team was called Wills India and Pakistan XI. The combined team consisting of big names such as Saeed Anwar, Wasim Akram, Rashid Latif, Waqar Younis, Mohammad Azharuddin (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble, played a match at Premadasa Stadium in Sri Lanka to send a message to the world cricket fraternity that the island was a safe place for organizing such a big event. The most important part of the tournament was that two Asian giants, India and Pakistan, had not played any bilateral series since 1989-90 due to political constraints. They decided to play under one team which showcased the sheer cricketing credibility in strengthening south-south solidarity. This

²³ The Cricket Association of Bengal (November 30-December 4, 2007). *War of the Willows: India-Pakistan at Eden Gardens*, Kolkata, pp.36-37

²⁴ Nandy, A. (2000). *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.47-48

gesture from India and Pakistan truly proved “a rare moment of unqualified unity when all other political differences seemed sidelined – even at the level of governments”²⁵. This Goodwill Match was wholeheartedly welcomed by Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan fans were cheering for the South Asian harmony with banners like: ‘SRI LANKA WELCOMES THE GOLDEN SONS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN’; ‘THANKS INDIA AND PAKISTAN, FOR COMING TO SRI LANKA TO KEEP SOUTH ASIAN DIGNITY’.²⁶ As Intikhab Alam, the manager of this team, remarks:

*This is the first time that India and Pakistan are playing as one team in its history. I sincerely hope with this match India and Pakistan will resume cricket ties. I hope it is the turning point. It was a tremendous sight to have both Indian and Pakistan cricketers get together at the airport. I don't think you can achieve any better goals than that. We are happy to be here and it is the least we can do for our countries.*²⁷

India-Pakistan cricket matches have also been used as a platform for resuming dialogues between the two conflicting nations when the official door of communication between them remained at stake. Cricket has played a positive role in helping the two countries to reduce differences between them. On this point, Shaharyar Khan, the ex-chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the manager of the Pakistan cricket team's tour to India in 1999, believes that cricket can truly be a binding force between the two countries. The euphoric support received by the Pakistani national team from the Indian spectators in that tour left an

²⁵ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of A British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, p.401

²⁶ Guha, R. (2014). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of A British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, p. 401

²⁷ Mukherjee, A. (Feb 13, 2016). World Cup 1996: India and Pakistan combine to beat Sri Lanka. *Cricknet Country*. Retrieved from <https://www.cricknetcountry.com/articles/world-cup-1996-india-and-pakistan-combine-to-beat-sri-lanka-261239> (Accessed on: August 10, 2019)

imprint on his heart. Reminiscing his experience about the memorable 1999 tour which marked the spirit of India-Pakistan friendship, Khan notes:

*I had not intended to publish my impression until the unexpectedly warm welcome by the people of India to the 'enemy' team. Their enthusiastic response planted the seed in my mind that cricket's vast untapped energy could be harnessed for understanding and tolerance...After a lifetime in diplomacy, attempting, mostly unsuccessfully, to overcome tension, hostility and conflict, I realized that cricket could act as a bridge of peace.*²⁸

On the other hand, it is also imperative to note that India-Pakistan relations have always been mired with complexity and instability due to strained civil-military relations and longstanding territorial disputes. A long timeline of mutual distrust and border skirmishes between these two nations have already sparked four wars in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 causing a huge number of casualties. The endless hostilities between the two countries also translated into their cricketing relationship. Cricket has consistently been the victim of simmering India-Pakistan tensions. Furthermore, cricket has been politicised as a weapon of the diplomatic boycott. When declaring war or economic sanctions can be counterproductive for any country's national interest, sports boycotts have often been considered as a significant tool for a country to convey a strong political message against its hostile opponents. It has been witnessed that India had taken the call of cricket boycott against Pakistan several times as a response to Pakistan's alleged role in harbouring terrorism which has rattled India's security and stability over the years. The India-Pakistan cricketing ties have been halted since the deadly Mumbai terror attack in 2008. India has accused the anti-Indian militant group, Lashkar-E-Taiba of masterminding this deadliest attack. In response, India boycotted a tour of Pakistan in 2009 to isolate Pakistan from the world cricket fraternity. Since then, Pakistani players were also barred from participating in the world famous league, the Indian Premier League (IPL). IPL 2008 was

²⁸ Khan, S. (2005). *Cricket: A Bridge for Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Preface, p. viii

the only season when Pakistani players had played in the league. Pakistani cricketers suffered a major setback for not getting a chance to be part of the next seasons of the money rich IPL as the political relations between the two countries turned sour. It can be recalled that Veteran Pakistani left-arm unorthodox fast bowler Sohail Tanvir, the “Purple Cup” winner in the league, played a major role to help Rajasthan Royals (RR) to lift the inaugural edition of the elite trophy. Despite proving his class his name was not featured in the next season. As Asif Iqbal, the former Pakistani national team captain uttered: “I know that as far as cricket is concerned, the reticence towards creating bilateral ties and exchanges has always been from the Indian, never from the Pakistani side. If security is a concern there are some other sides that have played in Pakistan recently, although some have not, but Pakistan has always said that it would be happy to host India at a neutral venue. That has not been acceptable to India; Pakistani players are not allowed to play in the IPL and although India accuses Pakistan of terrorism and cites that as a reason for not having cricketing relations with Pakistan, these reservations do not seem to matter when it comes to an IPL event; also, the accusation sounds a bit hollow when India is the only country refusing to play Pakistan on these grounds, suggesting that it is the only country concerned about terrorism which is palpably laughable”.²⁹ Abdul Majid Bhatti, senior cricket analyst of Geo tv. Pakistan, also thinks that cricketing boycotts having political overtones will never help both India and Pakistan to come close. Rather, cricket can be an integrative platform through which conflicts between the two countries can be transformed into positive interaction and both teams can develop their respect for each other’s community breaking down all the barriers. He shared an anecdote recalling his memorable experience in Eden, India, back in 2008, while he was covering a high voltage IPL match between Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Delhi Daredevils. According to his description, former Pakistan fast-bowler Shoiab Akhtar, popularly known as Rawalpindi Express, was the

²⁹ Personal Interview with Iqbal, A. (Dated: November 21, 2021) [Personal Communication, EMAIL]

centre of attraction of that match. Akhtar became a nightmare for Daredevils as he took 4 wickets with his blistering spell for KKR on his debut in the inaugural edition of the IPL. Bhatti was overwhelmed to experience the dramatic atmosphere of the stadium when the Indian crowd were cheering for a Pakistani cricketer: “It was amazing to see how Indian fans were supporting a Pakistani cricketer. They were cheering loudly for Shoiab for single-handedly destroying the opponent. The passionate fans made us feel at home. This memory was nothing but a universal aura of cricket which knows no political boundaries. I strongly feel that the suspension of cricket tour will never be helpful for India-Pakistan friendship”, he emphasised.³⁰ Furthermore, in the wake of the Pulwama attack, in India, several Indian cricketers have raised their voices in favour of boycotting Pakistan in the T20 World Cup in 2019. On this point, Jitendra Nath Mishra’s observation is mention-worthy:

Diplomatic boycotts target governments and the policy community, but sport reaches the wider citizenry. Sporting bans deprive millions of the joy of sport. It is doubtful that Pakistanis will re-think India just because they can’t watch their stars perform against Indian rivals. Rather, boycotts might further vitiate opinion. If “no talks with terror” can be tweaked in search of reconciliation, the same would hold for “no sport with terror”. A policy shift could be an option, even if it has only a slim chance of success.³¹

Following this backdrop, this chapter attempts to explore a few issues. First, it strives to understand whether cricket played any significant role as a diplomatic instrument amidst the background of India-Pakistan’s decades-long troubled history which often made the jubilations of India-Pakistan cricketing friendship short-lived. In the next section, my study also

³⁰ Personal Interview with Bhatti, A. M. (Dated: 20th September, 2019) [Personal Communication, Telephone]

³¹ Mishra, J. N. (August 4, 2020). Sports as Diplomacy in India-Pakistan ties. *Observer Research Foundation*. Retrieved from <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sport-as-diplomacy-in-india-pakistan-ties/> (Accessed on: October 18, 21)

endeavours to know how the mediatization of India-Pakistan cricket has shaped the public opinion of the two countries, positive or negatively influencing their bilateral relations.

ROCKY INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS AND CRICKET.

The India-Pakistan cricketing encounter remains as one of the most intense sporting battles in the world. The on-field duel has always been judged as a proxy for war as huge mass sentiment and nationalistic pride attached to this match. The lovey-dovey rivalry between India and Pakistan breeds a certain level of collective consensus and a feeling of in-group togetherness among the general public of the both nations while extending support to their national teams. The nationalist manifestation centering around this match occasionally provoked post-match violence by dividing the rival fan groups into a constant conflict of “us vs them”. India-Pakistan matches have often generated unwarranted heat before, after and during the match which often induces a situation called “war minus shooting”. According to Souvik Naha, it has always been observed that this fighting spirit works much more in India-Pakistan matches compared to other games. In fact, the tragedy of partition has not liberated the two countries even today. Their political conflict has spilled over into cricket field. On one hand, just as a victory against India satisfies Pakistan’s aggressive sense of nationalism, a loss against Pakistan is national humiliation to an Indian. Hence, the playground also sometimes plays the drums of war, exposing the people of the two countries to a constant ‘us’ vs ‘them’ conflict.³² Arjun Appadurai further notes, “cricket matches between India and Pakistan are thinly disguised national wars. Cricket is not so much a release valve for popular hostility between the two populations as it is a complex arena for re-enacting the curious mixture of animosity and fraternity that characteristics the relations between these two-previously united nation states”.³³

³² Personal Interview with Naha, S. (Dated: June 8, 2022) [Personal Communication, Telephone]

³³ Appadurai, A. (2015). “Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket”. *Altre Modernita*, (14), P.19. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/5911056.pdf> (Accessed on: July 5, 2020)

A sports writer tried to trace the intensity of India-Pakistan rivalry where every win is considered a national achievement and every loss a national loss: “In both countries a special stigma is attached to failure against the sub-continental rival, while success is doubly rewarded. In the eyes of more ardent cricket nationalists, the inescapable vagaries of luck and form are always suspect. On either side of the border, there’s a tendency to respond to defeat with allegations of betrayal”.³⁴ Cricket has always been affected by the strained political relations between two conflicting sides. Consequently, the India-Pakistan bilateral series have often been forced to be called off due to their tense political relations. On this point, a sports commentator’s observation is noteworthy.

*Today Indo-Pak cricket offers a striking case study to see how a political conflict between two states has trickled down to the mass level and saturated the mass psyche to such an extent, that political hostilities are not only played on the Line of Control but also on the cricket field. This mass psyche of a purported nationalist conflict has been also revived by years of state propaganda against the enemy country, which permeated in all forms of interaction and exchange with the enemy – be it sports or war.*³⁵

When Pakistan toured India for the first time in 1952 the tournament started on a good note with its inaugural match in Delhi. But N. B. Khare, the president of the right wing Hindu Mahasabha decided to lodge protest outside the stadium in Nagpur against the rationale of inviting Pakistan to visit India. Dr Khare, commented: “Pakistan is intent upon ousting her unwanted population by the method of intimidation, which includes outrages on womanhood. It is deplorable that at this identical period India has invited [the] Pakistan cricket team here...I regard this action as an ignoble one devoid of any sense of honour and self-respect and an index

³⁴ Marqusee, M. (March 10, 2004). War Minus the Shooting. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/mar/10/india.pakistan?CMP=gu_com (Accessed on: August 10, 2019)

³⁵ Reddy, M. (February 28, 2004). Pakistan has a lot to gain. *The Sportstar*, p.19

of the depth of our moral and national degradation”.³⁶ Nonetheless, Khare’s protest for boycotting Pakistani cricketers was condemned by M. D. Tumpaliwar, Secretary of Nagpur Pradesh Congress Committee who sent a letter to the city’s leading newspaper, Hitavada:

Sir – ‘Boycott of Pak team’ is the slogan visible on the roads of Nagpur since the last two or three days. This propaganda is popped up definitely by blind fanaticism. It is a systematic attempt to exploit and misguide the religious feelings of the people. When necessary, we shall not prove short of fighting with Pakistan on the battlefield. But it is certainly detrimental to the interest of the nation to disturb peaceful civic life evoking hatred of Pakistan day in and day out and cause deviation from reconstruction work.

Today’s world is marching towards unity. Schemes of World Government are being deliberated upon. Political enmity existing between one country and the other should not be allowed to dabble in other fields.

*I am confident people will not be misled by such communal propaganda asking for a boycott of Pak team. Sportive spirit should alone be allowed to prevail in the field of sports.*³⁷

Furthermore, Shiv Shena, the right wing Hindu extremist party has staged multiple protests against the India-Pak cricket meetings, terming them as “anti-national” activities. For instance, this radical Hindu outfit from Maharashtra has vandalised the pitch of Wankhede stadium in Mumbai in 1991 to stop Pakistani players to play the series on Indian soil³⁸. Another displeasing situation had cropped up when Shiv Shena threatened to sabotage a cricket match with Pakistan in the Hero Cup in 1993 as a result of which Pakistan had withdrawn the decision to visit India due to security fear. The proposed Pakistan tour in India was also cancelled on account of rising

³⁶ Guha, R. (2014) *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of A British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, pp.374-375

³⁷ Ibid. pp.375-376

³⁸ India insist Pak tour on as Hindu militants dig up pitch (January 7, 1999). *ESPNcricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/india-insist-pak-tour-on-as-hindu-militants-dig-up-pitch-80039> (Accessed on: April 5, 2021)

political protests. It was not long before when Babri Masjid, in Ayodhya, Uttarpradesh was demolished which flared up communal tensions across the country. However, Pakistan toured India during the 1996 World Cup and the Pepsi Independence Cup in 1997 amidst the atmosphere of security fears. Pakistan team toured India for Test series on Indian soil in the 1998-99 season after 12 long years. The Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee assured protection on the part of the Indian government. But, Pakistan cricket Chief Khalid Mohammad cautioned that the tour could be cancelled if adequate security was not guaranteed to the visiting team from India.³⁹ An embarrassing moment sprang up when Shiv Shena, who was in power in Maharashtra as well as a coalition partner with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government, wanted to flex their muscle by derailing India-Pakistan Test which was to be held in Mumbai in January 1999. It created disputes between two alliance partners over the hosting of the India-Pakistan match. Bal Thackeray vehemently opposed the decision of the then Deputy Chief Minister of the state, Gopinath Munde to guarantee the security for the forthcoming India-Pakistan match in Mumbai. Thackeray's response was very clear: "Staunch Hindus... should boycott the Pakistan team".⁴⁰ He further questioned the decision of allowing Pakistani cricketer in India "when thousands of innocent Hindus are being massacred in Jammu and Kashmir?"⁴¹ Eventually, the match was called off in the same venue. New tensions erupted dramatically just before the Kargil conflict when Shiv Shena dug up the pitch of the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium in Delhi in 1999 as a protest against Pakistan's cricket tour of India. Shiv Shena leaders praised this act as a sign of "true patriotism". Shiv Shena goons also threatened to leave

