Chapter – 1

Contours of the Study

1.1. Introduction

India is a symbol of plurality, where so many cultures flourish, languages find their saga of origin and zenith, people are diverse in their rituals, religion and taste, a thing that binds this emotionally fervent country is cricket. Purely European and complex, cricket promotes British style of lordship and gentlemanliness, ended up in having a love affair with passionate Indian masses. Nothing comes faster in the sports pages of Indian newspapers, than a cricket win, lose or controversy. Cricketers are more than role models to be worshiped by many across age groups. The influence of cricket in India can be understandable from the fact that, so far, only a cricketer could be conferred with the country’s highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna. Cricket had outperformed other sports in terms of viewership and revenue generation.

Clinching eight gold medals at the Olympics and one world cup trophy in the shelves, hockey has also been a popular game. Although, personalities like hockey player Dhyan Chandra, sprinters like Milkha Singh and P.T. Usha, tennis players Leander Paes and Sania Mirza, shooter Abhinav Bindra, and boxer Mary Kom had made their mark at the world arena in their respective sports, cricket and cricketers often overshadow other players in terms of media coverage. News media holds cricket such important information to update, that the scores of the cricket match is continuously displayed in the corner of the television screen, even during the regular bulletins. Cricketers enjoy celebrity status, thereby claiming the coverage they get. With the advent of new media, Indian cricket fans are provided with latest updates on their mobile phones, anywhere and everywhere. Live streaming of the cricket matches on the websites enables the fans to cheer their team and celebrate at the work stations during the working hours. It also provides enormous space to interact with the players and post their comment as feedback. Online sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Foursquare, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, blogs, and live chats provide such platforms. Social media are efficient in reaching many fans with speed, carrying ample amounts of information, and most importantly providing pedestals for interaction.
During the last half century, Indian cricket has earned over a billion ardent devotees, lucrative deals for media and advertisers, inflow of money by the corporate and has eventually changed the colonial and orthodox ideologies tied up with the game. It has revamped the hangover of colonial rule to India’s favorite leisure activity. The introduction of IPL (Indian Premier League) has made India the epicenter of world cricket. Played under flood lights, surrounded by star studded roaring crowd led by agile cheer leaders, watts of music, HD cameras capturing every inch of the action, it has swelled into an extravagant globalised stage. Stars of the game worldwide proudly get themselves auctioned for an Indian corporate owner and display their skills representing an Indian regional team.

In this globalised and jovial apparatus, Indian media seems to follow the thumb rule ‘where there is passion there is profit’. Zoom in to any channel, pickup any newspaper, cricket has become an indispensable topic suggesting that media today is obsessed with reporting cricket. Specialized programs like ‘cricket controversies’, ‘kissa cricket ka’ (story of cricket), ‘match ke mujrim’ (criminals of the match), ‘straight drive’ and ‘silly point’, to name a few, are regularly aired on the television news channels. To add on spice celebrities are made out of cricketers. Their personal life is discussed, their dating, their marriage, their brand endorsements, their Bollywood connections, even a holiday with family becomes news in the media. Famous cricketer Yuvraj Singh sighted with Bollywood actress Dipika Padukone by paparazzi was the latest in array of events. Cricket on television is a boon for advertisers because commercials can be shown every five minutes or so, after each over, this combined with the need for the new channels to fill their schedules meant more and more matches being shown. Further the success of films like “Lagaan”, a cricket match as its backdrop, was India’s entry in the Oscars, speaks volumes about the popularity of the game and how media reports it.

The Indian print media has also shown very similar response towards cricket and has left no stone unturned in sensationalizing cricket stories. In every newspaper, sensational cricket stories lead the space compared to other sports. A case study of the Chennai based leading English sports weekly ‘Sports Star’ reveals that, it neglected all the non-cricket sports including Indian hockey and football. The magazine ignored Indian sportswomen, and gives preference to foreign over Indian sportspersons. It also pays no heed to multi-games sporting events such as Afro-Asian games and
Commonwealth games held at the time of study. Reacting to the ongoing media attention towards cricket, famous cricketer and former Indian cricket captain Sunil Gavaskar says; “The English media have switched off cricket after the exit of their team from the 1999 world cup. They can turn to football, where England is aiming to qualify for the Euro 2000, and if that does not come about, they can turn to tennis at Wimbledon which starts a day after the cricket World Cup finishes, and if there is disappointment there also, then they can talk about golf, then Grand Prix racing. The beauty is that even though none of their sportspersons are in the top of any sport, their media will pin their hopes on English sportspersons and build them up till their exit, after which they will whine and moan for a few days and then turn to the next sport. Unfortunately for Indians, that is not the case, for cricket is a passion to the detriment of other sports. This is not good, for talented persons in other sports just do not get the exposure, leave alone the commercial opportunities that cricket gets.”

Commenting on the situation famous cricket commentator of a popular sports channel Star Sports, Harsha Bhogle argued “Modern sports are increasingly about selling of television rights, team sponsorship and player contracts. In most places in the world, all this is preceded by team performance. When a team plays well, television companies are interested, so are sponsors and contracts get bigger. Indian cricket is among the rarest examples in civilization where all this is independent of performance. Putting the blame on the audiences he questions, would you continue to buy bags that rip open? Milk, which has gone bad? A magazine, with blank pages? Would you not demand that manufacturers give you better products? Then why do you not, viewers and readers, demand better products from our cricket administrators.”

