Chapter II

Cricket as a Game in India – A Discussion

Before a discussion is initiated on the game of cricket in India, it would be worthwhile to trace the origin of the game. Sport of cricket owes its origin to an informal game played by the shepherd boys on the downs of Southeast England. The meadows, evenly cropped by grazing flock of sheep, were ideally suited to the earliest form of bowling, rolled along the ground. Two upright and stout sticks, a few inches apart with a bar across the top (wicket), became a natural target for the bowlers. The ball was probably made of matted wool bound by hide, while the first bat may conceivably have been the shepherd’s crook, which was replaced by a piece of wood curved at the end like a hockey stick.

It is pertinent to note that, from a purely technical point of view, the pastime of ‘club-ball’ was the generic ancestor of most of the English ball games. From that the parent tree sprang in different branches--the hockey group, in which the ball is driven to and fro; the golf group, in which it is hit towards a mark; and lastly, the cricket group, in which it, or its equivalent, is driven away from the mark when in motion (Altham and Swanton, 1948).

‘Cricket has many characteristics which, if not unique to it, are unusual or more highly developed than in other sports. Its culture runs deep and far back; certainly to the 16th century as evidenced by some of the paintings of that period.’ (Patherya, 1987)

It is true that an undisputed reference to the game is found in the testimony of John Derrick, a county coroner for Surrey, in a court case in the mid-16th century relating to the ownership of a plot of land where scholars of Free School of Guildford played the game of ‘crickett’. However, the earliest mention of the game can be found in the
wardrobe accounts of King Edward I (AD 1300). It mentions that during the month of March in that year a total expenditure of £6 had been incurred by the king’s son Prince Edward towards playing ‘Creag’ and other sports at Newenton. ‘Creag’ was closely related to cricket and Newenton was, in fact, the village of Newendon in Kent. Thus, the game was played in its original, though recognisable, form almost eight hundred years ago.

In its subsequent journey in England, it first developed as a pastime of boys. The first definite evidence of cricket being played and played enthusiastically by men in one part of the king’s dominion was found in the second decade of the 17th century. The pursuit of sports on the Lord’s Day as a means of diversion was opposed by the church. In 1617, a petition was made to King James I to permit sports on the Lord’s Day. This resulted in the publication of Book of Sports in which was listed the games which could be played on the Lord’s Day. The exclusion of the game of cricket in this publication led widespread resentment and the Book was burnt in 1643 in the presence of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex. The church, however, persisted with their opposition to cricket and a reference to that is found. In 1654, the church wardens and overseers of Eltham-Kent fined seven of their parishioners a sum of 2s each which was then a considerable sum for playing cricket (Altham and Swanton, 1948).

If the game of cricket saw the light of the day eight hundred years ago, it was only in 1598, towards the close of the 16th century, that the game drew international notice first to an Italian Dictionary and then, some thirteen years later, to Randle Contgrave’s French English Dictionary.

An Indian cricketer, who later became a cricket commentator and historian, has argued that the game of cricket had its origin in India during the time of Mahabharata.
and has cited *inter alia* as evidence the skill of Dronacharya in lifting a ball, which resembles the modern day cricket ball, from a dry well (*Mukherji, 2005*).

It is, however, of little significance because this research is more concerned with the managerial aspects of the game of cricket in India.

It has also been argued that the term ‘cricket’ finds its origin in the mother tongue of the Northern branch of the Aryan race. There was a syllable beginning with ‘cr’ and ending with a hard ‘c’, having, for its middle letter, every variety of the vowels, according to tribal predilection, and meaning a staff or stick. Furthermore, the termination ‘et’, though it sounds French, need not be anything of the sort. It may really be of good old English stock, a variant of the diminutive terminal ‘el’. Hence, ‘cricket’ is simply a small ‘crick’ or staff, a redundancy exactly paralleled by golf-stick, hockey-stick, or billiard-cue. Dr. Johnson was right when he derived the term ‘cricket’ from ‘cryce, Saxon, a stick’, though less happy, when he defined it as a sport ‘in which the contenders drive a ball with sticks in opposition to each other’.