³⁹ India insist Pak tour on as Hindu militants dig up pitch (January 7, 1999). *ESPNcricinfo*. Retrieved from <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/india-insist-pak-tour-on-as-hindu-militants-dig-up-pitch-80039> (Accessed on: July 14, 2021)

⁴⁰ Swami, P. (December 5, 1998). On a sticky wicket. *Frontline*. Retrieved from <https://frontline.thehindu.com/other/article30248679.ece> (Accessed on: August 5, 2019)

⁴¹ Ibid.

snakes in the crowd.⁴² However the planned series was not scrapped. The first series was scheduled to be held in Chennai and the second was conducted in the Kotla ground. The India-Pakistan cricketing relationship was further shaken after the 2016 Pathankot airbase terror attack in India. Although India's Dharamsala was set to host the T20 World cup matches in 2016 but voices of dissent had emerged against staging the Pakistan match which was scheduled on March 19. Anti-match sentiments were heated up as local sentiments involved in it. They were strongly claiming for the suspension of the match in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh said: "I don't want to bring politics in cricket and was in favour of Indo-Pak cricket match but after the attack by terrorists at Pathanakot airbase, the situation has changed and I feel that much should not be held after killings our jawans in the terrorist attack"⁴³. Eventually, the match was moved from Dharamshala to Calcutta. No bilateral series took place between the two arch rivals since 2012/13. However, they faced each other in neutral venues. India-Pakistan cricketing relations suffered a further setback after Uri (2016) and Pulwama terror attack (2019) where insurgents were linked to Pakistan. After the dangerous Pulwama attack, members of the Indian cricket team wore camouflage caps against Australia in the 3rd ODI in Ranchi in 2019 as a tribute to CRPF and their families for their sacrifice. The team decided to donate the match fees to the National Defence Fund for the martyrs of the Pulwama attack.⁴⁴ The Indian team wearing army caps created controversy as their gesture was heavily criticised for showing military jingoism. Pakistan Cricket Board had strongly condemned this act and sent a letter to the ICC, demanding strict action against India

⁴² Guha, R. (2014) *A Corner of a Foreign Field: the Indian History of A British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, p.411

⁴³ Virbhadra for cancellation of T-20 World Cup match with Pak (Jan 24, 2016). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/shimla/virbhadra-for-cancellation-of-t-20-world-cup-match-with-pak/articleshow/50705418.cms> (Accessed on: May 15, 2018)

⁴⁴ Special Correspondent (March 8, 2019). Paying tribute – Team India style. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/sport/cricket/indian-team-wears-army-camouflage-caps-donates-match-fee-to-national-defence-fund/article26469124.ece> (Accessed on: July 3, 2020)

for wearing military caps.⁴⁵ Accusing India team's action of politicising the game, Pakistan Minister Fawad Chaudhry tweeted: "It's just not Cricket", I hope ICC take action for politicising Gentleman's game... if Indian Cricket team not be stopped, Pak cricket team should wear black bands to remind The World about Indian atrocities in Kashmir... I urge #PCB to lodge formal protest"⁴⁶. On this issue, Balil Majid states:

*The purpose of camouflage fatigues by the army across the world is to conceal their presence in any armed combat. However, the adornment of camouflage caps sponsored by Nike (US based multinational company making sports apparels and sports equipment) by Indian cricket team in the Ranchi ODI on 8 March 2019 against Australia was all about revealing: jingoism, hyper nationalism and bellicism which have clasped the whole nation since the Pulwama Attack. The choice of donning camouflage caps, as a tribute to the nation's armed forces in the Ranchi ODI, was recklessly about magnifying the ongoing nationalistic anger in the country.*⁴⁷

In 2019, the BCCI also drafted a letter to the ICC chairman in support of banning Pakistan from participating in the 2019 World Cup. Strong protests came from cricketers to journalists, who outrightly called for a boycott of the Pakistani clash in the World Cup 2019, showing national solidarity. As Ex-Indian bowler, Harbhajan Singh told the media: "India should not play Pakistan in the World Cup, India are powerful enough to win the World Cup without having to play Pakistan. This is a difficult time. The attack that has happened, it was unbelievable and

⁴⁵ Pakistan wants ICC action against India for wearing army caps (March 9, 2019). *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/sports/2019/3/9/pakistan-wants-icc-action-against-india-for-wearing-army-caps> (Accessed on: August 5, 2021)

⁴⁶ Chaudhry, F. [Ch Fawad Hussain@fawadchaudhry]. (March 8, 2019). *It's just not Cricket", I hope ICC take action for politicising Gentleman's game... if Indian Cricket team not be stopped, Pak cricket team should wear black bands to remind The World about Indian atrocities in Kashmir...I urge #PCB to lodge formal protest.*[Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/fawadchaudhry/status/1104028646979837952?lang=en> (Accessed on: July 18, 2021)

⁴⁷ Majid, B. (March 13, 2019). Concealing the spirit of cricket with jingoistic fervour: the Indian way. *Café Dissensus Everyday, Café Dissensus Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://cafedissensusblog.com/2019/03/13/concealing-the-spirit-of-cricket-with-jingoistic-fervour-the-indian-way/> (Accessed on: September 10, 2020)

it's very wrong. Strict action will surely be taken by the government. When it comes to cricket, I don't think we should have any relations within them otherwise they will keep treating us like this.”⁴⁸ Backing Harbhajan, former Indian skipper Azharuddin also said: “If we are not playing Pakistan in bilateral series, we should not play them anywhere. I agree with Harbhajan, the World Cup cannot be bigger than the country.”⁴⁹ Senior journalist Minhaz Merchant also tweeted: “I've been advocating a ban on sporting and cultural contacts with Pak which exploits them to propagate a false image of respectability. A Sporting boycott of South Africa helped end apartheid. This is just 1 of many arrows (from military to economic) in India's quiver to punish Pak”⁵⁰. Further, as a mark of protest against the heinous attack, Cricket Club of India (CCI), an affiliated unit of BCCI, had covered the portrait of former Pakistan captain and current Prime Minister Imran Khan on its restaurant haul. Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) also removed Pakistani cricketers' photos from its premises inside the Mohali stadium. PCA treasurer Ajay Tyagi told PTI that “As a humble step, the PCA has decided to show its solidarity with the families of martyrs of the Pulwama attack and PCA is no different in this.”⁵¹ In

⁴⁸ Gupta, V. (February 18, 2019). *India should not play Pakistan in 2019 Cricket World Cup: Harbhajan Singh*. *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/cricket/story/india-vs-pakistan-harbhajan-singh-2019-cricket-world-cup-pulwama-terror-attack-crpf-kashmir-1459104-2019-02-18> (Accessed on: October 15, 2021)

⁴⁹ Sharma, A. (February 20, 2019). Sourav Ganguly to Harbhajan to Azharuddin: Chorus to boycott India-Pakistan World Cup tie grows louder. *My Khel*. Retrieved from <https://www.mykhel.com/cricket/india-pakistan-world-cup-clash-who-said-what-as-clamour-boycotting-cricket-diplomacy-grows-110918.html> (Accessed on: July 16, 2021)

⁵⁰ Merchant, M. [@MinhazMerchant]. (February 20, 2019). *I've been advocating a ban on sporting and cultural contacts with Pak which exploits them to propagate a false image of respectability. A Sporting boycott of South Africa helped end apartheid. This is just 1 of many arrows (from military to economic) in India's quiver to punish Pak* [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/MinhazMerchant/status/1098158603020746752?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1098158603020746752%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mykhel.com%2Fcricket%2Findia-pakistan-world-cup-clash-who-said-what-as-clamour-boycotting-cricket-diplomacy-grows-110918.html (Accessed on: September 5, 2021)

⁵¹ After Pulwama attack, Pakistani cricketers' photos removed from Mohali (February 17, 2019). *Financial Express*. Retrieved from <https://www.financialexpress.com/sports/after-pulwama-attack-pakistani-cricketers-photos-removed-from-mohali-stadium/1490429/> (Accessed on: August 8, 2020)

addition, the Indian company IMG Reliance also pulled out of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) as producers of television coverage condemning the Pakistan based militant attack. In this regard, PCB managing director Wasim Khan expressed his dissatisfaction with IMG's decision to discontinue as the part of broadcasting production service for PSL. Khan said "Denying India cricket fans the right to follow PSL...as well as covering or removing portraits of former Pakistan cricket captain and Prime Minister Imran Khan and other legendary cricketers from one of the most historic cricket clubs and venues are highly regrettable actions"⁵². He further emphasised: "The PCB has also noted the recent turn of events and expresses its extreme disappointment as we have always believed and emphasised that sports and politics should be kept separate. History tells us that sports, particularly cricket, have always played a binding role in building bridges between people and countries"⁵³. Besides, D-Sports the official broadcaster of PSL in India- also scrapped the coverage of the PSL in the middle of the tournament pointing to the same reason. In response, Pakistan decided to stop broadcasting the Indian Premier League (IPL) in their country. Pakistan Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said: "India made an organized effort to harm cricket in Pakistan and it doesn't make sense for us to allow an Indian domestic tournament to be promoted here"⁵⁴.

However, the role of cricket as a political tool to enhance diplomatic relations and people-to-people exchanges also cannot be denied in the background of India-Pakistan relations. But, before digging deeper into the issue of India-Pakistan cricket diplomacy, my study tries to explain how sports solidifies the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), thereby contributing

⁵² Sports and Politics should be kept separate: PCB MD (February 18, 2019). *Business Standard*. Retrieved from https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/sports-and-politics-should-be-kept-separate-pcb-md-119021800397_1.html (Accessed on: August 10, 2021)

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Pakistan ban IPL broadcast, say India made an organized effort to harm cricket in country (April 3, 2019). *Cricket Today*. Retrieved from <https://crickettoday.com/cricket/pakistan-ban-ipl-broadcast-say-india-made-an-organized-effort-to-harm-cricket-in-country/> (Accessed on July 5, 2022)

to positive peace-building. After analyzing this point, my study dealt with the role of cricket as a diplomatic instrument in reducing hostilities and tensions between the two countries.

SPORTS AS A TOOL OF HEALING CONFLICT

Sports provides a unifying platform, having the “power to bring people together, bridge differences, and promote communication and understanding”.⁵⁵ Sports, if administered within a positive framework, can be channelised as a tool of reconciliation and integration in which the conflicting groups can come together towards common goals. UN deputy Secretary General Amina J Mohammed delineated the positive role of sports to assist sustained development objectives and a peaceful future for all: “Sport has the power to align our passion, energy and enthusiasm around a collective cause. And that is precisely when hope can be nurtured and trust can be regained. It is in our collective interest to harness the tremendous power of sport to help build a better and more sustainable future for all.”⁵⁶ In this background, the fact which cannot be disagreed is that sports has the unique aura to facilitate Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and people-to-people contact through multiple social networks. According to J. J. Holst “confidence is the product of much broader patterns of relations than those which relate to military security”.⁵⁷ On the other hand, CBMs can be perceived as a comprehensive and holistic process for assisting peace negotiations and mediation in a hostile environment. It can be understood as unilateral, bilateral or multilateral transformative measures, undertaken

⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly (2006). *Sport for Development and Peace: the way forward: report of the UN Secretary General*. New York: UN. Retrieved from <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/584882?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header> (Accessed on: September 15, 2020)

⁵⁶ United Nations (April 6, 2022). *The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace*, 6 April. New York: UN. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/observances/sport-day> (Accessed on: April 25, 2022)

⁵⁷ Holst, J. J. (1983). Confidence Building Measures: A Conceptual Framework. *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 25(1):14. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338308442072> (Accessed on: December 10, 2021)

by policymakers⁵⁸ which involve “a series of actions that are negotiated, agreed and implemented by the conflicting parties”.⁵⁹ It maximizes the level of transparency and trust between the conflicting groups to avoid the escalation of inter-state or intra-state conflicts.

Elaborating the importance of CBMs, Anam Iftikhar notes:

*Since his birth man has met with disagreement and each person, belief, culture, and state have experienced clash in one type or the other. Basically the assignment of quarrel resolution has been seen as help of those parties who recognize the problem then negotiate with rivals to lead the issue in the positive direction. Similarly building of trust and confidence mainly is a method which engages a basic move in decision maker’s ideals from a critical postulation of antagonistic intensions to each of non antagonistic intensions. It occupies a significant place in various track skill efforts of problem solution, because they aspire to minimize nervousness and antagonism by making the parties behavior more conventional. The only purpose behind CBMs is to generate an atmosphere that is favorable for the commencement of any peace process.*⁶⁰

In this sense, CBMs cannot be conceived as an end in itself, but as a well-coordinated and supportive process in order to restructure and re-humanize relationships between the participatory groups based on common goodwill and peace. Mason and Siegfried throw light on three objectives of CBMs; to prevent conflict, to initiate and deepen peace negotiations and

⁵⁸ Khalil, U. (2014). The Role of Confidence-Building Measures in the Pakistan-India Relationship. *Pakistan Horizon*, 67(1): 81-82. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23726078.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A502385608de5bd791dabd2034efc7bc8&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC (Accessed on: May 5, 2020)

⁵⁹ Mason, S. J.A & Siegfried, M. (2013). Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in Peace Process. In *Managing Peace Processes: Process related questions. A handbook for AU practitioners*, Volume 1, African Union and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, p.58. Retrieved from https://peacemediation.ch/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AU-Handbook_Confidence-Building-Measures-in-Peace-Processes.pdf (Accessed on: July 15, 2020)

⁶⁰ Iftikhar, A. (2017). Can cricket be used as a tool for ‘Peace Process between India and Pakistan’?. *Journal of Punjab University Historical Society*, 30 (2): 23. Retrieved from http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/HistoryPStudies/PDF_Files/3_V-30-No2-Dec17.pdf (Accessed on: August 15, 2018)

to consolidate the peace process and its outcome⁶¹. CBMs can be designed in an incremental way which includes military as well as non-military CBMs. Unlike military CBMs which are tailored to prevent military tensions through the enhancement of disarmament measures, non-military CBMs pay focus on a broader range of communication channels such as political, social, economic, environmental or cultural domains and thereby, involve various types of actors to repair the conflict cleavages. While the former is more or less security oriented which fosters greater dialogue and transparency by taking measures like cooperation in joint peacekeeping actions, bilateral or regional consideration on arms control, establishing demilitarised zones, creating communication hotlines and so on, the latter encourages greater actions beyond the military paradigm which focuses on an array of mediations or negotiations in the areas like human safety, cross border trade, joint management of water resource and forestry, sporting and cultural exchanges etc. In the case of non-military CBMs, non-state actors like sports bodies and sportspersons play a crucial role to improve relations and foster mutual understanding between different parties, be it in the case of inter-state relations or intra-state relations.