It is noticed that, the media often run after its short term goals of profit prioritization and ignore its social mission of giving preference to what is in public interest than what is of public interest. This in turn leads to increasing emphasis on content types expected to increase circulation. Through such reporting, as the media claim, it is just fulfilling its social mission of keeping the citizens informed about the happenings in

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
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the society. The long drawn argument continues that media shows what people want or people are bound to be exposed to what media wants them to see.

Against this backdrop of the strengthening perception that news media is increasingly focusing on reporting of cricket as compared to other sports, this study attempts to unearth reality by exploring answers to the following pertinent questions:

Has the news media increased its coverage of cricket and cricketers over other sports?

If yes, has it simply kept pace with the rising popularity of cricket in the society?

What drives news media’s growing coverage of cricket?

How does media project sportspersons, specially cricketers?

What are the distinctive aspects of form or content that makes daily news reports of cricket continuously interesting to the public?

How are the other sports reported in the print media?

Have the attempts to make sports reports interesting to the readers eventually led to a change in the concept of sports journalism in terms of style and design?

The present study, “Media representation of sports and sport persons: a study of trends with specific reference to cricket in India” is intended to find answers to the above questions and many more by tracing down the trends in coverage and representation of news related to sports specifically cricket. It also seeks to review the definition of sports news in the context of the changing nature of sports reporting in the media. Further, it attempts to explore the changing trends in sports reporting and style in reporting of sports news.

1.2. Importance of the study

The Indian media market, as it is increasingly referred to for its market driven contents, is the fastest growing free press in the world. In India, the booming economy is providing a sustained boost to print media along with the electronic media. The news media sectors are growing – indeed, faster than the economy itself. Strengthening economic and social fundamentals such as growing literacy rates and a strengthening newspaper reading culture are boosting the newspaper readership and
hence its circulation in India. Despite the revolutions in electronic media, especially the new information and communication technologies (ICTs), the newspapers in India are registering a steady growth in their circulation.

Increasing involvement of international media groups in the Indian print media sector through foreign direct investment, mergers, and alliances are also contributing to the improving health of the Indian print media. Better technology, infrastructure, increase in newsgathering budget, multicolour printing has made the newspaper a better product. The ongoing phenomenon of media morphosis continues to make newspaper reading a pleasant experience and a rewarding pursuit for Indians. The demographic data in India inspires one to believe that the Indian print media is here to stay and continue to play a very important role in keeping the people informed, educated, and entertained, at least in the near future. Newspaper reading being a rewarding pursuit to its citizens is what a free media state desires to protect and promote, which contributes to the document domain’s sustained relevance in India. Alongside the morphosis, the media has also got commercialized. Profit prioritization has shifted emphasis to market driven media content eventually giving birth to concepts like sensationalist and celebrity-driven journalism. The developments have engaged the public in a debate about standards and ethics of journalism. In this new scheme of things, portrayal of cricket as a brand and projection of cricketers as celebrities induce researchers to ask flurry of questions. Is the outgrown celebrity status of cricketers in India a deliberate creation of media? Does the out of skin coverage given to cricket and cricketers hamper the status of other games? Do the media misuse its freedom in promoting cricket over other games, ostensibly, to ripe financial gains through advertising and sponsorships? Does the Indian media’s scheme of news priority contribute to the nation as a sports power in the making? These are the pertinent questions an aspiring sports power must not ignore to answer. The findings might give insights into our state of preparedness and the media’s role.

It is widely believed that the Indian public’s craziness for cricket is more or less the media’s own making. Some recent Bollywood films featuring sports such as sprinting in Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, hockey in Chak De India, cycling and athletics in Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar, but to name a few, support this story. The huge audience response to these films making them super hit at the box office conveys volumes about the
public’s love for these games. With proper media attention these sports can be huge brands.

At a time when India aspires to be a world leader, it cannot afford to ignore sports, which is one of the important indicators of overall prosperity and healthy citizenship. The attitude of media to get profit out of passion of cricket seems to break the moral of other players especially the budding talents involved in sports other than cricket. The name and fame a cricketer gets in the country, diverts the attention of youngsters from their talent as they want to become a Sachin Tendulkar or a Mahendra Singh Dhoni only. With this psyche, the country’s dream to become a true world leader may be an over expectation. India has never even qualified for the World cup of football since 1950, which is the most popular sport of the world. Indian hockey had a legacy, but in recent times it has also doomed. Till today, we don’t have a single medal in any track and field event in Olympics. Every young talent in India wants to become a cricketer, because of the name and fame imbided in it by the media. Every sportsman, representing the country in any sporting event, is a hero of the nation and deserves appreciation by the public, government and the media as well.

In Europe and America, social forces are working to check mainstream news media consumption. People also get the kind of on-demand information best provided online. In India, neither we have strong social organizations to scrutinize media consumption, nor are voluntary efforts in place to check its content. Understanding how media reports sports news especially cricket, will be a step forward for developing a policy and institutional framework, to help our media conform to its social obligations. The fact and figures provided by the study may emerge as a building block in framing the future sports policies.

1.3. Review of literature

As put forth by Boria Majumdar (2006)\(^4\) in “The Lost Histories of Indian Cricket”, modern cricket has immense political, economic and social potential and a widespread appeal across India. Therefore, governments, cricket’s governing bodies and players, sponsors and fans, all try obstinately to exert control over the game, which is certain to result in future furors. Majumdar has tried to present the lost stories and tales.

which deserve mention in the annals of our cricket history, but have been relegated to the dusty shelves of archives. Many of the accounts he presented are captivating stories of intrigue and power play, including controversies of yesteryears, which have faded away into oblivion.