(*Mukherji, 2005*)

The 17th century was a great turning point for cricket with the ascendancy of Oliver Cromwell. It was during that period that the game of cricket developed from the pastime of the boys or, at best, of the yeomen of the exclusive world into one of the favourite recreations of the fashionable world. The political history of England did play a significant role in such transformation.

Although, Cromwell acquired proficiency in cricket, he came down heavily on this game by forbidding it in Ireland and his law and order machinery indulged in banning sticks and balls. His attack on the nobles in London had a great social impact through the game of cricket. ‘The nobles, who fled London to their country estates in Cromwell’s time found their tenants enjoying this sporting pastime. Denied the
pleasures of the capital, they were not slow to join the fun, initially as sedentary
gamblers and sponsors and later as active participants. Tailors, butchers and peasants
combined with Earls and Lords to play, mingle and are at ease together.’ (Patherya,
1987) Cricket, to some extent, helped loosen the strict social barriers of those days.
This, according to Trevelyan, a historian, was not quite the case just 20 miles across
the Channel. ‘If the French nobility had played cricket with their peasants their castles
would never have been burnt.’ Patherya (1987) observes while writing about the
French Revolution.

It, however, has to be mentioned that cricket never became popular in Europe. It
remained essentially a British game and its spread was confined to the British
colonies.

With the Restoration, these nobility and gentry returned to London with their new
discovery, bringing with them, perhaps, the service of the local experts. In a year or
two, it became a regular practice in the society of London to make matches and to
form clubs (e.g., a club at St. Albans was set up, possibly in 1666), ushering in the
regime of feudal patronage, which controlled the destinies of the game for the next
century or more. (Patherya, 1987)

It took little time before this new found interest was reflected in the columns of the
press. The first such reference was in ‘The Post Boy’ in March, 1700, announcing a
match (the best of five games), the first of which was to be played on Eastern Monday
at Clapham Common near Foxhall--£10 a head for each game and £20 a head for the
odd one.

In 1707, another press insertion appeared, announcing a match between the
Londoners and the Croydon men at Lamb’s Conduit Fields, near Holborn. In 1719,
the county match between the Londoners and the Kentish men may be regarded as the first recorded match. (*Patherya, 1987*)

If one tries to trace the evolution of the game of cricket in Britain, it would not be incorrect to state that the game had its rudimentary beginning in the era of physiocrats, extended its roots in the period of mercantilism, blossomed in the wake of capitalist expansion and the Industrial Revolution, and became a way of life in the Victorian age.

Thus, if the 17th century was the turning point for cricket, the 18th century was the period for its consolidation. The process of consolidation, however, was not always been very smooth because the contemporary attitude towards the game was not always positive. In an article in the British Champion in 1743, just after 100 years when the Book of Sports was burnt because of the exclusion of the game of cricket, a series of charges were leveled against the game.

Briefly, the objections were threefold, viz., social, economic and moral. Socially, lords, gentlemen, clergymen and lawyers had associated themselves with butchers and cobblers in such ‘diversion’, which was both highly unseemly and ridiculous. Economically, cricket matches were luring away people from their employment, thereby, causing economic distress to their families. Moreover, it was encouraging idleness at a time when massive efforts at the industrial front were called for to restore the financial health of the British economy. Morally, it started giving most open encouragement to gambling.

The first charge had been dismissed by *Altham* and *Swanton* (*1948*), as an advocacy of snobbery, suggesting the contribution of cricket to its elimination in England. The second charge had also been countered as the Georgian parallel to the contemporary complaint that cinema and league football were rapidly driving the country into ruin,
reflecting the obsolete Aristotelian view of the worker as a living instrument primarily to amass wealth for his/her master.