Sports, on many occasions, has undeniably proved to be a cost-effective and flexible deterrent in reducing tensions among the opposing groups across the nations, communities, religions or races who find it difficult to coexist peacefully. Sports can be a significant part of positive communication which provides a collective experience by building relationships among divisive groups where people can work together at the grassroots or community level and can learn the ingrained values of sports “such as teamwork, fairness, discipline, and respect for the

⁶¹ Mason, S. J.A & Siegfried, M. (2013). Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in Peace Process. In *Managing Peace Processes: Process related questions. A handbook for AU practitioners*, Volume 1, African Union and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Retrieved from https://peacemediation.ch/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AU-Handbook_Confidence-Building-Measures-in-Peace-Processes.pdf , pp. 59-61

opponent”.⁶² With massive popularity to reach all sections of society, sports offers an avenue for accommodating different nationalities and cultures. It often acts as a confidence building mechanism by providing a ground for positive interaction among different groups, be it international, inter-regional or inter-cultural to mitigate their mutual distrust and prevent further violence. The credibility of sports in terms of fostering peace has also been prioritised in the plan of action being adopted by the member states (General Assembly resolution 60/1) in the 2005 United Nations World Summit. Paragraph 145 of the resolution says: “We underline that sports can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding...”⁶³ However, in this context, it is imperative to note that sports can be divisive, sectarian and violent too. Sports often provokes inter-group conflicts among the competing camps involving disagreements and frictions on and off the field which may escalate to the outbreak of extreme violence. Thus, competitive sports by going out of control can also stir up feelings like hatred, fear or enmity due to its competitive and aggressive physical or psychological characteristics. According to H.E. Chehabi, “the idea of improving people-to-people relations through athletic competition seems somewhat counter intuitive, as international sports events more often than not crystallize nationalistic passions”.⁶⁴ Following this scenario, George Orwell finds international sporting contests as nothing but a “mimic warfare”.⁶⁵ He remarks:

⁶² Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations (March 28, 2019) *International Day of Sport for Development and Peace*. New York: UN. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2019/03/international-day-of-sport-for-development-and-peace-2019/> (Accessed on: April 10, 2020)

⁶³ United Nations, General Assembly (2005). *General Assembly World Summit Outcome Document A/RES/60/1*. p.31 Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf (Accessed on: January 5, 2018)

⁶⁴ Chehabi, H. E. (2001). Sport diplomacy between the United States and Iran. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 12(1):90. Retrieved from : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592290108406190> (Accessed on: July 17, 2019)

⁶⁵ ‘Sporting Spirit’, *Tribune*, 14th December 1945.

I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield. Even if one didn't know from concrete examples (the 1936 Olympic Games, for instance) that international sporting contests led to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles... There cannot be much doubt that the whole thing is bound up with the rise of nationalism – that is, with the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige.⁶⁶

However, it is also imperative to note that sports, if integrated with a broad-based holistic and well-calculated approach, can be turned into an influential medium of conflict resolution which can rebuild social networks and can heal the damaged inter-group relationship across contexts. In this sense, sports proves to be a central component of confidence building mechanism and peace building between hostile groups. In addition, it is important to remember that sports not only opens up horizontal communications between different individuals and institutions at the community level but also facilitates vertical communications by engaging the leaders and decision makers to advance the dialogue making process for the sake of stability, rapprochement or peace. Chehabi also claims that sporting contests “that are accompanied by mutual signalling of goodwill and friendly cheering spectators, a shift in attitudes can be inferred from that”.⁶⁷ In this regard, the integral connection between positive peace building and confidence building process also needs to be stressed. While ‘negative peace’ pertains to the mere absence of violence, ‘positive peace’ consciously involves a long-term broader range of activities through which the structure of positive interactions and communications can be restored to eliminate the root cause of war. Sports through a process of reconstruction,

⁶⁶ ‘Sporting Spirit’, *Tribune*, 14th December 1945.

⁶⁷ Chehabi, H. E. (2001). Sport diplomacy between the United States and Iran. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 12(1): 90

reconciliation, and resolution⁶⁸ can rebuild the ground of trust between antagonistic groups, thereby contributing to the broader peacebuilding building process. In other words, sports as a part of the confidence building process bolsters the goals of positive peace building. Sports further act as track II and track III diplomatic tool to boost CBMs going beyond the boundaries of officially sanctioned dialogues between two countries. Whereas Track II diplomacy creates the opportunity for the engagement of government officials in a private capacity, Track III widens the ground for people-to-people contacts.⁶⁹

Following this discussion about how sports consolidates the structure of positive peace and confidence building process in a hostile atmosphere, the next section seeks to explore how cricket has opened the door of Track II and Track III diplomacy between India and Pakistan when their political relations seemed at stake.

CRICKET AS A DIPLOMATIC MEANS IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Cricket as a national passion of both countries has frequently been maneuvered as a diplomatic tool between India and Pakistan indicating a positive change in approach by their governments.⁷⁰ If we look at the checkered history of cricket diplomacy, the phenomenon can be traced to 1987 when the then Pakistani President Zia Ul Haq, accompanied by a delegation

⁶⁸ Cardenas, A. (2013). Peace Building through Sport? An Introduction to Sport for Development and Peace. *Journal of Conflictology*, 4(1): 27-28 Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/SC/Downloads/Dialnet-PeaceBuildingThroughSportAnIntroductionToSportForD-5589711%20\(3\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/SC/Downloads/Dialnet-PeaceBuildingThroughSportAnIntroductionToSportForD-5589711%20(3).pdf) (Accessed on: August 2, 2019)

⁶⁹ Crick, E. (2005/6). *Can cricket be used as multi-track diplomacy in the context of Indo-Pakistani Relations? With particular reference to the period between 1999 and 2005*. (Unpublished MSc Dissertation in Development and Security, at Bristol University), pp. 19-20. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.467.7447&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (Accessed on: July 15, 2017)

⁷⁰ Chakraborty, R. (2018). Cricket, Diplomacy and Nationalism in South Asia. *Harvard International Review* 39(1): 36. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26617319> (Accessed on: February 15, 2022)

of 68 government officials, national players and their family members, came India to attend a test match between two sides in Jaipur's Swami Mansingh Stadium. His arrival on the pretext of a cricket match seemed to be an icebreaker between the two countries as it was that critical juncture when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, while Pakistan was allegedly financing and backing Afghan resistance forces and India was also under pressure to maintain an ally with the Soviet. The tensions between India and Pakistan further went high in November 1986 when the Indian Army went for a yearlong military exercise in Rajasthan near the Redcliff, called "Operation Brasstacks". This military operation on this large scale was bigger than any NATO exercise and looked like a threatening exhibition of Indian forces which led Pakistan to fear that India was planning to attack Pakistan. Besides, Pakistan as a front line state also had to deal with Soviet Russia's expansionism inside Afghanistan. So, in that critical moment, it was very difficult for them to afford a two front war. Thus, Pakistan was more inclined to pursue a diplomatic solution with India. However, as an immediate retaliation response it deployed its army reserves near the Punjab states.⁷¹ Consequently, Brasstacks had escalated the trust deficit between the two countries to a threshold of nuclear war which needed immediate diplomatic solution. In this highly tense atmosphere, Zia's visit to India for a cricket match seemed to be politically significant. This visit was proclaimed as a "cricket for peace initiative"⁷². However, according to Ramesh Bhandari, India's former foreign secretary, "There was no euphoria when Rajiv Gandhi and Zia met because people didn't trust Pakistan. They had heard so often that peace would arrive, but it always remained far away. There was a feeling

⁷¹ Bandyopadhyay, J. (2003). *The Making of India's Foreign Policy: Departments, Institutions, Processes and Personalities*. New Delhi: Allied, p.272. Also see Brasstack Crisis 1986-87, *History Pak*. Retrieved from <https://historypak.com/brasstack-crisis-1986-87/> (Accessed on: January 25, 2018)

⁷² Singh, R. (January 14, 2014). Peace is not a button which you can press and a light will come out: Zia-Ul-Haq. *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/indiascope/story/19870315-peace-is-not-a-button-which-you-can-press-and-a-light-will-come-on-zia-ul-haq-798629-1987-03-15> (Accessed on: August 3, 2019)

in India that many within the Pakistan armed forces wanted to take revenge for Bangladesh. So there was no hype”.⁷³ This unannounced and unofficial visit of General Zia was considered as politically significant because it paved the way for track II diplomacy when two nuclear foes were close to the brink, deploying a large number of forces across the borders. Zia met Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the airport. As reported by a reputed media, Behramman, the special adviser to Rajiv Gandhi, who was deputed to accompany Gen Zia has recalled what Zia had said to Gandhi while bidding goodbye before his departure for Chennai: “Mr Rajiv, you want to attack Pakistan, do it. But keep in mind that this world will forget Halaku Khan and Changez Khan and will remember only Ziaul Haq and Rajiv Gandhi, because this will not be a conventional war. In this situation, Pakistan might be completely destroyed, but Muslims will still be there in the world; but with the destruction of India, Hinduism will vanish from the face of this earth”⁷⁴. Behramman also recalled: “These were only a few minutes, but Gen Zia seemed to us a very dangerous man. With a stern-face, Gen Zia’s eyes showed that he meant business. I was astonished, that after this stern warning, in a flash, Gen Zia started smiling as if nothing happened and warmly shook hands with other hosts. Except Rajiv Gandhi and I myself, [nobody knew] that Gen Zia had created problems for the Indian PM by threatening him with nuclear war.”⁷⁵ This meeting led to further talks on the next day between Rajiv Gandhi and Gen Zia at the dinner where both countries had decided to withdraw 80,000 troops from each side⁷⁶. In this case, the platform of cricket was politically instrumentalised to de-escalate the flaring-up tensions between the two countries. Later, as a follow-up, India’s the then Finance

⁷³ Bhandari, R. (July 16, 2001). The Rediff Special: When Rajiv met Zia. *Rediff.com*. Retrieved from <https://m.rediff.com/news/2001/jul/16spec.htm> (Accessed on: September 5, 2019)

⁷⁴ Aziz, S. (Nov 15, 2015). A Leaf from History: Cricket diplomacy checks war pitch. *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1219397> (Accessed on: August 3, 2016)

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

minister, V. P. Singh also visited Pakistan to meet his counterpart, Mahbub-Ul-Haq for productive dialogue to maintain the rapprochement and stability between the two countries.

In the 1990s, both India and Pakistan faced each other on the cricket field. India clinched victories in the World Cup matches against Pakistan in 1992, 1996 and 1999. However, nuclear tests conducted by both India and Pakistan in 1998 dramatically heightened tensions about the possibility of a dangerous nuclear war in the South Asia region. The nuclear explosion by both belligerent countries had turned South Asia into a vicious nuclear hotspot. Both countries realised that it was the extreme need of the time to facilitate confidence-building measures in order to perpetuate a ceasefire between them. Further, the SAARC summit in Colombo (July 29-31, 1998) created an opportunity for both countries to resume the bilateral dialogue process and defuse tensions between them. Following the positive outcome of this summit which ultimately paved the way for bolstering mutual trust between India and Pakistan, a ray of hope sprung up when the two countries agreed to face each other to play bilateral series in India in 1999 which had been suspended for 10 years. This Test series at MA Chidambaram stadium, Chepauk, Chennai set the tone for repairing the rising mistrust between them. The tour had a significant impact on public opinion which turned out to be a major booster for India-Pakistan harmony in the arena of cricket. The cricket crazy fans heartily welcomed the visiting Pakistani team with banners like “Pak-Czech dosti Zindabad”. The biggest moment came when Pakistani cricketers received a standing ovation from the spontaneous crowd for their brilliant performance against India in the Chennai Test 1999. Pakistan won the series by 12 runs. Remarkably, it turned out to be a watershed event in the world of cricket which proved the potential of cricket to create an atmosphere of harmony and unity between confrontational opponents beyond the shadows of intense political clouds. Pakistan’s all-time legend Wasim

Akram picked up the Chennai Test as his favourite one.⁷⁷ Shaharyar Khan cherished the memory of this fantastic test as a classic example of the India-Pakistan fraternity which diminished the divisions of political boundaries:

Chennai was the most exciting Test Match I had ever witnessed. After a ding-dong contest Pakistan won by 12 runs when an hour earlier Sachin Tendulkar had brought India to the edge of victory. The Pakistan team was deliriously happy but despite the disappointment of losing, the Chennai crowd of about 20,000 stayed on in the stands to witness the post-match awards and applaud the winners. The team went on a victory round of the stadium and were given a standing ovation by the Chennai crowd. This was the turning point of the tour – an absorbing Test match fought out to the wire and the home crowd, sportingly and magnanimously, giving the victorious visitors a standing ovation! My son in Islamabad rang me in Chennai and remarked that while congratulations were in order the crowd response was unbelievable.⁷⁸

In the ODI match at Mohali, 10,000 Pakistani fans crossed to cheer their team. They were given a warm welcome by the Indian hosts on and off the field.⁷⁹ They were given discounts by shopkeepers, taxi drivers and hoteliers. A free film show was organised by the chief minister for Pakistani fans who shared a keen interest in Bollywood films. They were also invited to the dinner arranged by the Punjab government. As Shaharyar Khan recalled: “At the end of the game, which Pakistan won, there was no triumphant gloating from the Pakistanis but fans from both sides calling out for friendship between Pakistan and India. These images left a deep imprint on my mind and I drew experience when the Indian team visited Pakistan in 2004 after a gap of fifteen years”.⁸⁰ This 1999 tour of Pakistan came out to be a landmark event for paving

⁷⁷ Wasim Akram picks picks 99’ India tour as favourite. (June 16, 2020). *The Statesman*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestatesman.com/sports/wasim-akram-picks-99-india-tour-as-favourite-1502900476.html> (Accessed on: August 15, 2021)

⁷⁸ Tharoor, S & Khan, S. (2009) *Shadows Across the Playing Field*. 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket. New Delhi: The Lotus Collection, p. 125

⁷⁹ Ibid 126

⁸⁰ Ibid.

the way for India-Pakistan harmony. It culminates in Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's famous Bus diplomacy and the signing of the Lahore Declaration between Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif. According to a cricket fan's opinion being reported in a daily newspaper, "...normally cricket series follow in the wake of improved bilateral relations. This time cricket diplomacy had paved the way for peace between neighbours!"⁸¹

The major breakthrough came in 2004 when India toured Pakistan. This cricket exchange happened in the name of the goodwill series. When they left for Pakistan, the famous message came from Prime Minister Vajpayee; "Khael hi nahin, dil bhi jitiya" (Win not only matches but hearts too). Ratnakar Shetti, a noted cricket administrator of the BCCI, unveiled his experience of this significant cricket tour in his autobiographical account:

The prime minister spent nearly an hour with the team. We gifted him a bat autographed by the players and I told him about our reconnaissance trip and the banners we had seen in Karachi. In his address to the team, he emphasized the need to win hearts. 'Khel bhi Jeeto aur Dil bhi (Win the game and also the hearts),' he said. Just as we were preparing to take his leave, he asked the naval band to play "Hum honge Kaamyab" (We shall overcome)...