Daya Kishan Thussu (2007) in “Media on the Move” notes that, the new communications technology, especially the Internet, is creating transnational solidarities and cultural identities.

Eileen Kennedy and Laura Hills (2009) in their book “Sport Media and Society” claim that, “Sport has become a powerful vehicle for mediating meanings and feelings in the society. Every image of sport in the media evokes a wealth of associations, constructing a lens through which to view society. Inevitably, the picture we see conveys all the complexities of contemporary cultural politics”. They tried to provide the analytical concepts and methodological approaches used in studying the sport media, through original case studies. They emphasized the need to interact critically with media sport by drawing out the complex intersections of social issues within a variety of sport media. The book in a way aimed at transforming the experience of consuming media sport into an analysis of this fascinating facet of culture. The chapter “Sport and the Press” presented an insight into how newspapers use words and images to construct discourses of sport. Newspapers are thus shown, to use sport to engage in a dialogue with readers, constructing mythic communities, based on assumptions of shared values.

Dunning, Malcolm and Waddington (2004) in their book “Sport Histories” presented the development of modern sports through ten case studies. The book addressed the genesis and growth of both- sports which have formed central foci of research and discussion in the sociology and history of sport like soccer (football), rugby, baseball, boxing and cricket – as well as sports which have been relatively neglected - shooting, motor racing, tennis, gymnastics and Japanese martial arts. There are discourses on contact sports and non-contact sports, as well as individual and team sports, ball sports and non-ball sports, sports the modern forms of which began to develop in the

eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and sports which were codified, not only in Britain, but also in France, the United States and Japan.

Lawrence A. Wenner (1998)\(^8\) in his book ‘Media Sport’ talked of sports as a channel through which feelings, values, and priorities are communicated. Today, sports have dominated the world media. The media is showing ever-increasing enthusiasm towards coverage of sports, as a means to devise strategies for penetration into new markets. Sport has become a content as well as mode of communication, which has reached great heights. The advent of twenty first century has seen this cultural fusing of sport with communication, which has resulted in a new genetic strain called Media Sport.

Analyzing the development of sports in Western Europe in his book ‘Body and Mind: Sport in Europe from the Roman Empire to the Renaissance’, John McClelland (2007)\(^9\) claim that, “Sport for many has replaced religion as a source of emotional catharsis and spiritual passion, and for many, since it is among the earliest of memorable childhood experiences, it infiltrates memory, shapes enthusiasms, serves fantasies”. He also claim that, political structures, educational systems, religious institutions, warfare, technology and medicine shaped sport over the long course of history. Considering the political, cultural, economic, spiritual and aesthetic power of sport in the twenty first century, a new and original perspective on the relationship between sport and society is revealed.

Presenting a unique and involving account of the Indian cricket phenomenon in his book ‘The Magic of Indian Cricket’ Mihir Bose (2006)\(^10\) claim that, Indian cricket has been a major driving force in the world game. It developed from initially being a colonial pastime to its transforming into a national passion and now wielding global power. Indian cricket has almost become indispensable to modern India’s identity, culture and society. He discussed the game in terms of race, caste, politics, national consciousness and ambition, money, celebrity and the media, evoking all the unpredictability, frustration and glory, which mark the magic of Indian cricket.

Presenting an intricate relationship between growth of media to growth of sports and games J.V. Vilanilam (2005)\(^{11}\) in his book ‘Mass Communication in India: A Sociological Perspective’ argue that, “Media has become great promoters of games and sports”. Sports have transcended the status of merely being human activities, into a huge money-minting business. He also claims the nexus between the advertisers, corporate, media and sports, especially cricket.

Boyle and Haynes (2009)\(^{12}\) in their book ‘Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture’ claimed that sport has become more a central component of mainstream popular culture as well as economic, political and public discourse. He even argued that a more commercially focused, demand-led, 24/7 media system has helped to facilitate the seemingly insatiable appetite for particular sporting discourses. More and more mainstream coverage is devoted to sporting stories and the stars that the media sport industries work so hard to create, and the media management and PR industries work so hard to sustain and extract a commercial value for them. He also discussed that, the advent of digital broadcasting has signaled a new phase in the evolution of a relationship between sport and the media.

In his book ‘Sports Journalism: Context and Issues’ Boyle (2006)\(^{13}\) explores the impact of increased competition among and across media outlets on journalistic practice as, for example newspapers increasingly position sports coverage as an important part of their wider brand identity in the marketplace.

According to the sociology of sport literature, creation of giant media conglomerates is one of the key aspects of the current sport globalization process. Law, Harvey and Kemp, (2002)\(^{14}\) examined the corporate structure of six major media/entertainment conglomerates to understand some of the details of these holdings which unpack the ‘circuits of promotion’ being formed through media platforms and content convergence. The study also analyzed how these competitors are also involved in several joint ventures, which connect them together, thus forming a dense web despite their rivalries. It claims that democratic interventions at the national and global levels


were very much required to ensure that sport media consumers do not remain easy targets of the global media/entertainment oligopoly.

Mehta (2007)\textsuperscript{15} in his study, tried to plot the growth of Indian television and exhibit its crucial role in making cricket integral to modern notions of Indian identity. He found that, both television as well as cricket mutually benefits each other and indeed the massive infusion of capital from Indian television has transformed the world of cricket. The enormous money that television has generated for cricket has also transformed India into the spiritual and financial heart of the global cricket industry. In this process, however, hockey and other sports have been left behind owing to the harsh realities of capitalism and expanding markets.