It is, however, the third charge which merits some discussion. Instances of betting were rampant and the stakes varied between 100 and 200 guineas in general and sometimes it was even more, e.g., in 1751, in the match between the Earl of Sandwich’s OLD Etonians vs. England at New market stakes were £1500 or inside bets were reportedly as high as £20,000. Unruly scenes among the spectators and even among the players were not uncommon as an inevitable outcome of the ‘money element’. Instances of Chelsea Common match of 1731 and Kent and Surrey match of 1762 could be cited in support of this contention. Altham and Swanton (1948) have written about the lampoon entitled ‘The Noble Cricketer’ mentioned below. This lampoon, an anonymous one, published in 1778, is the bitterest of all and aimed at no less a target than the Earl of Tankerville and the Duke of Dorset. Thus, to the Duke:

‘When Death (for Lords must dies) your doom shall seal,
What sculptured Honors shall your tomb reveal?
Instead of Glory, with a weeping eye,
Instead of Virtue pointing to the sky,
Let Bats and Balls the affronted stone disgrace,
While Farce stands leering by, with Satyr face
The noble triumph of a noble Lord.’

However, though the cricket historians underplay the role of betting in popularising the game of cricket, it would not be incorrect to observe that cricket and betting have been inseparable since its inception.
The same tradition has been continuing even today world across, the more recent example of which is the spot-fixing scandal in the Indian Premier League (IPL) which shook the cricket administration in India.

At this stage, it is important to turn again to the evolution of the game. ‘The earliest matches relating to cricket proper were between neighbouring villages in Kent and Sussex. Then these teams may have pooled their resources to join issue with a similar combine over the border ………. soon after, the game became centralised on London matches between county and county….’. (Altham and Swanton, 1948) In the first half of the 18th century England, cricket was dominated by Kent which was the reigning champion in the matches against Surrey and Sussex. The match between Kent and All England, held at Artillery Ground in June 1744, was described in the press as the ‘greatest cricket match ever known’ and was witnessed by such eminent personalities as Prince of Wales, his brother ‘Butcher’, Cumberland and Admiral Vernon. During this period, one witnessed the rise of a number of counties through the patronage of the nobility in England. A list of more important counties which were formed with the names of their patronage (as far as can be traced) and the approximate year of their formation (where available) is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County/Village</th>
<th>Year of Formation</th>
<th>Patron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Sir Horatio Mann Sackvilles of Knole (Earl of Sandwich) and his sons--first Duke of Dorset (the Earl of Middlesex) and Lord John Sackville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Sir William Gage and the second Duke of Richmond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Fredericke Louis (Prince of Wales) The fourth Earl of Tankerville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucestershire</td>
<td>1729</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berks, Bucks and Hearts</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicestershire</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>1771</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
These counties played a major role in popularising the sport but they had been victims of fluctuating fortunes. ‘With the advent of the nineties, we reach the most far-reaching and practically the final stage in the development of county cricket. The County Cricket Council, a self-constituted body, which originated in 1887, with a view to legislating on such questions as county qualification and classification, brought forward at the end of the season of 1890 an elaborate scheme for the division of all county elevens into three classes, with automatic arrangements for promotion and relegation. Strong opposition was, however, forthcoming from the second class counties, whose cause was ably championed by Doctor, now Sir Russell Bencraft, and with agreement impossible, the Council dissolved its own existence to be resurrected thirteen years later in the Advisory Committee which meets under the aegis of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). But ‘class-consciousness’ was now fully awake and the days of the old ‘octarchy’ were numbered.’ Altham and Swanton (1948)

It would not be out of place to mention that the fourth Earl of Tankerville, who was the patron of Surrey and the third Duke of Dorset, who was the patron of Kent, were the leading spirits in the White Conduit and Marylebone Clubs and were established subsequently as the recognised authority in cricket, besides the Earl of Winchelsea and Charles Lenox (the fourth Duke of Richmond).
It is, however, Hambledon, a small village in Hampshire, and miles away from any important township, where ‘modern’ cricket found its mentor. Formed in 1750, the Hambledon Club grew into an institution. The growing importance of this village club in the social structure of England could easily be appreciated from the fact that men of eminence like the third Duke of Chandos, the Earl of Nottingham, the eighth Earl of Winchelsea, the fourth Duke of Richmond and the fourth Earl of Darnley became its presidents between 1750 and 1780. During those thirty years, this village was the centre stage for the best cricketers in England and their patrons. Indeed, Hambledon threw up some of the greatest names in cricket of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century--John Small, William Barber, Richard Nyzen, Tom Seuter, Thomas Brett, George Leer, Edward Aloverrow, William Hogsflesh and James Aylward. Matches organised by that club against All England created an interest and enthusiasm, which pervaded the entire country. John Nyzen, the author of the ‘\textit{The Young Cricketer's Tutors}’, has captured the mood brilliantly in the words below.