The series had elicited a tremendous amount of interest and many Indians were eager to travel to Pakistan to watch the matches. The two governments deliberated and announced the issuance of more than 5,000 'cricket visas. Cricket fans and media persons apart, film stars, several industrialists and politicians from India crossed the Wagah border in the days that followed.⁸²

⁸¹Tharoor, S & Khan, S. (2009) *Shadows Across the Playing Field. 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: The Lotus Collection, 126

⁸² Shetty, R. (2022) *On My Years in BCCI Board Test. Trial. Triumph*. New Delhi: Rupa, p. 110-111

The PCB in negotiation with the Ministry of Interior has decided to issue 8000 visas for Indian fans⁸³. Moreover, the application process for a visa was made less complicated as the fans only had to show their ticket or internet receipt of the match tickets to the Pakistani Embassy. This tour of India in Pakistan also provided the opportunity for the latter to show the world that Pakistan must be considered a safe nation for organizing any big event. The Tests were scheduled to be held at Multan, Lahore and Rawalpindi, and the ODIs at Karachi, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Lahore. The hospitality offered by the Pakistani people to Indian cricketers, officials and fans were outstanding. Indian cricketers were offered free shopping, free food in restaurants and free rides across the country. They also made a short visit to Harappa. India team also enjoyed Mehdi Hassan's musical concert before the match ⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly, spectators thoroughly enjoyed the gathering of celebrities, film stars, and politicians like Arun Jaitley, Jagmohan Dalmiya, Imran Khan, Rajiv Shukla and many more in the celebrity box in the Karachi stadium. Most importantly, Ms Dina Wadia, the daughter of Mohammed Ali Jinnah agreed to accept the invitation to attend the two Lahore ODIs. She had praised the act of 'cricket diplomacy' in favour of goodwill and harmony between India and Pakistan. Although India had defeated Pakistan in both the ODI series and Tests too but it created a historic moment for India-Pakistan friendship and harmony.⁸⁵ Shaharyar Khan, who was actively involved with this tour as a most admired and efficient cricket administrator from PCB wonderfully expressed his feelings about how India-Pakistan acted as a bridge between two countries' people beyond the shadows of mistrust and political barriers:

Before the tour began, I had to make a delicate decision. Should the Indian supporters be placed in a separate stand reserved for them, as was the case in Mohali in 1999, or should they be allowed to mingle freely with Pakistanis? A separate stand was the safe bet but I decided on mixed stands. The result was

⁸³ Tharoor, S & Khan, S. (2009) *Shadows Across the Playing Field*. 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket. New Delhi: The Lotus Collection p.132

⁸⁴ Personal Interview with Jagdale, S. (Dated: May 20th, 2022) [Personal Communication, Telephone]

⁸⁵ Shetty, R. (2022) *On My Years in BCCI Board Test. Trial. Triumph*. New Delhi: Rupa p. 115

electric and amazing. Large swathes of Indian fans carrying their flags and chanting slogans mixed with Pakistani fans in a spirit of goodwill and sportsmanlike conduct. There was goo-humoured banter between both sets of fans and soon young people exchanged flags and ran about the stands with both flags held high. Young people, especially girls, had their faces painted with emblems from each country on each cheek. Banners of 'Friendship Series' and 'Pak India dosti zindabad' appeared all over the ground...

While I was a little disappointed at our cricketing results, I was amazed at the public relations success of the tour. The conduct of both teams on and off the field had been in the noblest traditions of the sport but the public welcome to the Indian team had exceeded all expectations. The people of Pakistan seemed unanimously to be conveying a yearning to live in peace with its neighbours; that even though we had problems to resolve, there was so much to be gained through peace...

The public reaction to the Indian tour was in fact a political statement that the people of Pakistan had made, establishing a high water-mark in people-to-people relations that the government and establishment could not ignore.⁸⁶

In 2005, the increasing influence of 'cricket diplomacy' in bilateral relations was also evident when Pakistan's then military ruler Parvez Musharaff also travelled to India for a cricket series on the invitation of Indian Premier Dr. Manmohan Singh which ultimately led to a full-fledged summit with Dr. Singh to accelerate back channel dialogues over the Jammu and Kashmir disputes. Shri Shyam Saran, Indian ex-Foreign Secretary expressed the Government of India's stance on the constructive outcome of Musharaff's upcoming visit to India in the background of India-Pakistan cricket match. He noted:

Of course, this visit also provides an opportunity for leaders to meet and discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. They will, of course, be having this opportunity both socially. Prime Minister, as you know, will be hosting a dinner

⁸⁶ Tharoor, S & Khan, S. (2009) *Shadows Across the Playing Field. 60 Years of India-Pakistan Cricket*. New Delhi: The Lotus Collection, p.136

in honour of President Musharraf and Begam Sebha this evening. But, tomorrow there will also be an occasion for them to talk to each other during the forenoon after they have seen the first part of the cricket match.

... I would like to draw your attention to the fact that this visit takes place after a year and a half of a very intense dialogue process that has been continuing between the two countries. We have, I think, very much of an improved atmosphere in the relationship between the two countries. We have put in place a number of confidence building measures. The contacts between the peoples of the two countries has been probably on a scale which is unprecedented. Our High Commissioner is having a major problem in trying to keep up with visa applications. He is issuing about ten thousand visas a month, if I am not mistaken. When a cricket match takes place, he is under a greater degree of pressure but that is all for a good cause.

Even on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, we have had a major breakthrough in the shape of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service which, despite threats from the terrorists, has gone ahead successfully. Our Prime Minister has a vision, which he has articulated, of a world where borders become less and less relevant. We look forward to a time when there will be much freer traffic across the borders, across the Line of Control; there will be greater transport linkages, cultural exchanges; there would be perhaps even the people of the two sides getting together to look at shared problems of the environment. There are a number of areas in which there could be very fruitful exchanges between the two sides.

I think it is with that vision that Prime Minister would be talking to his honoured guest. As I said, we have every reason to believe that against this background of a much more improved relationship, much greater interaction between the peoples of the two countries, and the fact that on the eve of his visit to India we have heard some very positive statements also coming from Pakistan, coming from President Musharraf himself.

Our Prime Minister also has in his public statements spelt out what our vision is of taking this relationship forward. So, we believe that all this augurs very well for this forthcoming visit, it will be a very informal, relaxed visit

*celebrating the cricketing bonds between the two countries, and at the same time taking advantage of this opportunity to engage in a very wide-ranging and fruitful dialogue.*⁸⁷

The Indian Prime Minister also delivered a speech in the Indian parliament regarding the credibility of cricket to create a strong bond between the two countries:

*...I must say that nothing brings the people of our sub-continent more together than our love for cricket and Bollywood cinema. I am equally conscious of the fact today that even as I speak in this House I am competing for the nation's attention with young men like Sehwag and Kamal. Perhaps that is how it should be. Indeed how nice it would be if we conduct our affairs in this august House with the same spirit of sportsmanship that our young cricketers exhibit on the playing field of the subcontinent.*⁸⁸

He further stated:

...when our citizens went to Pakistan for the last Test series, they returned with tale of bonhomie and warm hospitality. I am delighted to say that our people have returned this hospitality to the thousands of visitors from Pakistan. Relations between nations are after all nothing more than relations between their people. I am sure that time will work to heal our wounds and create an environment of shared prosperity and peace in this subcontinent...it is my earnest desire that the people in our neighbouring country and their leaders should feel free to visit us whenever they wish to do so. Be it to watch a cricket match; be it do some shopping; or be it to meet friends and families- India is

⁸⁷ Media Briefing by Foreign Secretary Shri Shyam Sharan on the Visit of President Musharraf (April 16, 2005). *Ministry of External Affairs. Government of India*. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/3799/Media+Briefing+by+Foreign+Secretary+Shri+Shyam+Saran+on+the+Visit+of+President+Musharraf> (Accessed on: July 18, 2020)

⁸⁸ *Prime Minister Manmohan Singh: Reply on Motion of Thanks to the President's Address*, PM Speeches, Lok Sabha 14, Session No. IV, Parliament of India (2005) p.362. Retrieved from https://eparlib.nic.in/handle/123456789/809051?view_type=search (Accessed on: 5 October, 2019)

*proud to be an open society and an open economy. I do hope that President Musharraf and his family will enjoy their visit to our country.*⁸⁹

Hence, the Manmohan government wanted to initiate substantive discussions on bilateral issues between the two countries ranging from Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), people-to-people to economic and commercial cooperation aimed at creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence.⁹⁰ The most interesting part of this bath-breaking tour was that Indian government agreed to issue an unprecedented 10,000 visas to Pakistani fans to witness the event. The statement of an unofficial Indian official can be considered in this regard: “We are expecting a huge demand for visas and plan to have special visa camps in Pakistan to issue up to 10,000 visas. We might even allow Pakistani to obtain special permits and drive in their cars into India to watch the match in Mohali”.⁹¹ This landmark move was a reciprocal gesture of India’s tour of Pakistan in 2004 when 8000 visas were issued for the Indian fans to watch the goodwill series in 14 years.⁹² It is also important to note that 7,500 tickets were sent to Pakistan Cricket (PCB) for the Test in Mohali.⁹³ Most importantly, this historic tour also created a rare opportunity for Pakistani fans to cross the border and to meet their close relatives in India. This was also the time when two governments also decided to recommence the rail service between

⁸⁹ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh: Reply on Motion of Thanks to the President’s Address (2005), PM Speeches, Lok Sabha 14, Session No. IV, Parliament of India, p.363. Retrieved from https://eparlib.nic.in/handle/123456789/809051?view_type=search (Accessed on: 5 October, 2019)

⁹⁰ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh: *Regarding Visit of Chinese Premier and President of Pakistan to India*, PM Speeches, Lok Sabha, 14, Session No. IV, Parliament of India, (April 20, 2005), pp. 546-552. Retrieved from https://eparlib.nic.in/handle/123456789/809422?view_type=search (Accessed on: April 10, 2020)

⁹¹ India to issue 10, 000 visas to Pakistani fans (Feb 21, 2005). *ESPN.com*. Retrieved from https://www.espn.in/cricket/story/_/id/23117330/india-issue-10000-visas-pakistani-fans (Accessed on: March 15, 2020)

⁹² Rajesh, Y. P. (February 19, 2015). Pakistan cricket fans to get 10, 000 visas. *Rediff.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.rediff.com/cricket/2005/feb/19visas.htm> (Accessed on: April 16, 2021)

⁹³ PCB gets 7500 tickets for first Test (February 25, 2005). *Dawn*. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/383731/pcb-gets-7500-tickets-for-first-test> (Accessed on: May 10, 2020)

Munabao (Rajasthan) and Khokhrapar (Sindh) aiming at strengthening people-to-people connectivity. And, a bus service was also launched between Amritsar and Lahore to boost the connectivity between the two neighbours.⁹⁴

A similar context of cricket diplomacy was revived when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh invited his Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani in 2011 to watch the India-Pakistan encounter in the World Cup semifinal in Mohali. This move seemed to be a masterstroke to resume the peace process with Pakistan which was shattered due to Pakistan's link to the deadly 26/11, Mumbai terror attacks in 2008. It was said that Manmohan wanted a prosperous and stable Pakistan rather than a breeding ground for terrorism which would be less threatening to India's internal and external security dynamics and national interests. Many felt that nothing could be a more fruitful forum than a cricket match which can open the door to informal communication channels between the two countries amidst their trust deficit. Expressing the significance of the tour, Indian ex- secretary Nirupama Rao stated:

As I said, this was a wide-ranging conversation and it took place against the backdrop of what is a sporting contact, a cricket match between our two countries. And indeed sporting contacts such as this epitomise the essence of people-to-people exchange and the spirit of a good game, a constructive – it may be a competitive game but it is also a constructive game, it has a constructive spirit that surrounds it. It truly is cricket, to use that phrase. So, as I said, sporting contacts epitomise in many senses the substance, the essence of people-to-people contact between two countries such as ours. And I think they contribute a great deal to cementing understanding and friendship between the two countries.

... So, I think we have begun this year, 2011, with a very positive agenda of contact and exchange between India and Pakistan. It is a good augury for the future. And indeed the meeting of our two leaders here in Mohali today has once

⁹⁴ Rajesh, Y. P. (February 19, 2015) Pakistan cricket fans to get 10, 000 visas. *Rediff.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.rediff.com/cricket/2005/feb/19visas.htm> (Accessed on: July 20, 2020)

*again reaffirmed the intention of both Governments to take forward the process of dialogue because dialogue is a process through which we can understand each other better, through which we can resolve outstanding issues, and the goal of this dialogue is normalization of relations, a pervasive and a more permanent process of normalisation in an uninterrupted manner.*⁹⁵

Further, Gilani's opinion during this tour is significantly noteworthy: "Dr. Monmohan Singh is a very good politician. His approach is very positive and he wants to do something for peace and prosperity of this region so we both are committed that the environment should improve and we could serve people."⁹⁶ Most importantly, this gesture of "cricket diplomacy" which created the ground for dialogue between India and Pakistan was praised by the United States. Welcoming this move on "cricket diplomacy" for initiating diplomatic talks, Former Acting Deputy Spokesman of the U.S Department of State, Mark C. Toner stated:

The United States congratulates the people of Pakistan and India on the cricket match between the two nations' teams, and their respective Prime Ministers on the promising "cricket diplomacy".

The match showcased world-class cricket, sportsmanship, and statesmanship. The expansion of dialogue between India and Pakistan is a welcome and encouraging development for both countries, for the region and for the world...