Tuggle (2004)\textsuperscript{16} quantitatively examined the coverage given to women’s athletics by ESPN Sports Center and CNN Sports Tonight, India's two nightly sports news/highlights programs. The two programs were found to devote only about five percent of their air time to women's sports. Other measures, such as story placement and use of on-camera comments also indicated an emphasis on men's athletics. It was also found that the news stories centered more on individual competition, while women’s team sports received negligible coverage.

Gupta (2009)\textsuperscript{17} explored the reasons for India emerging at an excellent position in international cricket and how the creation of Indian Premier League (IPL) is a giant leap in the metamorphosis of the power structure in international sports. The article argued that, India has learnt the lessons of globalization (as they apply to sport) and has shown the wisdom to create a new national cricket league that has an international character. The study claims that, the success of the IPL and similar sporting ventures in non-western countries would set the stage for challenging the West’s sporting monopoly and authority to determine where and how the game is played.


\textsuperscript{17} Gupta, A. (2009). India and the IPL: Cricket's Globalized Empire. \textit{The Round Table}, 98 (401), 201-211.
Ganguly (2005)\textsuperscript{18} studied culture of politics and the politics of culture, specially cricket in South Asia. The study aimed to examine the way global media networks created a revenue generating programming format in live broadcasts of cricket games - beamed to the 'nation' - but more importantly a national consciousness through the watching of the games. While corporate media grapples with state regulatory policies for broadcast rights, political agendas claim media networks and popular culture. Questions of political capacity, preferences and leadership therefore spill over the international political-economic structures and state regulatory frameworks into prime time television and 'nations' watching a game of cricket. In looking at the uneasy conjuncture of corporate media, state and mass viewership he argues that political capacities and choices are not limited to the level of the state only but informed at given junctures of political, economic and cultural moments within a historical specificity.

Discussing celebrity involvement in Indian public sphere, Jaideep Mukharjee (2004)\textsuperscript{19} in his article narrates that, alongside the genuine activities media also spotlight the stars of showbiz, society and sport. It also juxtaposes the history of Indian media and its ability to make celebrities.

To claim that, Indian society has tactical support for media censorship, Gupta (2005)\textsuperscript{20} in his work on status of Indian press and its development argue that, the future of censorship is very bright in India -in media, culture and intellectual life. He adds that one need not be taken in by political postures and academic correctness, and indeed the politicians, the bureaucracy, the literati and the middle class love censorship. They all talk of freedom only for their own ideas, lifestyles and moral codes, while they advocate censorship for others.

A study by Wendy (1999)\textsuperscript{21} says that despite the fact that cricket is almost embedded in our traditions and culture, it has had to adapt to changing value systems. It has never enjoyed the stability that it deserved. Over the years, cricket has changed

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according to the changing rules, rituals and understanding of the society. The globalization of culture has been the major factor leading to cricket's commercialization, commodification and revamping as spectacle. However, cricket continues to be a strong source of ideologies. The very nature of the game, its organization and the values linked with it have all seen a makeover, in cricket of the empire as well as in globalized cricket.

A study by Mehta, Gemmell, and Malcolm (2009)\(^\tiny{22}\) says that, the game of cricket has become a symbol for the forces of globalization and a medium for emphasizing new post-colonial identities. India has emerged as the new financial hub of cricket and particularly, the formation of the Indian Premier League India has ushered in a new era of cricket consumerism. The study examined the discourse around the Indian Premier League, debates around cricket’s new ‘Asian bloc’ and the racism row between the Indian and Australian cricket teams in January 2008, to describe how the international power dynamics of the game have changed and its connotation for the post-colonial, globalized world.

Seeking to analyse the trends in sports on celluloid, Gooptu (2004)\(^\tiny{23}\) outlined the Indian social status and romance about cricket and pointed out that Lagaan was the only sport/cricket film that not only achieved phenomenal success, but has also achieved cult status as the first ‘crossover’ Bollywood film. His study reveals the development of Indian cricket with the help of corporate finance, sponsors and media. He claims that the success of Lagaan saw other Bollywood producers and directors toying with cricket.

Wagg and Ugra (2009)\(^\tiny{24}\) studied the discourse based on controversies surrounding Australian ex-Test cricketer Greg Chappell, during his tenure as coach of the Indian cricket team between 2005 and 2007. They used the media discourse on Chappell to outline the shift in Indian cricket culture in the context of contemporary Indian society, globalization and the East-West relations within the global economy. It was found that Chappell’s tenure as coach of Team India marked the evolution of a global


cricket technocracy. It almost leveled out, or threatened to level out the historic
differences that existed in national cricket cultures.

Bandyopadhyay, (2008) explored the way India-Pakistan cricket tours have been
represented by the media, taking into account the domestic political debates, sub-
continental diplomatic relations and purely cricketing arch-rivalry. He found that the
eyearly 2004 tour of Pakistan by team India evoked a wide variety of responses by the
Indian masses. It marked the beginning of cricket being considered as a multi-pronged
weapon. It could be a political instrument to generate electoral confidence, a
diplomatic ploy to accelerate peace process, an economic means to improve the
neighbor’s financial distress, a cultural arena to assert cricketing muscle, an emotional
tool to soothe traditional enmity, and many more. The study concluded that the
obvious popular perception of an ever-rising enmity stands in striking contrast to the
friendly ties between the two cricket boards at international level. Indeed cricket
remains one strong link that could aid in the normalization of relations between the
two neighboring countries.