‘Half of the country would be present and all their hearts are with us – little Hambledon pitted against All England was a proud thought for the Hampshire men. Defeat was glory in such a struggle – victory; indeed made us only a little lower than angels.’

The founding of the MCC in 1787 was really the death-knell of the Hambledon Club. More and more London became the centre of great cricket, steadily the membership declined and the players were lured away by the golden magnet. It was at Lords in 1793 that the Hambledon Club played its last recorded match.

The Hambledon initiative is a watershed in the evolution of the game in England. It had a multiplier effect in the spread and formation of the cricket-playing clubs in England and Wales. It is interesting to note that that Scotland, however, remained
insulated from this development, the reasons for which could be its topography being incongenial for the game, its natural preference to golf as its national game and strong national sentiment bordering on aversion to anything originating from England. A number of such clubs saw the light of the day and they regularly played matches against each other and held tournaments. Mention may be made of Squire Land, Farmham, and White Conduit, which later became the MCC.

These clubs were run on the munificence of the aristocrats and the landlords who had a major say in their supervision and control. All the players were mostly amateurs in the sense that playing was taken as a recreational pastime or passion and not as a livelihood. The classic example of this is the history of formation of MCC. Altham and Swanton (1948) have nicely described it.

“The Star and Garter, Pall Mall, was a favorite rendezvous of the members of a select London social club called the Je ne sais quoi Club of which the First Gentleman in Europe was the perpetual chairman. Around 1780, the cricket lovers among the members began to play the game together in the White Conduit Fields of Islington. At that time, it seemed to be a public ground, managed by the proprietor of the tavern of that name, who, as early as 1766, had advertised ‘Bats and Balls for Cricket and convenient field to play in’. In 1785, a regular club had been formed and ‘The White Conduit’ played its first recorded home match on June 20th, beating the Gentlemen of Kent by 304 runs. A year later came the momentous decision destined to affect and dominate the entire subsequent history of the game. It seems that a section of the White Conduit Club began to resent the public and rather the primitive surroundings of the Islington matches and, accordingly, two of its members, the Earl of Winchilsea and Charles Lennox, took active steps to secure a new private ground, more worthy of their club’s pretensions. Now, in the service of the White Conduit, seemed to be more
particularly of the noble Earl, there was a certain Thomas Lord, who acted as the
ground-bowler of the club, and, no doubt, made himself generally useful.”

‘Lord came of a sturdy, and once prosperous, yeoman stock. His father, a man of
considerable property in Yorkshire and a Catholic, had sunk his fortune in an attempt
to aid Prince Charlie and his son had then been forced to seek a livelihood in whatever
way he could. A man of great personal charm and good looks, to which Morland’s
portrait does fair justice, and of a business capacity, which subsequent events were
soon to prove. When Winchilsea and Lennox proposed to him that he should open a
private ground himself and promised him their personal support and reimbursement in
case of loss, he was not slow to accept.’

‘The same winter he approached the agent of the Portman family and arranged to rent
from them a parcel of ground lying in the then almost completely rural district where
Dorset Square now stands. For the rest of the winter and throughout the ensuing
spring, he worked unceasingly to get his ground in order and on May 31, 1787, the
first ball in a match was bowled at Lord’s.’

‘This first match was actually between two minor counties, Middlesex and Essex, but,
in the following month, the White Conduit Club took the field in a well-fought game
against the first named and then, a fortnight later, with six given men, met and were
defeated by All England. A year later, the last step was taken. The White Conduit
became the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and the laws of cricket were revised and
re-issued under the seal of that, henceforth unchallenged, authority.’

‘By the year 1800, Lord’s is an institution established high and dry beyond all
rivalry. The MCC had twice again revised the laws of cricket and is recognised to be
the supreme authority on the game. All the leading amateur players were to be found
on its members’ list and it became strong enough to meet such unaided counties as
Hampshire and Middlesex. Its ground became the accepted venue for all the great
matches of the year and the focus of ambition for every aspiring cricketer.’