The United States welcomes the ongoing engagement between India and Pakistan. We continue to believe that talks should continue at a pace, time, and scope of the two governments' choosing. We applaud both leaders and their

⁹⁵ Mohali India Pak Cricket Match – Media briefing by Foreign Secretary (March 31, 2011). *Media Center, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*. Retrieved from <https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/3295/Mohali> (Accessed on: July 3, 2020)

⁹⁶ Chakraborty, A & Ganguly, S. (March 30, 2011). India, Pakistan re-engage through cricket diplomacy. Reuters. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-pakistan-idUSTRE72T52N20110330> (Accessed on: February 2, 2021)

*citizens for the creative initiative, warm spirit and friendly competition on display during the match.*⁹⁷

THE MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF INDIA-PAKISTAN CRICKET:

Finally, it can be stated that the tremendous increase of mass media all around the world has created additional hype around the India-Pakistan cricket match. As Ali Zain contends:

*Cricket matches, especially the games played between India and Pakistan which have viewership of around a billion people, fulfill the characteristics of a popular media event. This aspect has become even more obvious with advent of new media technologies and social media networks which allow fans to follow as well as comment on live sports events. As a result, sports events have become occasions of networking among fans, expression of emotions, mediated interactions, with players and the vitriolic nature of comments.*⁹⁸

Undoubtedly, cricket has become a spectacular mediatised product which can attract a wider audience, transcending the geographical confinements. For example, the India-Pak clash in ICC T20 World Cup 2021 garnered a record consumption of 15.9 billion minutes in India alone on the Star India Network. It became the most viewed T20 match in cricket history. In the UK, the viewership for that match grew by 60% on Sky UK and the overall viewership increased up to 7%. In Pakistan, there was a significant spike in the viewership for that match by 7.3% as compared to the 2016 edition. PTV, ARY and Ten Sports were the broadcasters who contributed to this phenomenal reach.⁹⁹ Geoff Allardice, the CEO of the ICC said: “We are

⁹⁷ Press Statement of Mark C. Toner, Acting Deputy Spokesman, Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State (March, 2011). Retrieved from <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/03/159474.htm> (Accessed on: July 2, 2018)

⁹⁸ Zain, A. (2020). Contact and Sanction: Cricket as a Diplomatic Tool in India and Pakistan. In M. Binark (ed.) *Popular Culture and Media in Asia*: um: ag, p. 423

⁹⁹ International Cricket Council (November 25, 2021). *ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 delivers record viewership globally* [Media Release]. Retrieved from <https://www.icc-cricket.com/media-releases/2368761#:~:text=25%20Nov%202021-ICC%20Men's%20T20%20World%20Cup%202021%20delivers%20record%20viewership%20globally,the%20strategic%20market%20of%20USA> (Accessed on: August 5, 2020)

pleased with these outstanding global viewership numbers, that demonstrate the power of T20 cricket to attract a huge audience across the globe on linear and digital platforms. It reinforces our belief that there is a significant opportunity and appetite to grow the game in our strategic growth markets...”¹⁰⁰

Looking back at the history of India-Pakistan relations, it can be said that the media has largely been engaged in influencing public opinion from both sides of the border with their sensationalised reporting. Media can either instigate enmity or can mould public opinion in favour of peace between these two subcontinental nations. State-controlled TV channels and radio stations have played vast roles in positively or negatively influencing Indo-Pak relations.¹⁰¹ In this context, Javed Jabbar illuminates the enduring role of media in influencing the trajectories of India-Pakistan relations:

A Range of factors determines relationships between states: geographical proximity, historical interaction, cultural commonality, ideological perspectives and respective perceptions of the other. Perhaps more than any of these factors, the last one, i.e., perceptions of the other, are shaped in contemporary times by the mass media. Whether by conveying undiluted information in its purest form –by itself a rare occurrence – or whether by engaging in the daily hurly-burley of the volatile brew of facts, opinions, information and disinformation the mass media have become the single most decisive factor in shaping and sustaining between states, particularly on the people-to-people level. There is no better illustration of this percept than the perceptions that prevail in Pakistan and India in the context of media...

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Hafeez, E. (2015). Role of Media in Fostering the Relationship between India and Pakistan. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 13(3): 140-141. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332727618_Role_of_Media_in_Fostering_the_Relationship_between_India_and_Pakistan (Accessed on: January 5, 2017)

*The media in the two countries divide as well as bind, separate as well as synthesise, individual personalities and perceptions. In 46 years of history, media have helped reinforce both the nastiness as well as the nostalgia.*¹⁰²

Keeping this fact in mind, it is imperative to note that cricket as the constitutive element of popular culture and an integral part of the sub-continental societies has largely attracted media attention. The pervasive role of global media in selling cricket as a commodity to its desired customers, especially in South Asia needs can be brought to the fore in this scenario. With the increasing importance of global media, “the primary agency for understanding Cricket moved from the outside to the inside, from the trees and maidan to the large screen TV and the darkened (preferably air conditioned) room. Cricket became part of a familiar place for contemporary viewers, a place shaped by the entertainment-political complex, a place with a shared language about identity, celebrity and consumption”.¹⁰³ The emergence of satellite television has made cricket central to reinforcing the collective imagination of the nation. The central impact of media on public life in consciously articulating coherent narratives of national identity and stimulating nationalistic appeal must be taken into consideration in this context. As David Rowe contends: “if the media sports texts have the power to unite, temporarily or in the long term, symbolically or materially, desperate groups of patriots or consumers, then they are potentially deliverable”¹⁰⁴. In this sense, cricket has become integrally connected to the mediated construction of national identity. In this process, media is considered to be a viable mechanism which strengthens the linkage between cricket and nationalist ideology. Hence, If

¹⁰² Jabbar, J. (1994). The Media Factor in the Pakistan-India Relationship. *South Asian Survey*, 1(2): 231–232. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/097152319400100202> (Accessed on: March 10, 2017)

¹⁰³ Kavoori, A. (2021). Cricket, Media and the Nation: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Three Mediated Moments in Indian Cricket. *Global Media Journal – Arabian Edition*, 3 (3): 9. Retrieved from <https://amityuniversity.ae/gmj-ae/journals/2021/1%20Anandam%20Kavoori.pdf> (Accessed on: July 20, 2021)

¹⁰⁴ Rowe, D. (2004). *Sport, Culture and the Media*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, p. 125

India-Pakistan cricketing rivalries bear a metaphor for compulsive nationalism, with narratives like 'war' or 'revenge', it is mostly due to the enemy narratives and jingoistic patriotism being generated by media propaganda campaigns. The profound influence of mass media in shaping public opinion concerning India-Pakistan cricketing relations is widely evident over the years. Fans tend to internalise the messages transmitted by media and react accordingly to the Indo-Pak cricketing tussle. Nayeem Showkat's comparative study of the two leading national print media, India's "The Hindu" and Pakistan's "Dawn", examined the potential of media reportage on India-Pakistan cricket matches played in the year 2011 and 2012 in the backdrop of India-Pakistan relations. It reveals that the years-old disputes and irritable equations have been presented by both the newspapers while reporting on India-Pakistan encounters. However, both nations' print media also incorporated positive representation in their content concerning the India-Pak match in that period to portray cricketing events as important occasions to achieve unity and peace between the two nations. Based on the finding of the study in which the percentage of negative frames are less than the positive frames in the sample, the author finally expresses his hope about the credibility of cricket in improving India-Pak relations with an affirmative media presentation.¹⁰⁵ In this way, media acts as a catalyst in the social construction of identities. Hence, the political value of sports journalism in transforming public perceptions in both the countries cannot be overlooked. The rise of digital media has massively shaped the aura of India-Pakistan rivalries. Sometimes, the media has represented the India-Pakistan cricketing tussle as mimic warfare to its larger audience. As Anand Vasu views that "Chest thumping, hysteria among fans, fuelled by high-intensity jingoism on TV channels has turned India vs Pakistan into a spectacle of different kind"¹⁰⁶. For example, before the contests of ICC

¹⁰⁵ Showkat, N. (2017). *Cricket Diplomacy*. New Delhi: VL Media Solutions.

¹⁰⁶ Vasu, A. (June 16, 2019). India vs Pakistan isn't about the cricket anymore. It's just hype and jingoism. *The Print*. Retrieved from https://theprint.in/sport/india-vs-pakistan-isnt-about-the-cricket-anymore-its-just-hype-and-jingoism/250583/?_twitter_impression=true&_amp (Accessed on: September 22, 2020)

World Cup 2019, Pakistani streaming app Jazz TV unveiled a video in World Cup ad, mocking Indian Air Force (IAF) Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman who was captured a day by Pakistani security forces after his plane was shot down by a Pakistani Air force jet after the Balakot airstrike. This ad went viral on the internet featuring an actor with a blue jersey (representing the Indian national team's jersey colour) who looked like Abhinandan with his trademark moustache and was seen holding a cup of tea. When interviewed with the questions about India's playing XI and the team's strategy in the upcoming World Cup, he kept on repeating, "I am sorry. I am not supposed to tell you this". His response was a reminder of the viral statement made by IAF pilot Varthaman posted in a video released by Pakistani authorities. Finally, when the actor tried to walk away with the cup after the interrogation, he was pulled back by the interrogator with the following dialogue "Ek second ruko, Cup Kaha leke jaa rahe ho?" Condemning the advertisement Ajay Banerjee tweeted: "Jazz TV advt on #CWC19 takes the Indo-Pak air duel to new level. It uses the air duel over Nowshera and Wing Co Abhinandan Varthaman's issue as a prop..."¹⁰⁷ This footage taunting India's national hero created huge social media frenzy as it angered many cricket fans. Indian Tennis star Sania Mirza took to Twitter by slamming these ads provoking sensitive issues which could have heightened the tensions between the two nations: "Cringeworthy ads on both sides of the border...seriously guys, you don't need to 'hype up' or market the match anymore special with rubbish! It has ENOUGH attention already! It's only cricket for God sake, and if you think it's

¹⁰⁷ Banerjee, A. [@ajaynewsman] (June 11, 2019). *Jazz TV advt on #CWC19 takes the Indo-Pak air duel to new level. It uses the air duel over Nowshera and Wing Co Abhinandan Varthaman's issue as a prop...* [Tweet; image attached]. Twitter.

https://twitter.com/ajaynewsman/status/1138318807573979137?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1138318807573979137%7Ctwgr%5Ed03ad39fe13fac42944b551387d1938e676bae82%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.outlookindia.com%2Fwebsite%2Fstory%2Fworld-news-watch-where-are-you-taking-the-cup-pak-tv-airs-abhinandans-spoof-ahead-of-india-pak-cricket-match%2F331958 (Accessed on: July 24, 2020)

Also see Zee News (June 11, 2019). *Pakistan TV ad mocks IAF pilot Abhinandan Varthaman ahead of India-Pakistan World Cup Match.* [Video] YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKR6TgF70js&t=181s> (Accessed on: August 19, 2020)

anymore than that then get a grip or get a life”¹⁰⁸. Meanwhile, in India, Star India also attracted criticism online by releasing a sequential video based on the Mauka Mauka, albeit with a Father’s Day twist. This version of the ad carried a predominant chauvinistic sentiment in which an Indian fan mocked a Pakistani supporter for their bleak record against India in the World Cup, an underlying reference to the rhetoric “Baap” (father) when it comes to facing Pakistan in the World Cup games.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, media has also helped in fostering cricketing ties by changing the public perception and actions in favour of peaceful co-existence. For instance, Aman Ki Asha (A Hope for Peace), a joint peace initiative by two leading houses, the Jang group of Pakistan and the Times of India, turned out to be a most unique campaign launched by the mainstream media houses of conflicting communities. This project imbibed the collaborative spirit of both India and Pakistan by taking Urdu word Aman (Peace) and the Hindi word Asha (Hope) which aimed at creating mutual friendship and peace between them. Few parts of the joint statement by editors of both Jang Group and Times of India can be reproduced in this context to clarify the objectives of the Aman Ki Asha campaign:

...The media in India and Pakistan speaks directly to the hearts and minds and stomachs of the people. It can help in writing a final chapter, adding a happy twist to a story that seemed headed for tragedy. It can do so by shaping the discourse and steering it away from rancour and divisiveness. It has the maturity to recognize the irritants and obstacles to peace and will not take a timid stance towards the more intractable and contentious issues – whether relating to Kashmir, water disputes or the issue of cross-border terrorism. It

¹⁰⁸ Mirza, S. [@MirzaSania] (June 11, 2019). *Cringeworthy ads on both sides of the border...seriously guys, you don’t need to ‘hype up’ or market the match anymore special with rubbish! It has ENOUGH attention already! It’s only cricket for God sake, and if you think it’s anymore than that then get a grip or get a life.* [Tweet] Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/MirzaSania/status/1138694896351498240> (Accessed on: April 3, 2021)

¹⁰⁹ Star Sports (June 9, 2019). *ICC CWC ’19: India vs Pakistan. This #FathersDay, watch an ICC #CWC19 match, jo dekh ke bas bol sakte hain ‘baap re baap!* [Video] YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks4f_IRpSag (Accessed on: February 18, 2021)

can offer solutions and nudge the leadership towards a sustained peace process...

The Times of India and the Jang Group have come together to energize the process of peace between our two countries. We believe that this is an invention whose time has come. We recognize that set backs will occur but these should not derail the process...

A surge of goodwill and flexibility on the part of civil society and the media will push these forces back by denying them the raw material that manufactures hate.