Tuggle and Huffman (2001) in their study noted that, though during the starting
days of television, it was thought that live coverage of news events would be
extremely rare, but on the contrary, live coverage became pervasive. They examined
the live coverage of events by television and found that stations in sampled-markets
aired more stories containing a live element than they aired standard reporter
packages. However, in most cases TV stations could not justify the necessity of going
live, further reinforcing the contention that new age television newsrooms are being
controlled by technology and not by journalism.

Nalapat & Parker’s (2005) analysis suggest that, by studying the autobiographical
details of sporting celebrities, cultural change can be observed, interpreted and
analyzed. The study reviewed the image of India’s sporting tycoon Sachin Tendulkar
in terms of its contribution to debates surrounding politics, religion and Indian
nationalism. The basis of the study is that though Tendulkar affords all the hallmarks

of celebrity status, his identity remains rooted within the context of certain political and nationalistic values. His iconic status especially in his own country is shaped by these very values.

Walker (2006)\(^\text{28}\) examined the development of sports journalism during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (1870 to 1914), a period of significant change within the provincial press. Previous research suggested that the coverage of sports news within the local newspapers had a role in building local and regional identities. This study investigated how far this argument is supported by the analysis of the Lincolnshire press. Increasingly, the identity of local press titles was, to an extent, shaped and defined through their sports coverage. This enabled newspapers to distinguish themselves from neighboring rivals. The article examined the sports coverage appearing within the local press as contrasted with that in mainstream national press.

McChesney (1997)\(^\text{29}\) noted that, the world faced a new challenge in the name of a few media conglomerates controlling the power structure in the global media. He adds, “A specter now haunts the world: a global commercial media system dominated by a small number of super-powerful, mostly U.S.-based transnational media corporations. It is a system that works to advance the cause of the global market and promote commercial values, while denigrating journalism and culture not conducive to the immediate bottom line or long-run corporate interests. It is a disaster for anything but the most superficial notion of democracy—a democracy where, to paraphrase John Jay's maxim, those who own the world ought to govern it”.

While attempting to explain why cricket flourished like no other game did in India, a study by Boria Majumdar and Sean Brown (2007)\(^\text{30}\) claim that, in countries like the Americas, there were attempts to dissociate American sport from British sport, while in countries like India since the Empire lasted far longer, the intention was to appropriate and subsequently indigenize British sports for purposes of resistance. The nationalist movement in India had made it necessary that cricket should be adopted as


a non-violent means of confronting the British rule. The authors have discussed promotion of such nationalism in order to decode this long existing dichotomy.

Boria Majumdar’s (2007)\textsuperscript{31} study argues that, cricket in 21\textsuperscript{st} century India is close to being labeled a truly postcolonial sport. On the one hand, it has detached all connections with the colonial past. And on the other it contributes to identifying and fixing some of the problems in contemporary Indian society. He claims that, euphoria engulfs the nation as soon as the world cup comes and an otherwise sane country goes frenzied triggering all time high cricket commerce. The fortunes of the Indian cricket team are considered to reflect the postcolonial India and the performance of eleven men decides the behavior of a billion people.

In a study on role of Indian television in transforming international cricket Boria Majumdar (2008)\textsuperscript{32} discussed the way Board of Control for Cricket in India has begun to finance global tournaments purely for the Indian television market. This illustrates the complex nature of what has come to be called globalisation and establishes the fact that satellite television is one of the most obvious symbols of globalisation. He also talked of cricket coverage on Bengali television shows saying that the marriage of television and cricket has converted the game into a national passion with people connecting their patriotic feelings with cricket.

Attempting to unleash the Indian history of cricket and politics of race during colonial India social historian and cricket writer Ramchandra Guha (1997)\textsuperscript{33} claims that, newspapers of British India used to report the game played between the rulers and the ruled. The nationalist newspapers used to highlight the triumph of the Asians over the Europeans. Cricket and journalism played an important role in believing that the endless power of the Europeans could be brought to an end.

David Rowe (2003)\textsuperscript{34} explores the role of mega-media sports festivals like the summer Olympic Games and the football World Cup, as important indicators of globalization. Sociologists of sport have raised questions on the so-called power of

sports leading to globalization, referring to various empirical instances. It also examined the relationship between social institution of sport and cultural differences of nation.

Jones Ken (2000)\textsuperscript{35} discusses the decline in popular sports writing in the journals. He draws out the changes in sports journalism before the period of the Second World War and after that. He pointed out that, “the determined romanticism of a more innocent age had yielded to higher standards of journalism.” Globalization and immediacy of television changed the overall pattern of sports writing. Unearthing scandals and controversies had taken the front seat in the agenda of sport writers.

Hagerty Bill (2005)\textsuperscript{36} in his article “It’s Cricket, but is it journalism?” interviewed some sports journalists and track down the changes in the trend of sports reporting in radio specially test match specials. The study suggests that, the trend of reporting cricket became more than expert summaries, it also composed of jokes, and light commentary. In his words, “the commentary boxes feature practical jokes, the chocolate cakes sent by listeners and devoured on air and the public-school-style nicknames adopted by the TMS team”.

Paul Dimeo & Joyce Kay (2004)\textsuperscript{37} in their study on response of the international press to the co-hosting of the 1996 Cricket World Cup by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, claims that, event of world cup of cricket has been used to some sort of positive image building by the press. It claimed that before the event due to instability in the region as a result of cross border tensions between India and Pakistan and civil war in Sri-Lanka, the international media projected a negative image of this region.