‘But, side by side, with the growing popularity of the game and its headquarters,
London was expanding its restless limits--east and west; south and north. The
inevitable results followed. Mr. Portman, the landlord, thought it proper to raise his
rent and Lord was thereby forced to seek fresh fields and pastures new.’

‘The old agreement did not expire till the Lady Day, 1810, but the Lord had no
intention of facing a blank season and, by May 1809, had secured and opened his
second ground, part of the St. John’s Wood estate, belonging to the Eyre family.
During that and the next year, the MCC continued to play on the old ground, the new
field being tenanted by a relatively unimportant club. But, during the winter 1810-
1811, the Lord removed the turf from the first to the second and the premier club
finally abandoned its earliest home. For some reason that was not apparent then and
that the second ground never caught on with the MCC members and, though various
scratch matches were played there, three times in all (in 1813), the MCC never won a
match. This rather ominous situation was terminated once and for all when the
Parliament determined that the newly-proposed Regent Canal should be cut straight
across the middle of the ground. Still undaunted, the Lord applied for and obtained
from the same Eyre family a new parcel of land, situated some half-mile north of the
old ground at North Bank. Once more, during the winter of 1813-1814, he removed
the old turf to its new quarters, enclosed the ground in a high fence, built a tavern and
a pavilion and, on June 22, 1814, the first match, MCC vs. Hertfordshire, was played
on the third ground, assumed to be the last Lord’s Ground.’

Another interesting development during that period was the introduction of cricket in
the public schools such as Eton, Harrow, etc., as a decent sport for the children of the
nobility who were their pupils. The public schools and the elite private boarding schools, where team sports were efficiently utilised as agents of social control, played a significant part in the evolution of modern sports including cricket. As an important component of the curriculum, sport was linked with religion in a concerted effort to help mould ‘muscular Christians’. These individuals supposedly exhibited the positive qualities of both sport and religion. Many of the privileged classes, who attended these institutions, practised and preached this ethic even after they left school, spreading it throughout the British Empire. The notion of ‘muscular Christianity’ harked back to the ancient Greek ideal of a ‘sound mind in a sound body’ with one major variation, essential to its core—the practice of Christianity rather than worship of a pantheon of gods. It was believed that some of the virtues required for sound masculinity, the ‘muscular Christian’ practice could be learnt through participating in team sports. These included qualities such as sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, ability to be both a good winner and loser, and work (or practice) ethic (Toohey and Veal, 1999).

Alumni of these schools served as ambassadors for this game both in England and later in the British colonies. Reference may be made of Earl of Sandwich, an Etonian, who organised matches at periodic intervals between Old Etonians and England. An idea of the spread of the game in those schools could be found from the list of ‘blues’ awarded to the students of those public schools between 1827 and 1854 after the Annual Public School Festival.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Schools</th>
<th>Oxford</th>
<th>Cambridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eton</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrow</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charterhouse</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonbridge</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the game of cricket was played in the Oxford and Cambridge Universities in the late 18th century, the formation of the Oxford University Cricket Club and the Cambridge University Cricket Club was delayed until the middle of the 19th century and acquiring grounds for playing cricket did not start until 1850 but, by the end of the 19th century, the university cricket was on a very strong footing and C.B. Fry, Ranjit Singh Ji, and Jessop were products of the university cricket system.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the cricket reached its zenith in the Victorian England of the 18th century coinciding with the spread of imperialism and as an aftermath of the technological growth ushered in by Industrial Revolution. Victorian cricket, according to John Arlott, was a microcosm of Victorian England; imperialistic, jingoistic, class conscious, missionary-minded patriotic, prosperous, poverty stricken—all with a single embrace (quoted in Patherya, 1987).

During this period, Gentlemen vs. Players matches became an institution. A team was most likely to be a combination of self-sufficient amateurs and professionals, eking out a difficult passage and the missionary zeal applied as much to the long-robed Bible-quoting priests as to the touring cricketers. A Test won was the cause for national elation (Patherya, 1987).