Our subcontinent needs to follow the footprints left behind by the great poets, sufi saints and the bhakts who preached and practiced love and inclusiveness. This is the land of Tagore and Galib, of Bulleh Shah and Kabir, of Nanak and Moinuddin Chisti. It is their spirit that will guide us in this journey. The one and half billion people of this region await the dawning of an age where peace, equality and tranquility prevails. This will happen when every heart beats with Aman Ki Asha.¹¹⁰

According to Lederach's theoretical framework of "Pyramid of Peacebuilding" demonstrated in his seminal book *Building Peace* (1997), along with the top-level leadership (government officials, top most leadership of military, business or trade) the stakeholders of middle ranges (middle class sector such as academia, national level NGOs, civil society, media persons) and grassroots levels (local leaders, Community developers and common people) also contribute to peace building process.¹¹¹ The Aman Ki Asha initiative can be examined through the lens of Lederach's approach. In this initiative, cricket was made to be a vital part of their middle and grassroots level integration. Cricket was promoted in their campaign because the game has

¹¹⁰ Joint Statement by Editors of Jang Group and Times of India. *Aman Ki Asha*. Retrieved from <https://amankiasha.com/joint-statement-by-editors-of-jang-group-times-of-india/> (Accessed on: June 15, 2021)

¹¹¹ Rid, S. A. (2019). Aman Ki Asha (a desire for peace): a case study of a people-to-people contacts peacebuilding initiative between India and Pakistan. *Contemporary South Asia*, 28(1): 1-9. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2019.1666090> (Accessed on: June 25, 2021)

immense potential to directly or indirectly influence the masses. For instance, they have released three creative films with Aman Ki Asha logo and the text, “Celebrates Indo-Pak cricket” which emphasised that despite the differences between India and Pakistan, the love and enthusiasm for cricket unites the people of both countries. All these films promoted the campaign, “Competitors, not enemy”. The campaign was covered in radio, digital and print media which aimed at ending the emotional hatred between the people of the two countries and to strengthen their mutual trust. There was a two match series between India and Pakistan in Pakistan for physically challenged cricketers under the banner of “Aman Ki Asha”¹¹². The series turned out to be a significant one as it created the ground for people-to-people interactions beyond mutual mistrust and suspicion. In this case, cricket helped in bringing together the common people of both countries. Parveen Bahl, the President of the Physically Cricket Association of India (PCAAI) said “People who warned us against visiting Pakistan were absolutely wrong. Pakistan is as peaceful as any European country. We feel absolutely at home. The atmosphere is peaceful and the people are friendly and hospitable. We are really enjoying our stay here.”¹¹³

Further, along with the mainstream media, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube have created open platforms for large public discourse through multimedia channels which proved to be instrumental in stimulating people’s engagement in their social and political life, to varying extents. As Mingst argues, “Social media can be used to bring a

¹¹² Aman Ki Asha (December 24, 2012). *Aman Ki Asha – Delhi Haat : Kaajal*. [Video]. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsiI1wfQdN8>. (Accessed on: July 5, 2022)

Aman Ki Asha (December 24, 2012). *Aman Ki Asha – Bengali Market: Passport Ad*. [Video]. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItvmW-cmIkY> (Accessed on: July 7, 2022)

Aman Ki Asha (December 29, 2012). *Aman Ki Asha – Morning: Old Men Ad*. [Video]. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReZMYAjeuOg> (Accessed on: July 10, 2022)

¹¹³ India clinch ‘Aman Ki Asha’ cricket series in Pakistan (June 22, 2022). *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/new-zealand-in-india-2016/top-stories/india-clinch-aman-ki-asha-cricket-series-in-pakistan/articleshow/14327331.cms> (Accessed on: July 15, 2022)

major social change in the relations of the two countries, in the days to come”¹¹⁴. With the rapid expansion of social media globally, a shift can be noticed in the nature of fandom in the past years over the India-Pak rivalries. It came out to be difficult for the BCCI to break the deadlock on the India-Pakistan cricket series when social media saw an outpour of posts calling for a boycott of the Pakistan team. In this regard, BCCI secretary Anurag Thakur comments: “When it comes to Pakistan, it’s not that easy to take calls. Five years back, there was no role of social media. Today you see a lot of reaction from social media, but you still can’t say it’s the sense of the entire country. At times you can’t go only by social media; you have to look at the interests of the nation”.¹¹⁵ In contemporary times, social media’s role is prevalent in the rise of digital nationalism which paved the way for “emotionally-driven connectivity through which political communities- nations, regions, sects, tribes- are reimagined”¹¹⁶. The multitude of social media platforms and affordable internet access has given rise to an unrestricted and vibrant public sphere where the nationalist message gets disseminated through various networks in a bottom-up direction transcending the traditional understanding of the government’s monopoly of nationalism. Digital nationalism allowed people or groups to express their identity and to find a sense of commonality within a broader reach. It is dominantly evident in the fan’s behaviour in the virtual world during India-Pakistan encounters when the consciousness of national belonging gets (re)solidified. According to Sharda Ugra “the word ‘fan’ itself comes from the word ‘fanatic’. Today, fandom has reached a level where

¹¹⁴ See Hafeez, E. (2015). Role of Media in Fostering the Relationship between India and Pakistan. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 13(3): 150. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332727618_Role_of_Media_in_Fostering_the_Relationship_between_India_and_Pakistan (Accessed on: March 10, 2017)

¹¹⁵ BCCI secretary calls for resumption of cricket ties with Pakistan (December 4, 2015). *The Express Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1003820/we-play-pakistan-in-icc-tournaments-then-why-not-in-bilateral-series-bcci-secretary> (Accessed on: July 5, 2017)

¹¹⁶ Tynan, C. (December 13, 2017). Nationalism in the age of social media. *Scholars Studio Blog*. Retrieved from <https://sites.temple.edu/tudsc/2017/12/13/twitter-bots/> (Accessed on: August 5, 2019)

fans on the ground and social media believe they have to perform a particular role and act a particular way. Right now, it's way more jingoistic, with an 'us' versus them' narrative"¹¹⁷. As it was seen, #BoycottPakMatch, #WhyPlayPak or #WalkOutFromPakMatch was trending on social media ahead of the India-Pakistan face-off at the ICC Champions Trophy in 2017 which escalated tensions ahead of the India-Pakistan match. A number of fans showed their support for boycotting the Pakistan match due to its alleged involvement in ceasefire violation and casualties of armed forces on Indian soil. For instance, Anshul Saxena who has a lot of followers on social media tweeted: "Even today our 2 Jawans Martyred. Indian cricket must learn from Indian Hockey who denied to play Johor Cup due to Pak. #WalkOutFromPakMatch"¹¹⁸. Another fan named Karan Sharma also took to twitter to show his protest: "Its not BCCI but India you play for. And India wants you to boycott tomorrow's match with pak. #WalkOutFromPakMatch"¹¹⁹. "Dear Viratkohli Indian Army keeps you safe to play cricket. Tomorrow, boycott Pak match for Indian army. #WalkOutFromPakMatch"¹²⁰, he further added. On the other hand, social media also positively impacts on India-Pakistan relations. For example, the symbolic value of a social media campaign by cricket supporters on Facebook called #ProfileforPeace in uniting India and Pakistan amid the rising tensions between them cannot be ignored. The campaign #ProfileforPeace started gaining attention on

¹¹⁷ Pundir, P. (October 29, 2021). Inside the Bizarre and Violent World of Cricket Fandom in India. *Vice*. Retrieved from <https://www.vice.com/en/article/bvn8md/india-cricket-fans-fandom-toxic-ipl-t20> (Accessed on: May 14, 2022)

¹¹⁸ Saxena, A. [AskAnshul] (June 3, 2017). *Even today our 2 Jawans Martyred. Indian cricket must learn from Indian Hockey who denied to play Johor Cup due to Pak. #WalkOutFromPakMatch*. [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/askanshul/status/871010709202546689> (Accessed on: July 10, 2020)

¹¹⁹ Sharma, K. [@ikaransharma25] (June 3, 2017). *Its not BCCI but India you play for. And India wants you to boycott tomorrow's match with pak. #WalkOutFromPakMatch*. [Tweet; image attached]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/IKaranSharma27/status/871007016180953090> (Accessed on: June 5, 2020)

¹²⁰ Sharma, K. [@ikaransharma25] (June 3, 2017). *Dear Viratkohli Indian Army keeps you safe to play cricket. Tomorrow, boycott Pak match for Indian army. #WalkOutFromPakMatch*. [Tweet; image attached]. Twitter <https://twitter.com/ikaransharma27/status/871006701746610178> (Accessed on: October 10, 2019)

Facebook ahead of the 2016 ICC World Cup Twenty20 when the rival fans swapped their Facebook profile flags supporting the opposite team. It proved to be a wonderful gesture on the part of cricket fans of both countries to bring their nations closer by ending the years-long hatred between them. Most interestingly, Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder and chief executive of Facebook, shared a heartwarming message on Facebook, showing strong support to this campaign. His post was liked by over 230k Facebook users and shared by over 20k users. He wrote:

Something pretty interesting is happening in India and Pakistan on Facebook right now.

Last week marked the beginning of the 2016 ICC World Twenty20 – the biggest cricket tournament of the year. This is the first time the tournament is being hosted by India.

Fans around the world are going to [facebook.com/profilepicframes](https://www.facebook.com/profilepicframes) and using a profile frame to show support for their favourite teams. But fans from India and Pakistan are doing something different. Hundreds of thousands of Indian cricket fans are putting the Pakistani frame around their picture. And Pakistani fans are doing the same thing – showing support for India. They’re using the hashtag #ProfilesForPeace.

When we designed the profile frames feature, we just wanted to help people show support for their favourite teams or a cause they believe in. But this story shows that the more connected we are, the more we realize that what unites us is more important than what divides us.¹²¹

¹²¹ Zuckerberg, M. (March 16, 2016). *Something pretty interesting is happening in India and Pakistan on Facebook right now...* [Facebook post; image attached] [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10102717445294641&set=a.612287952871&type=3> (Accessed on: August 8, 2021)

CONCLUSION:

Winding up the above discussion, it can be said that sports can undeniably contribute to the process of positive peace-building, transforming exchanges between societies and their people into trusted and sustained relationships. Cricket also manifests a similar phenomenon in the subcontinental scenario. India and Pakistan often have politically utilised the arena of cricket to break the eyes in bilateral ties. India-Pakistan cricket matches have been used as events to facilitate communication between the two South Asian neighbours when the traditional door of diplomacy continues to remain frosty. However, despite the unifying capacity of cricket to act as a bridge between India and Pakistan, India-Pak cricketing ties have halted several times due to the enduring conflict between them. The endless hostilities between the two nations also rattled the collaborative ground of mutual trust and interdependence between the people of India and Pakistan which was developed through cricket diplomacy. Despite several disruptions, the credibility of cricket diplomacy cannot be ignored so far as India-Pakistan relations are concerned. Cricket has not only built the platform for the state leaders and diplomats of India and Pakistan to revive the unofficial backchannel talks as a substitute for Track I diplomacy but also has assisted Track III diplomacy by providing the opportunity for cross-border interactions and friendly exchanges between the common people of the two countries. Thus, a policy shift could be an option for both the governments of India and Pakistan so that cricket could be channelised with long term planning to create a favourable atmosphere for lasting peace, stability and harmony. As John Beech remarked:

If sports tourism takes place as a part of a more-or-less orchestrated series of confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the context of a sustained commitment to ease tensions by the political elites of the parties to the conflict, then such encounters can serve to undermine stereotypes and are more likely to result in humanization of 'the other' and the promotion of cross-border links and relationships that can feed into the process of détente and wider peace-building.

*A significant factor in this overall process is that if top-level leadership and middle-level opinion leaders are stressing the importance of friendly relations with an erstwhile enemy, then this can create the space for encounters across the lines of division, making it safe for those at the grass roots to echo such sentiments and act upon them in terms of holding out the hand of friendship to the other.*¹²²

My study also elucidated how cricket has become a mediatised product, especially in the subcontinent due to the massive influence of media over the game in contemporary time. Without a doubt, media has been playing a powerful role in shaping public opinion with regard to India-Pakistan 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. Most importantly, the media-cricket-politics nexus is evident so far as the changing trajectories of India-Pakistan relations are concerned. Sometimes, hyper-nationalistic portrayal of media interprets the India-Pakistan cricketing encounter with the rhetoric of war. Likewise, media also generates positive vibes centering on the India-Pakistan cricket match and can influence people to view their match as an opportunity to strengthen their friendship. Therefore, there is no denying the fact that if the media can act in a positive manner with a constructive public agenda, the platform of cricket can be promoted as a binding tool between the people of two nuclear nations.

¹²² Beech, J. (2005). Sport Tourism as a Means of Reconciliation? The Case of India-Pakistan Cricket. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 30 (1): 89. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2005.11081235> (Accessed on: September 2, 2021)

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous analysis of my entire study, it can be summarized that although both sports and politics seem to have been circumscribed by the autonomous realms of their own but the intertwining aspect of their relationship is firmly embedded in the changing socio-political environment of the society. Contrary to the standpoint of the idealistic perspective which considers that sports being a pure pastime should not blend with politics, pragmatists argued that it is logically impossible to isolate sports from politics. From this point of view, it appears to be unrealistic to treat both sports and politics as separate entities owing to their inevitable confluence in the wider social, political, economical or cultural setting. Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young states that “sports events celebrating the body and physical culture have long been driven by political and ideological motives, from the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome to the societies of early modern Europe; in more modern Western societies as well less developed and non-western ones.”¹

Given this backdrop, my study elucidates that sports as the most attractive popular culture and pervasive social institution acts as a major means in governing social networks. The monumental impact of sports as a major social phenomenon on the society cannot be denied as it creates scopes for enormous social interactions in multifaceted ways to a considerable degree. Harold Parkin’s states that “sport gives a unique insight into the way a society changes and impacts on other societies it comes into contact with and, conversely, the way those societies react back upon it”.² On the other hand, politics fundamentally governs social relations. So,

¹ Tomlinson, A. & Young, C. (2006). *National Identity and Global Sports Events*. Albany: University of New York Press, p.1

² Perkin, H. (1992). Teaching the Nations How to Play: Sport and Society in the British Empire and Commonwealth. In J. A. Mangan (ed.) *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*. London : Frank Cass, p. 212

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.

Sports offers a powerful lens through which political identities and relations, political ideologies, political cohesion and confrontation, the use and distribution of power, the interaction between nation-states and its individuals and many other political themes partnering to the larger socio-political scenes get magnified. In this regard, Kutte Jönsson, the Associate Professor of Sport Philosophy and Sport Ethics notes: “As claimed, sport has always been a target for political interest of various kinds. Or, differently put: Ever since the dawn of modern sport, political leaders have seen the potential of making sport political. No one can blame them for using sport for their own purposes, not least when we consider that the sport movements never have been shy to invite political actors into the sport family. In fact, at long times they have had mutual interests to continue working on their relationship”³. Hence, the holistic and deeper understanding of politics cannot be made possible without exploring the relational aspects of sporting spectacle with its political surroundings.