Rosalind O’Hanlon (2007)\textsuperscript{38} outlines the major military skills which were treated as compulsory part of the repertoire needed for a complete gentleman of the medieval society of India. Skills like wrestling, horse riding, archery and swordsmanship were indispensable for military preparations and were given patronage by the kings. The practice in the peace time was treated as the favorite pass time of the society.

\textsuperscript{36} Hagerty, B. (2005). It’s cricket, but is it journalism? British Journalism Review, 16 (3), 79-84.
Matthew Engel (2001) in his study explored the trends in sports coverage in the journals of England. The study brought forward the fact that the volume of sports reporting has increased over the years. In his words, “this is the culmination of a trend that has been evident from several years, although at first mainly in the Sunday papers. Now all four general daily broadsheets have increased their sports coverage by previously unimaginable amounts. And in May this year, both the Times and the daily Telegraph took the obvious next step and began daily standalone sports sections. The pictures also took over the space of news reporting in this new trend.”

Boyle and Haynes (2002) drew down the paradigm shift towards new media and sports experience of the fans to conclude that the new media opened a whole bunch of opportunities for fans as now they can watch anything, anywhere and anytime. They figure out the implications of global, networked multimedia driven communications on understanding of sport and media sport relationship. They conclude that, “we now stand on the verge of the next stage development of the sport driven by changes and opportunities that the evolving media landscape offers.”

C.H. Neels Van Heerden et al (2004) tried to explore the relationship between media exposure and sponsor recall relating to the Cricket World Cup 2003 (CWC 2003). The author attempted to examine the application of sponsorship as a communication construct and recall as a media vehicle effect. A survey of university students was conducted by exposing them to a self-administered questionnaire aimed to gauge their exposure to CWC 2003 events. It was found that there existed a relationship between media exposure and sponsorship of sporting events like cricket World Cup. The main conclusion was that an event sponsor has to manage its sponsorship expenditure through the incorporation of other marketing communication elements to improve its success rate.

To quote the author, Patching Roger (2006) “They say there are only two certainties in life – death and taxes”. The author suggests that you add another for the average Australian: the need to know ‘the latest score’. The author has ‘crunched the numbers’

on the News Value column in The Australian’s media section during 2005, to
demonstrate the overwhelming popularity of sports coverage in the Australian media.
Of the ‘top five’ stories, nominated in the column in the 44 weeks surveyed, 41% involved sports coverage, nearly double the next category. There are also preliminary findings of a study of the first 41 weeks of the surveys for 2006. The author asks why sports’ reporting is not offered in more tertiary journalism courses.

In an attempt to present an explanation of the unprecedented thrill of the Indian masses with the IPL, Ramani Srinivasan (2008)\textsuperscript{43} claims that, behind the glitz and glamour of the Indian Premiere League, there lay a distorted form of commodity and consumer excess. He added, “Seen from a larger perspective on sports management and administration in the country, the IPL becomes a distorted money-spinning exercise devoid of substantial participative value. Thus a cricketer like Ishant Sharma would earn $ 9,50,000 over three years for, merely bowling four overs each in about 16 games in each year and for endorsing a brand, while other sports persons such as hockey players suffer from lack of compensation and training facilities. Reliance on corporate bodies alone to promote sports would only help bring in so much benefits of commercialisation-inflated value for the commodified participant and exclusive pandering to the voyeuristic desires of the consumerised spectator.”

Vincent Couvelaere & Andre´ Richelieu (2005)\textsuperscript{44} explains that, sport teams draw a huge fan following who even connect with them emotionally. For this reason, teams have employed various strategies to exploit this relationship and to increase their profits. The author examined the endeavors of four French soccer teams, in order to promote their brand. The results indicated that, the growth and execution of a brand strategy is supposed to work well commercially for the professional soccer teams, but they needed to attempt at building their brand equity.

Ankur Budhiraja (2012)\textsuperscript{45} studied the consumers’ perception in the context of Indian sports Celebrities as brand endorsers. He also tried to study the impact of sportsmen associated with different sports. He concluded that, “The analysis of the responses

shows that the products endorsed by Indian cricket celebrities are highly impactful and they have a strong impact on purchase decision making process”.

Gaustad Terje (2002)\textsuperscript{46} analyzed the basic economics of televised sports and creates a strong basis of further empirical research in this field. He concludes that, “As soon as a sports program is produced, all revenues from new groups of viewers and new markets will represent an almost net gain to the producer’s overall profits. He also advocates that the development and introduction of digital television results in increase in transmission capacity, and this development, coupled with the scale economics of televised sports, is likely to create a substantial increase in the overall volume of sports programming available to viewers.

Discussing in detail the symbiotic relationship between media, sports and advertising, Bosshert (2003)\textsuperscript{47} explores the journey of sports journalism right from its beginning. He also discusses the sports journalism in every era, right from the press to the advent of radio and television to the postmodern digital world. He concludes that, “Sporting events underwent dramatization and personalization, and became producers of sensations and stories of human interest. The medium of radio-following the telegraph-allowed live transmissions and added speed to sports reporting. Television added the personal experience of authenticity and offered the possibility of witnessing sporting events without going to the stadium or arena. In addition to that, with the help of different techniques (close ups, slow motion), it created new media realities. At the end television changed sports into a money-making show business.

Boyle (2006)\textsuperscript{48} in his book Sports Journalism: Media Sports and Society provided an overview of sports journalism in all forms of media. It also looks into institutional, cultural and economic environment of this segment of journalism. He discussed in detail about print media traditions and sports journalism, sports broadcasting, image and status of sports journalist in the society. The book also threw light on the changes and challenges faced by this field of journalism in the age of 24x7 media and digital age.