There were a number of significant developments during the Victorian era. Firstly, endeavour was made to organise the game on a sounder framework. The cricketers tended to adjust their hours of work to be able to practise. With enough patience, persistence and industriousness over a period of time, a generation of accomplished
cricketers emerged. With the newly-introduced railway network, long-distance travel by the amateur and professional players became common. When the Factory Act of 1850 introduced half-day on the Saturdays, cricket positioned itself on the launching pad to soon become the principal spectator sport in England.

Secondly, this era saw the first cricket stars some of whom have been described by Haygarth in the Scores and Biographies (quoted in Patherya, 1987).

Thirdly, and most significantly, was the exploitation of that new enthusiasm for personal monetary success and that developed simultaneously with the efforts on the part of the nobles to retain cricketers in their payroll by offering services to them in their estates. William Clarke was the pioneer in this. By virtue of his marriage to the widow, who owned the Trent Bridge Inn, in 1837, he opened the adjoining meadow as a cricket ground. The introduction of an admission fee for the spectators was in itself a piece of entrepreneurial foresight. He followed this by drawing in his side the most accomplished players and touring the country. Matches against the village fifteens, sixteens or twenty-twos were hurriedly set up always against an agreed consideration. When the early experiments proved successful, Clarke enlarged his programme. By the year 1851, there were as many as 34 fixtures during the summer mostly in the towns which had never played host to a top-class side and his profits increased. Indeed, financial viability was the sole criterion for persistence. Clarke would never accept to bring along his All England side without a subscription of £70 as an insurance against rain in addition to the meals and entertainment for his team. However, the players were paid poorly and there was no rational basis for distribution of payment to the players. This biased arrangement could hardly last and several of Clarke’s recruits complained that he was piling up a fortune at their expense. Clarke’s attitude worked even where payments, they felt, were not adequate. (Patherya, 1987)
That situation also attracted others to join the fray and, between 1837 and 1875, a number of such clubs were formed as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clubs</th>
<th>Year of Formation</th>
<th>Promoters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All England Eleven</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>William Clarke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United All England Eleven</td>
<td>1851/1853 ?</td>
<td>John Wisden &amp; James Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New All England Eleven</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United South of England Eleven</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United North and South of England Eleven</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United North of England Eleven</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The South of England Eleven</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Patherya, 1987*

However, competition diluted the profits and the available talents. The standards set by the pioneers never equalled. The club system of competition perished as a consequence. The champions of old were on their way out as the prevailing system folded out.

It would be appropriate at this stage to briefly discuss the concept of amateurism in cricket. Inherent and central to the ‘muscular Christian’ model of sport mentioned earlier was the notion of amateurism, i.e., playing the game for intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards. Amateurism was a 19\textsuperscript{th} century construct which served many functions in Victorian England, not all of them as noble as the proclaimed ideals. ‘……… one of the primary and original purpose of amateurism as a category of sports was social distinction, that is, to separate the so-called gentleman from the lower classes of the society …. Any person who competed for money was not only basically inferior but was also a person of questionable character.’ (*Altham* and *Swanton, 1948*)

One reason proposed for this distinction and classification was the increasing participation of the middle class and the lower class in some leisure activities and sporting activities which had previously been the domain and prerogative of the upper
class. To further rationalise the distinction between amateur and professional athletes, it was considered by the elite (and, thus, sports’ power-brokers) that the latter, ‘whose livelihood depended on his success and achievement’, could not be ‘imbued with the same disinterested sense of fair play’. Consequently, character development, as a moral outcome of games, was accepted to be exclusively an outcome of mature sport but not its professional equivalent. Definition of amateurism accentuated that its adherents ‘competed solely for the love of sport or solely for pleasure, and physical, mental and social benefits that could be derived from athletics’. This view of amateurism, formed in England and viewed as being ‘pure sport’, provided the basic of Olympic rules for approximately the first 75 years of its existence together with a misunderstood belief of the practices of the ancient games, regardless of the reality of under-the-table payments and government subsidies. (Toohey and Veal, 1999)

Nevertheless, the new found dynamism heralded by Clarke gave rise to three developments in 1864 which revolutionised the game, viz.,

i) legalisation of over-arm bowling,

ii) appearance of Wisden’s Almanac, and

iii) emergence of W. G. Grace, who gave the game a new dimension and who dominated the cricketing scenario for the next 40 years and shifted the balance in the Gentlemen vs. Players fixtures in favour of Gentlemen (hitherto performing very poorly).