Academia has been slow to research the role that sport had and continues to have on political discourses. In researching the links between politics and sport, only in the last thirty years have political scientists started to give any attention to sport. Despite an increased focus on sport, the politicisation of sport has been occurring for much longer than that. Sport is a part of the fabric, the social order of society, and politics is very much about social order: the way in which we wish to live and organise our affairs. The question, therefore, is not whether or not politics should be involved in sport but rather ‘how’ politics should be involved.⁴

³Jönsson, K. (May 21, 2012) Sport and Politics: An Ethical Approach. Baltic Worlds. *The Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEEES)*, Södertörn University. Retrieved from <https://balticworlds.com/x/> (Accessed on: July 18, 2020)

⁴ Warren, M. D. (2018) *Politics and Sport don't mix – or do they? National identity and New Zealand's Participation in the Olympic Games*. Unpublished Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy. Victoria University of Wellington, pp. 11-12. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.17072054.v1> (Accessed on: July 18, 2020)

Sports has emerged as a lucrative political element for the states especially from the late eighteenth and nineteenth century because of its tremendous attraction which largely draws government's attention. In this sense, sports is intrinsically linked to the government and the conduct of the government. There is no doubt that sports has increasingly been manipulated by the states, irrespective of their ideological orientation, as a flexible political tool to fulfil its different political and diplomatic interests. As Allison holds: "All Kinds of governments, representing every type of political ideology, have endorsed international sporting competition as a testing ground for the nation or for a political "system". German Nazis, Italian Fascists, Soviet and Cuban Communists, Chinese Maoists, western capitalist democrats, Latin American juntas – all have played the game and believed it".⁵ In addition, my study also pertinently points out the fact that politics is no longer confined to the formal paradigm of government activities. Rather, it extends to every layer of human interactions in society. Accordingly, politics and power struggle also vastly manifests within the social institutions or organizations like sports federations or bodies where direct government's engagement in decision making or policy making structure is not widely evident. However, my research study solely concentrates upon politics of sports rather than politics in sports. In other words, the intention of my research study is to bring out how the ground of sports has repeatedly been politicised to shape political and diplomatic relations. In this light, my study undertakes a realist theoretical framework to explain how sports has been intimately connected to the areas of statecraft, foreign policy, diplomacy and inter-relationships between states responding to the changing dynamics of international relations. Extending this point further, it is mention worthy that sports as a plural and global non-state actor has become strongly entrenched in the interdependency chains of the increasingly interconnected world. In this regard, my study also clarifies that although sports as the most valuable transnational force has majorly influenced the transitional relations

⁵ Allison, L. (1993). *The Changing Politics of Sport*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 17

of contemporary world politics, transcending the porous boundaries of sovereign territorial states, the dominant role of states in influencing the arena of sports for meeting the national aspirations and managing the political relationships in global politics cannot be evaded. Thus, sports, despite being a significant non-state with autonomous decision making capability, has still been politically and diplomatically promoted by states.

Considering the broader context of politicisation of sports, my study has made clear how cricket as the most popular global sports has historically developed political significance. Besides, my research also makes an attempt to find out whether the locus of world cricket has shifted from West to South Asia. Having originated in South-East England in the late 16th century, the game called cricket has evolved from a rural pastime to the leading sports in the first half of the 18th century. The game has quintessentially become the epitome of the English national character since the time of industrial revolution. Gradually, cricket has become an integral part of England's colonial history as it turned into the "umbilical cord of Empire linking the mother country with her children".⁶ Cricket was exported across the globe as a unifying force connecting the culture of Victorian imperialists with its colonies. Addressing the diffusion of cricket as a part of British colonization, the former MCC President Pelham Warner remarks:

*Cricket has become more than a game. It is an institution, a passion, one might say a religion. It has got into the blood of the nation, and whenever British men and women are gathered together there will the stumps be pitched. North, South, East and West, throughout the Empire, from Hong Kong to the Spanish Main, cricket flourishes.*⁷

⁶ Mangan, J. A. (1986). *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*. London: Frank Cass, p. 153

⁷ Bradley, J. (1990). The MCC, society and empire: a portrait of cricket's ruling body, 1860-1914. *The International Journal of the History of the Sport*, 7(1): 15. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523369008713710>

However, with the changing dynamics of colonial and post-colonial international politics, cricket has proved to be more than a mere entertainment in the South Asian region due to the socio-political significance of the game. As Kausik Bandyopadhyay notes:

*Sport in colonial and postcolonial South Asia has been closely linked to wider historical processes that have shaped the society and culture of the region since the twentieth century. It has been a powerful vector of forces, such as imperialism, nationalism, communalism, regionalism, decolonization, partition, immigration, violence, diplomacy, interstate relations and commercialization. Quite simply, patterns of history and society have transformed sport in the region while simultaneously sport has shaped the history and society of South Asia.*⁸

Cricket came to the Indian subcontinent through the British colonizers. The game was introduced to the indigenous peoples of colonial India through the white settlers. Soon, the game became popular in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and other parts of India through aristocratic and princely patronage. Likewise, the root of Pakistan cricket also can be traced in pre-independent India under the Raj. There were many renowned players of Pakistan Test playing nation who had played years of cricket in the Pentangular Tournaments in Sindh and Bombay before the partition. The Northern India Cricket Association (NICA) used to have a strong side in the Ranji Trophy. Unsurprisingly, cricket continues to grow as the most popular sports in Pakistan after independence. As the Ex-ICC President, Eshan Mani says: “Cricket is a binding passion for Pakistan. It binds families, communities and the country in support of teams and individuals that play this great game...Cricket holds a unique place in the cultural fabric of Pakistan”.⁹ Thus, cricket has become integrally connected to the political histories and national unification process of the sub-continental countries. For instance, cricket seems to have acted

⁸ Bandyopadhyay, K. (2015). *Sport, Culture and Nation: Perspective from Indian Football and South Asian Cricket*. New Delhi: Sage, Introduction, p.xviii

⁹ Baloch, K. H. & Parvez, M. S. (2005). *Encyclopedia of Pakistan Cricket (1947-48 to 2004)*, Vol. II, n.p: K. H. Baloch

as a tool of national resistance in the historical context of India and Bangladesh. Cricket was appropriated by the native Indians to challenge the superiority of the British imperial power. Cricket also awakened Bengali nationalism in their pre-independence time leading to the demand for East Bengalis' autonomy from the West Pakistani hegemony. Thus, cricket played a significant role in the rise of Bangladesh as a separate nation. Talking of the fascinating socio-political history of Pakistan, cricket came out to be a unifying force for them setting aside the disruptive chaos within the country. Cricket also worked as a medium for new optimism as well as a development tool in countries like Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Cricket gave them a temporary relief from the prolonged tensions of civil strife and war. Moreover, cricket has also created the avenue for South Asian solidarity on several occasions. Cricket has paved the way for greater cooperation amongst South Asian countries. From jointly hosting the cricket World Cup to supporting each other in the crisis time through cricketing collaboration, South Asian countries have proved their regional fraternity on the cricketing field overcoming their political differences. Most importantly, cricket has been maneuvered as a diplomatic tool in this region owing to the fact that the majority of people of South Asian countries find common attraction in cricket. Cricket has successfully served various diplomatic objectives. There are several instances, cricket acted as diplomatic bridge between the South Asian countries. Cricket has always been promoted in this region as an effective soft power to connect the neighborhood nations. My study showed how cricket with its tremendous cultural influence has deepened the diplomatic engagements of South Asian countries. Countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives or Afghanistan have consciously harnessed cricket as a diplomatic means to improve collaboration and communication between them. Most importantly, the emergence of the Indian Premier League in the present era shows that South Asia has become the powerhouse of World cricket in which India is playing a leading role as the global cricket superpower. The game is no more controlled by the traditional Anglo-Australian axis. Besides, the outstanding

standard of Pakistan Super League and Bangladesh Premier League and the increasing popularity of these leagues over the past decade revealed how cricket's centre of gravity has been shifted towards South Asia. The recent move of the International Cricket Council, the world governing body of cricket, from London to Dubai in 2005 exemplifies this phenomenon signaling the development of South Asianisation of cricket.

My study also uncovered how cricket had historically developed an association with the politics of nationalism and communalism under the British Raj. As previously discussed, cricket was imported by the British sailors and soldiers in the eighteenth century. The game was promoted by the British ruling elites as part of their civilizing mission to educate the locals with the agenda of "games ethic" for glorifying the Anglo-Saxon character of the Victorians. British administrators sought to create the bond between the coloniser and colonised through cricket. As Ceil Headlam, while sharing an account of the Oxford University Authentics' cricket tour to India, comments:

*First the hunter, the missionary, and the merchants, next the soldier and the politician, and then the cricketer – that is the history of British colonisation. And of these civilising influences the last may, perhaps, be said to do least harm...cricket unites, as in India, the rulers and the ruled. It also provides a moral training, an education in pluck, and nerve, and self-restraint, far more valuable to the character of the ordinary native than the mere learning by heart of a play of Shakespeare or an essay of Macaulay, which is reckoned education in India...*¹⁰

The natives were accustomed to the game by emulating the rulers. Bombay Parsees were the first community who started playing cricket in the middle of the nineteenth century for their community's social and political advancement. The game continued to spread in other parts of

¹⁰ Headlam, C. (1903), *Ten Thousand Miles through India and Burma: An Account of the Oxford University Authentics' Cricket Tour with Mr. K. J. Key in the Year of the Coronation Durbar*. London: J.M. Dent, pp. 168-169

India when Maharajas and aristocratic elites took up cricket as the leading patrons. The Maharajas of Patiala, Gwalior, Kathiawar, Nawanagar, Porbandar, Limdi, Rajputana, Natore, Cooch Behar and many more were the early cricket enthusiasts who played active roles in promoting cricket across India. They used to encourage the game employing the best cricket players across the country. They used cricket for asserting their regional superiority and social mobility. However, the role of cricket as a symbolic agent of nationalist sentiments in the colonial context also highlighted that cricket was also turned into a tool of subverting the superiority of British hegemony by beating the Englishmen at their own game. From C. K. Nayudu's remarkable innings of 153 against the powerful MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) to the emergence of Natore cricket team carrying the imprint of indigenous pride, there were several instances related to the game which reflected that cricket was deeply rooted in India's socio-political landscape and its anti-colonial struggle. Finally, it has also been addressed in my analysis that cricket as a microcosm of Indian society also got dragged into the fight between secular nationalism and communalism in the background of partition politics. The communal organization of the Bombay Pentangular tournament, the country's most popular cricket tournament in the 1930s and 1940s, seemed to have been clouded by communal sentiments of Indian political life. A heated controversy has sprouted over the issue that the tournament based on communal lines could have been detrimental to the unity of good fellowship and healthy nationalism in the country. Congress leadership was also critical of the way communal divisions were encouraged in the country's premier tournament. Further, it was also claimed that cricket mirroring the communal elements in the sporting arena also had lifted up Jinnah's two-nation theory as "the Muslim League saw the contests as an example of 'parity' between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Invariably, whenever the Muslims won a tournament, Jinnah would send a congratulatory message to the captain as the Muslims had

helped to promote their credentials in Jinnah's two-nation theory".¹¹ With this insight, Berry Sarbadhikary notes: "For sometime I have felt that Quadrangular cricket is no longer a necessity and that it is now apt to lead to more harm than good... The time has come when we must play the great game as cricketers and Indians. There is no more time to play cricket as Hindus, Muslims and Parsis."¹² Most importantly, in early 1940, when serious divisions were aroused over the question of continuance of the tournament, Mahatma Gandhi's opinion was sought as the verdict of a well-respected umpire. Finally, Gandhi wrote to the organizers that the communally divisive connection of the tournament needed to be erased for the sake of communal harmony which was desired in the critical juncture of nationalists' struggle to unite India's diverse population. Eventually, the communal tournament, India's top class cricket for 25 years, was buried, followed by the consistent pressure of the anti-Pentangular movement commanded by few sections of sporting communities and intellectuals. Thus, it can be argued that although communal aspect of cricket in the pre-independence India did not have the major influence upon the mass public opinion in the background of Hindu-Muslim fragmentation and religious conflict which culminated in the India's tragic partition and the subsequent emergence of Pakistan but cricket's connection with the turbulent socio-political situation of the country cannot be ignored.

Given this historical background, my study also explored why cricket has become a national obsession for both India and Pakistan in the post-independence period. There is no denying the fact that cricket has turned into the leading sports in both India and Pakistan surpassing the popularity of other mass sports like football and hockey. Today, both India and Pakistan are internationally acknowledged as the greatest force in the world of cricket. People of both this

¹¹ Khan, S & Khan, A. (2013) *Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent politics of Sport in Pakistan*. Noida: Harper Sport, p.8

¹² Sarbadhikary, B. (1945). *Indian Cricket Uncovered: Inside Story of Indian Cricket*. kolkata: Illustrated News, p. 65

South Asian countries started to view cricket as a symbolic venue to fulfill their national aspirations. Besides, cricket becomes the binding tool for both the nations which unified their diverse population regardless of class, caste, ethnic, cultural or religious boundaries for the sake of a common national cause. The success of their national teams became synonymous with the collective pride of their nation setting aside the factional struggle within their countries. National cricketers are idealised as national heroes by millions of Indians and Pakistanis. When both the countries have been struggling hard to overcome numerous political and economic challenges, the national glory achieved through cricket gives their people a sigh of relief. The national team's achievement provides an occasion for the people of India and Pakistan to heal from their unfulfilled and broken dreams in their personal lives for the temporary time. It has also been observed that a series of emphatic victories, the gradual growth of cricketing infrastructures, financial reforms, the improvement of media communication, the impact of commercialism etc. have contributed to the rise of cricket in India and Pakistan. My study also highlights that the nationalistic expression goes extreme during the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry as the game still lives under shadow of partition. The long-running rivalry and the profound dysfunctions in their relations after their acrimonious split also echoed in their cricketing relations. Sometimes, the India-Pakistan face-off invokes toxic nationalism and religious fanaticism when sports based loyalty is judged as an important parameter to prove national loyalty from country's people. It is for this very reason, India-Pakistan competitive match often turns out to be a litmus test for the minorities to reaffirm their national allegiance. This phenomenon clearly reveals that the wound of partition has never been cured and very much existent in the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry.