1.4. **Objectives of the Study**

The central objective of the study is to find out the trends in the coverage of sports in the mainstream print media through an analysis of the contents of the sample newspapers. From this broad objective, the following specific objectives flow:

- To analyse the trends in the coverage of different sports in the mainstream print media;
- To find out the relative coverage of cricket vis-a-vis other sports, such as hockey and athletics;
- To examine whether the coverage of other sports have kept pace with that of cricket;
- To explore the issues that drive the media coverage of cricket and other sports;
- To identify the position of cricket and other sports in the media’s scheme of news priority in its historical perspective;
- To identify the gains (if any) the media has accrued though increased coverage of sports in general and cricket in particular;
- To explore the distinctive aspects of content, format and style that make sports news consistently interesting to the readers;
- To examine whether the changes in the media environment, shift in news priority, media technology, and taste of the readers have altered the concept and nature of sports news, language, style, and design and layout aspects of sports journalism.

1.5. **Hypotheses**

H₁ Media coverage of sports continues to increase during the last three decades

H₂ The mainstream print media has been giving more coverage to cricket compared to hockey and athletics.

H₃ Newspapers carry more soft news on sports and sports persons than hard news stories on sporting events in recent times.
H₄  Growing coverage of cricket in the print media just reflects the rising popularity of the game in the society

H₅  The concept of sports journalism has evolved over time by incorporating innovative features in news presentation to make sports news continuously interesting

H₆  The purpose best served for media by coverage of sports is to satisfy marketing goal by raising its readership

1.6.  **Research design and methods**

This study primarily builds on the content analysis of selected mainstream English dailies seeking to find out the trends in coverage of sports in the Indian print media. The sports programs on 10 mainstream news channels and 4 sports channels have been analyzed to explore the trends in reporting of sports in Indian television channels. Besides, a survey was conducted to know the public perception on the changing trends in media coverage of sports in India. The content analysis includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the media content to identify the quantum and tone of coverage of sports. Qualitative analysis of the content seeks to find out the nature, tone, and focus of media contents on sports and sports persons, whereas the quantitative analysis of the consents attempts to measure, in quantitative terms, the coverage of cricket vis-à-vis other sports including the sports persons. The follow-up opinion surveys of selected journalists, sports persons and members of the public intended to identify public perception on the trends in sports coverage in Indian print media, the driving forces of sports coverage, the purpose best-served and the perceived beneficiaries of growing sports coverage in the Indian media.

**Selection of newspapers**

Media being a broad term consisting of more than 80,000 newspapers and periodicals, more than 800 television channels, a network of more than 700 radio stations, besides a reach variety of traditional folk media and 800 odd films produced every year, and the expanding array of new media platforms, it was not feasible to incorporate the entire spectrum of mass media within the preview of the study. Therefore, multistage
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Sampling was applied to select few units of different genres of media to represent the Indian mass media.

To represent the mainstream print media for the present study, three national level English dailies i.e. the Times of India, the Statesman and the Indian Express have been chosen. The selection of the three newspapers was based on the arguments that these newspapers represent the widely circulated, popular newspapers, catering to different geographic regions and ideological interests. The papers also appeal to divergent intellectual classes. True to its image of a global leader, the Times of India is known for its attractive content packaging and presentation. With a readership of about 7.615 million, it is the most popular and widely circulated paper with very strong presence in the northern as well as eastern states of India. Characterized by its terse reporting style the Statesman is one of the leading newspapers of the country in general and eastern India in particular. With an average circulation of 1, 80,000 copies, it is one of the widely accepted papers of Bengal. With the punch line ‘journalism of courage’, Indian Express is one of the India’s acclaimed and trusted publications. With daily circulation of 0.625 million copies, it represents the largest newspaper chain in the country. The paper is famous for its unstinted efforts in catering to the anti-establishment mindset, especially anti-congress mindset.

For analysis of the television content, 10 mainstream news channels perceived as most popular and widely viewed have been selected besides 4 prominent sports channels.

Time span of the study

The study being focused on cricket, the time span for the content analysis also extends to the period of growth in popularity of cricket in India. Cricket in India got wider attention after the country’s first World Cup victory in 1983. Therefore, to properly understand the shift in public mood and the mood of the media the pre-world cup victory phase has been included. As such, the study starts from the year 1978, one event preceding the reference point so as to understand media coverage before the world cup win and after that till 2011. One tournament of every selected sport in each decade was taken into account.

Sampling techniques
The study intended to know the trends in media coverage of sports with specific reference to cricket; hence a purposive sampling was done. The dominant sports categories in India being Cricket, Hockey, and Athletics, the tournament periods of these sports viz. the Cricket World Cup, the Hockey World Cup and the Asian games have been included in the study. Issues of the selected newspapers for two weeks each, during and two months before, of the above said tournaments from 1978 to 2011 have been included as sample for the study.

If an event was of more than two weeks, first week and the last week of the event was included. 15 days sample was also collected before two months from the commencement of the event. Samples were drawn from five tournaments of each of cricket world cup, hockey world cup and Asian games. A total of 15 events, with an estimate of 1350 copies were analyzed. All the news related to selected sports was taken into account including the front page, editorial page and the sports page.

Selection of sports

The selection of the sports for the analysis was based on their popularity in India and at the global arena. By virtue of having nurtured one of the best teams in the world, cricket was an obvious choice. Media’s honeymoon with the game was very difficult to ignore. It has, in fact emerged as the biggest revenue generator of the south-east Asian region engaging the largest viewership. Hockey happens to be India’s undeclared national game and is widely appreciated. Despite a decline in the fortunes of the game in recent years, the nation’s prestige is linked with this sport. India is also consistently rising on the ladder of success in athletics being a major actor at the Asian games and Commonwealth games. The efforts to gain attention at the Olympic Games during the last decade have earned for itself wider appreciation from all quarters including the media. As a result, the media’s coverage of the athletics has been on a constant rise. Being guided by the considerations cited, the study selected three major sports of India i.e. cricket, hockey, and athletics for analysis under the study. The coverage of all the three categories of sports, during each of the tournaments starting with the world cup cricket 1983, has been examined.

Cricket: After winning the world cup of 1983, cricket became the favorite sport of the country. In recent times, cricket coupled with media and Bollywood has swelled as a religion among the Indian audience. Gradually, India became the world leader in
cricket. The birth of IPL resulted in inflow of money and recognition. India has produced players who are acclaimed around the world for their talent. India became world champion again 2011, ICC champions trophy was also won by India in 2012. For past four years, India is among the first two slots in the ICC Test and One day rankings. Cricketers like Sachin Tendulkar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Virat Kohli have fan following around the world.

**Hockey:** More or less accepted as the country’s national game, despite no such official declaration, hockey has been one of the popular sports in India. At world stage Indian hockey has achieved incredible fame by winning a World cup in 1975 and eight time Olympic gold medals. India has produced world class hockey players like Dhyan Chand.

**Athletics:** Having won six medals in the London Olympics in 2012 from just 03 in the Beijing event, India is moving up the ladder of success in athletics. It had the privilege of hosting the Asian games in 1951 and 1982, besides the Commonwealth games in 2010. Athletics has always been a popular sport among the Indian audiences. It is because of India’s strong presence at the Asian games compared to Olympics, the former has been included in the present study. List of sports and disciplines that have been covered under ‘athletics’ as per the Indian Olympic association are archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, billiards and snooker, boxing, bowling, canoe sprint, cycling road/track/mountain bike, diving equestrian dressage/eventing/ jumping, fencing, football, golf, gymnastics /artistic /rhythmic, handball, hockey, judo, kabaddi, modern pentathlon, rowing, rugby, sailing, shooting, swimming, synchronized swimming, table-tennis, taekwondo, tennis, trampoline, triathlon, volleyball, water polo, weightlifting, wrestling freestyle/ Greco-Roman.

**Methods of data collection and analysis**

Front page, editorial page and sports pages of the sample newspapers were taken into close scrutiny. Every news item related to selected sports, including the pictures and graphics used was marked. The length and breadth of the column was measured for the quantitative analysis. The newspaper contents related to selected sports and sportspersons categorized into news, editorials, articles and features, and letter to the

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to quantify both as number of items and the space covered in column centimeters. The media contents so quantified have been codified, tabulated and analyzed using simple statistical techniques like ANOVA, t and z-tests. The qualitative analysis attempts to evaluate the stories using the tone, language, and nature of the contents. The narration incorporates suitable headlines, phrases, and photographs for a proper understanding of the trends in media coverage.

For the opinion survey, two hundred respondents have been selected from among journalists, sportspersons, and members of the public applying the stratified random sampling technique. Pre-structured questionnaires were administered among the sample respondents seeking their responses to both open and close-ended questions. The respondents were briefed about filling the questionnaire by the researcher. The responses so collected were categorized and tabulated separately under three categories viz. the response of the journalists, the responses of the sportspersons and the view of the public. The tabulated data was analyzed using statistical techniques to decode their views on trends in the media coverage of the sports in general and cricket in particular.

1.7. Presentation of the study

The present study “media coverage of sports and sportpersons: a study of trends with specific reference to cricket in India” has been presented in eight chapters dealing with different conceptual and theoretical aspects of sports and media.

Chapter-1 of the present study encompasses the contours of the study covering the objectives and importance of the study, its hypothesis in conjunction to related available literature. It also covers the methodology, and presentation of the study along with its limitations.

Chapter-2 deals with the evolution and growth of sports, including the early origin of sports, growth of sports and sporting bodies. It also studies the classification of sports together with growth of sports in India. Apart from discussing the popular sports of India, professionalization of sports and its impact in India is also studied.
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Chapter-3 provides an overview of the mass media scenario in India. Discussing in detail the condition of print and electronic media the chapter also provides the latest trends in the telecommunication sector including the internet.

Chapter-4 confers on media and reporting of sports. It thrashes out the evolution and trends in media coverage of sports in India. It also presents the role of media in building sports a brand in India specially cricket.

Chapter-5 talks about theoretical linkages between society, media and cricket. It presents a brief talk about why and how media reports cricket.

Chapter-6 discusses media coverage of selected sports by analyzing there content in the sample newspapers both in terms of its quantity and quality. The chapter also discusses the changes which were observed by the researcher in the field of sports journalism in print media. It also decodes the opinion survey and bring-forth the facts regarding perceptions of three sections of society taken into study viz members of the general public, sports persons and journalists.

Chapter-7 confers sports programme telecast on Indian Television, it also provides a brief profile & genre of the programmes with changes in sports journalism on television.

Chapter-8 encompasses testing of the hypotheses in its first section and discusses major findings of the study. Further it draws important conclusion from the study followed by its limitation and scope of further investigation.