Finally, my study also investigates the role of cricket as a diplomatic tool and confidence building measure between India and Pakistan. But before digging deeper into the role of cricket as a mechanism of easing tensions between the hostile nations, it has been pointed out that

hyper-nationalistic aspect of India-Pakistan cricket rivalry often complements the notion of “war minus shooting”. The never ending political disputes between India and Pakistan often translates into the India-Pakistan cricket matches where every win against the rival team is considered as the national achievement and every loss is equally judged as national humiliation. In this context, Shaharyar Khan’s remark is mention-worthy:

Until 14 August 1947, Pakistan was not on the map of the world. It had no history, no recognizable culture, no identity. On the other hand, India was a known geographical entity with thousands of years of history, identity and culture behind it. Pakistan has since independence sought to fill this void by seeking parity and equality with India. The metaphor minnow ranged against the mighty and established heavyweight. Sport, and particularly cricket, is an avenue where Pakistan has attempted to achieve this parity by matching India’s prowess. Pakistan-India cricket matches reflect this rivalry that encompasses our common history, the recent memory of communal riots, bloodshed and violence of two wars, the break-up of Pakistan that saw the birth of Bangladesh and the national shame of surrounding 93,000 prisoners of war to India.¹³

Further, cricket fraternity also finds it unfortunate that the bilateral cricket series between India and Pakistan have been disrupted a number of times due to the deterioration of their political relations. Hence, the persistent tensions between India and Pakistan have always shaped their cricketing relations too. India-Pakistan relations have always been mired with instabilities and insecurities caused by decade old contentious issues. Both countries fought two wars and a limited conflict over India-Pakistan wars in 1947, 1965 and 1999 over Kashmir. India-Pakistan peace-talks or any kind of diplomatic dialogue went in vain on several times because of their strained relations. It has been witnessed that whenever there is a breakdown of relations between these nuclear armed nations, it is the India-Pakistan cricket series which suffered a

¹³ Khan, S. M. & Khan, A. (2013). *Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent Politics of Sport in Pakistan*. Noida: Harper Sport, p. 40

heavy loss. For Rajdeep Sardesai, “In the Indo-Pak context, the fact that the politicians and the diplomats were unable to melt the ice over the Siachen glacier and the Kashmir valley meant that cricket became both a weapon and a victim of the impasse”.¹⁴ Cricket turned into the strategic arsenal of India by becoming the instrument of sanction diplomacy. India had boycotted Pakistan several times in bilateral series because of the latter’s alleged role in exporting terrorism to India. India banned cricketing ties with Pakistan to affirm its zero tolerance policy for terrorism. Lashing out at Pakistan on the suspension of India’s cricketing ties with them, External Affairs Minister of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar recently commented: “you have terrorism in different parts of the world, but there is no part of the world where a country uses it consciously and deliberately as a large scale industry against its neighbour...Of course everyone wants to talk to their neighbour. The issue is, how do I talk to a country that is conducting terrorism and which frankly I would say follows a policy of implausible deniability”.¹⁵ He further added: “If the dominant narrative of a relationship is of terrorism, suicide bombings, violence and then you say, ‘okay, guys, now tea break, let’s go and play cricket’. That’s very hard narrative to sell to people”¹⁶. “So this is a democracy, the sentiments of people do matter. And the one message I don’t want to give is, you do terrorism by night and it’s business as usual by day. And, unfortunately, that’s the message I would give if I were to follow this one (allow cricket matches between India and Pakistan)”, he emphasized.¹⁷ But the opposite scenario can also be highlighted on this matter. There has also been a strong demand for resumption of the India-Pakistan series in past. For instance, when

¹⁴ Sardesai, R. (2004). *Icons Across Borders*. O. Kureshi, P. Mandhani & R. Kumar (ed.) *India-Pakistan Cricketing Ties: Neighbour’s Pride*. New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, p. 32

¹⁵ ‘Difficult in real life to separate issues’: Jaishankar on suspended India-Pak cricket ties (September 26, 2006). *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/in-us-jaishankar-slams-pakistan-for-using-terrorism-as-legitimate-tool-of-statecraft-6031437/> (Accessed on August 25, 2020)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

India and Pakistan stopped touring each other, Rajeev Shukla, former chairman of Indian Premier League and parliamentarian, strongly batted for the India-Pak cricketing ties in the Rajya Sabha in 2015, questioning government for not giving its clearance to it. “When the Prime Ministers are meeting; Foreign Ministers are meeting; Foreign secretaries and NSAs are meeting; only the cricketers are not being allowed to play. Everyone is creating problem on that. When mangoes and sarees are being exchanged and their trade is taking place and everyone between two countries are meeting, only the cricketers are not allowed to meet and play. When everything is happening, why not allow the cricket teams to play also. The Government should explain and come out with a statement.”¹⁸ Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha in reply said: “I think that is a suggestion on which the government should look into it.”¹⁹ Mushtaq Mohammad, the Pakistan stalwart also said in a personal interview that he feels upset because India Pakistan are not playing each other since long time. According to him, the cricketing relations between the two countries was different in his time. He strongly feels that cricket has the charisma which can bring the people of the two countries closer. Cherishing his deep bond with former Indian captain Bishan Singh Bedi, Mushtaq said: “political differences never stopped us from sharing a cordial relationship. We both played for the same county team Northamptonshire. We stayed in England for 6 years. It is cricket which made our friendship strong.”²⁰ For him, the bilateral series between India and Pakistan should be reinitiated, overcoming the political stalemate. Thus, cricket has become integrally connected with the different political trajectories of India-Pakistan relations. Sometimes, cricket turned into the

¹⁸ Shukla, R. (December 7, 2015) “Discussion: Re. demand for seeking information on recent developments in India’s Engagement with Pakistan”. Parliament of India, Official Debates of Rajya Sabha. *Ministry: Minority Affairs, Parliamentary Affairs*. Part 2 (Other than Question and Answer), Session Number- 237, p. 11. Retrieved from

https://rsdebate.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/656063/1/ID_237_07122015_p8_p11_10.pdf
(Accessed on June 20, 2021)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Personal Interview with Mohammad, M. (Dated: May 19, 2022), [Personal Communication, Telephone]

strategic arsenal of states by becoming the instrument of sanction diplomacy. Similarly, cricketing venues have also been used as an opportunity to initiate peace talks.

Cricket also served as a diplomatic and confidence building tool. Cricket diplomacy came into prominence when Pakistani President Zia Ul Haq introduced the term. Since then, state premiers from both sides of the borders have tried to play the card of cricket diplomacy to enhance diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif wanted to foster ties between the nuclear neighbours through the adoption of cricket diplomacy as a result of which a two-match series were played between India and Pakistan in 1999. India's friendship tour of Pakistan in 2004 turned out to be path-breaking tour in the history of India Pakistan cricketing relations. This tour had successfully strengthened the ground of mutual friendship and people-to-people interactions between the people of conflicting nations. The intention behind this tour was reflected in Vajpayee government's message for the Indian players before the starting of the tournament: "Don't just win the games. Win the hearts of the people as well". Thus, 2004 India's tour to Pakistan can be considered as the most successful tour in terms of meeting the diplomatic goals. As Shaharyar Khan who had served as the chairman of PCB for nearly three years remarks:

At the cricketing level, the loss of both series was extremely disappointing. A torrent of criticism was directed at the players, the coach, and the board, with Test players and cricket commentators highlighting Pakistan's cricketing failure at every level...

However, in the public relation domain the Indian tour had been an unbelievable success. It left a benchmark at the political level that raised people to people goodwill levels that neither government could disregard. The spirit between the Pakistani and Indian fans reflected a desire for peace regardless of the daunting issues, like Kashmir, that divided the two nations for nearly 60 years. The presence of the Quad-e-Azami's family in Lahore, Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi in Karachi, and a bevy of Indian VIPs heading 20,000 Indian

*cricket supporters, added a special flavor to the series that the public and media began to call the Friendship series.*²¹

In 2005, General Parvez Musharaff, the President of Pakistan visited India accepting the invitation from Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to watch the ongoing India-Pakistan cricket series. Both the leaders wanted to spread peace message through this cricket series. They also viewed the series as an historic chance to strike a deal over Kashmir disputes. In 2011, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gillani tried to revive peace talks on the sidelines of Cricket World Cup. Following this context, it can be argued that whenever India-Pakistan ties disrupted, cricket was used as a diplomatic forum to facilitate dialogues between them. Most importantly, cricket played a monumental role as a confidence-building measure which helped the people of both countries to come close setting aside their decades of mistrust. On several occasions, India-Pakistan cricketing rivalries created the ground for fans interactions. There are countless stories about how warm cricketing encounters between the two belligerent South Asian countries championed the cause of unity and harmony between the people of both sides of the border devoid of terror and war. Previously, India-Pakistan bilateral cricket series encouraged the fans to visit their ancestral home and embrace the warmth and love of the neighbouring country. In this way, Indo-Pak bilateral cricket matches often proved to be instrumental in restraining the enemy narratives being nurtured by the ceaseless mutual animosity between India and Pakistan. The previous analysis further showed how India-Pak cricket series encouraged peace talks among common people of both countries breaking the barriers of years-long hatred and enmity. It has further been clarified that India-Pakistan cricketing ties can turn out to be a greater sign of optimism if it strengthens rapprochement between them beyond the boundaries of mutual suspicion and

²¹ Khan, S & Khan, A. (2013) *Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent politics of Sport in Pakistan*. Noida: Harper Sport, pp. 69-70

hostility. Following this discussion about the role of cricket as a diplomatic tool in shaping India-Pakistan relations, it can be said that India-Pakistan cricketing encounters not only extended the scope for Track II diplomacy in which the heads of states and other official leaders used the cricketing platform as a diplomatic forum to facilitate unofficial dialogues on sensitive issues but also enhanced the ground of Track III diplomacy by promoting people-to-people contact between the common citizens of two countries which had led “ordinary Indians and Pakistanis to see and appreciate each other’s cricketers as gifted human beings rather than cold, ruthless figures from an alien land”.²² Finally, it can be stated that although cricket does not possess the high-capability to end hostilities between India and Pakistan single-handedly but the universal aura of cricket can assist a process of negation between the governments of two countries by ensuring the atmosphere of positive peace if it is strategised within the long-term and well calculated policy framework. Last but no least to say that media has been playing a massive role in shaping the public opinion with respect to India-Pakistan relations. The mediated construction of cricket in the contemporary world cannot be overlooked in the backdrop of India-Pakistan cricketing encounters. Sometimes, media have dubbed India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry as mimic warfare with fabricated jingoistic reporting. With the increasing influence of social media, inflammation of nationalistic sentiments is widely evident centering on the India-Pakistan flagpole cricketing battle. Likewise, Indian and Pakistani media houses also positively shaped India-Pakistan relations by popularizing the sentiments conducive to peace. They advocated the message for peace, trust-building and people-to-people interactions across the border. Social media also emerged as a viable mechanism through which the common people’s perception can be moulded in a positive direction which can transform the mutual hatred of both countries into mutual love and friendship.

²² Guha, R. (2002). *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. Gurgaon: Allen Lane, Penguin, p.408

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Annexure – I



The Test Captains: A. H. Kardar and L. Amarnath (Pakistan Cricket Team's Tour of India; Season, 1952/53). Source: Inaugural Test Matches by A. H. Kardar [Book/Memoir]



Official Souvenir of Pakistan Tour in India, 1952. Courtesy: Apurba Panda.

Annexure-II



Group photo of the Rest of the World XI. Sitting (left to right), Grout, Sobers, Reid, Pataudi, myself. Standing, (left to right), Kanhai, Gibbs, Hall, Griffith, Bland, Barlow and Hunte

Rest of the World XI, 1966. Source: Playing For Pakistan: An Autobiography by Hanif Mohammed.

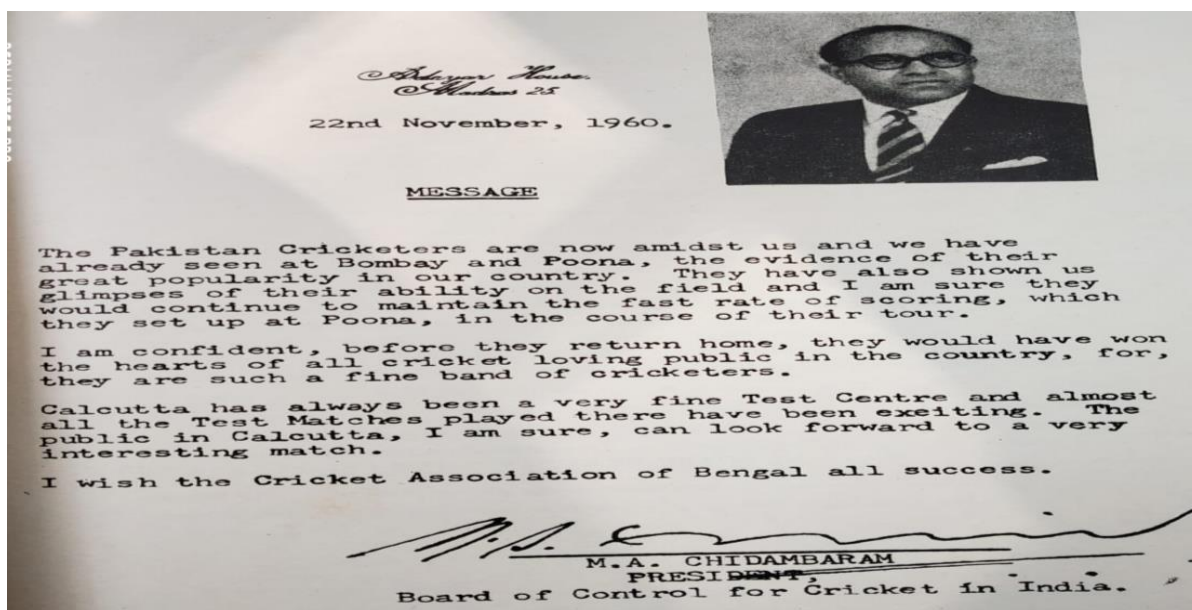


Hanif Mohammed with Mansur Ali Khan of Pataudi, Rest of the World XI, 1966. Source: Playing For Pakistan: An Autobiography by Hanif Mohammed.

Annexure III



Source: Official Souvenir – Pakistan vs. India, 1960-61



Message of M. A. Chidambaram, President of Board of Control for Cricket in India for the India-Pakistan series 1960/61. Source: Official Souvenir, Cricket Association of Bengal 1960-61.

Annexure IV



Mr. Mohammad Ali, the Honourable Prime Minister witnessing the Fifth Cricket Test Match between Pakistan and India on 28.2.55. Source: Memoirs of an All Rounder, A. H. Kardar.



The India and Pakistani Cricket Test Teams were invited to tea at Governor-General's House on March 2, 1955. The members of the teams being presented to H. E. Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, Governor General of Pakistan. Source: Memoirs of an All Rounder, A. H. Kardar.

Annexure V



General Zia meeting the Pakistan national team during the 1987 'cricket diplomacy' tour of India. Source: All Round View by Imran Khan.

Annexure VI

Since my research is mainly constructed upon subjective experiences, several interviews have been taken with unstructured and open-ended questions to have an in-depth understanding of my selected research area. For this, personal experiences and narrations from different respondents such as cricketers, academicians, journalists, and Board administrators have been considered most valuable to gather detailed information about my research topic.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Abdul Majid Bhatti, senior sports journalist, author and cricket analyst at Pakistan's largest network Gio News

Arunabha Sengupta, Cricket writer and historian.

Asif Iqbal, former captain of the Pakistan national cricket team.

Daljit Singh, Indian former first class cricketer and the Chairman of pitches and ground committee, BCCI

Gautam Bhattacharya, Senior journalist, author, anchor, commentator

Kausik Bandyopadhyay, Professor, West Bengal State University and Sports historian.

Mr. Nirangshu pal, son of former Indian legendary footballer Gostho pal

Mustaq Mohammad, former captain and coach of the Pakistan national cricket team.

Pranab Roy, former Indian Test cricketer and son of legendary cricketer Pankaj Roy

Salim Parvez, Cricket historian and writer, Pakistan.

Sanjay jagdale, former Indian cricketer and former member of the Selection Committee, BCCI.

Souvik Naha, Senior Lecturer at University of Glasgow, Sports historian.