A doctor by profession he was the sheet anchor for Gloucestershire and, despite being an amateur, he earned vast amounts from the game. Grace made more money in real terms than any cricketer up to the third quarter of the last century. He doubled the tour of Australia in 1873 with his honeymoon, offered his players second class passage plus £170. During his 1891-92 tour of Australia, all his expenses were paid for in
addition to a payment of £3000 and three testimonials realised £9073 after he scored his 100th first-class century in 1895. Grace was indeed a pioneer of what in today’s terminology known as endorsement and when he died in 1915 he left behind something like £10000 (Toohey and Veal, 1999).

The 19th century or the Victorian era also saw that cricket was extending beyond the shores of England to its expanding empire both in the east and the west. This was a deliberate policy of the empire to create a market through the medium of sport and Australia was the first obvious choice followed by India, West Indies and South Africa. This, however, called for a controlling body based on the British philosophy as distinct from the philosophy of the other European nations and the MCC was carefully designed and structured to suit these requirements.

What started essentially as a rural sport in England became an urban elite sport by the end of the 18th century and, during the 19th century, the cricket became an imperial sport and teams from the British colonies such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and West Indies visited England in the fourth quarter of the 19th century to play test matches under the rules framed by the MCC. Return visits were also arranged by the team from England to these countries very often under the banner of the MCC. The host countries were required to bear the entire cost of the visiting team, including remuneration to the players and a fee to the MCC for granting the permission for such test matches. In the case of the English teams visiting other countries, the rules were a little different. Though, initially, these tours were the outcomes of the initiatives of the private enterprises and the initiatives of the players, with the passage of time these tours were institutionalised by the MCC.

The visit of the English cricket teams across the shores of England, however, started with the USA and Canada. In 1859, twelve professional cricketers of England crossed
the Atlantic to play a short series of matches in Canada and the USA. This venture ‘was done due to the enterprise of the old Eton and the Cambridge cricketer, W. P. Pickering and the Montreal Cricket Club, the leading cricket body in America, on the one hand, and Mr. Edmund Wilder, President of the Cricketers’ Fund (which subsequently developed into the Cricketers’ Friendly Society), Fred Lillywhite, and, among the actual players, George Parr and John Wisden, on the other hand. Negotiations between the parties started three years before and eventually, during the Canterbury Week, final arrangements were made. Based on the guarantee of the Montreal Cricket Club, each of the twelve players was to receive £50 in addition to the whole of their expenses. They were to play five matches--at Montreal (against Twenty-two of Lower and Upper Canada), New York (against Twenty-two of the USA), Philadelphia (against Twenty-two of the USA), Rochester (against a combined Twenty-two), and Hamilton (against Twenty-two of Lower and Upper Canada). (Altham and Swanton, 1948) It was written by William Caffyen in 71 Not Out that twelve professional cricketers made something like £90 a head out of their two months’ trip. (quoted by Altham and Swanton, 1948) Mention may be made of the tour of an English team in 1872 to Canada and North America under R.A.Fitzgerald. W. G. Grace and Lord Harris were included in the team and they became life-long friends after the tour.

It was, however, the matches between England and Australia which gave a new dimension to the game. In 1861, promoted by Messrs Spiers and Pond, a team under the captaincy of H. Stephenson, toured Australia. In all twelve matches were played, including one at Melbourne and another at Sydney. The tour was a great success both from the point of view of the spectators it drew to witness the matches and the financial reward it gave to the promoter. Messes Spiers and Pond were said to have
cleared £11000 over their enterprise. The tour of 1861 was followed by tours in 1863-64, under the captaincy of Parr, and was, like the previous one, was a professional side with the exception of E.M.Grace. In 1873, W. G. Grace took out the third English Team to Australia followed by the fourth one in 1876-77. Betting on the matches was almost universal in the last tour. (Altham and Swanton, 1948)

In 1878, the first Australian tour of England took place. The sponsors were James Lillywhite, who acted as Australia’s match-making agent, and, on the part of the tourists, J. Conway of Melbourne, was officiated as the manager throughout the tour. Australians created history by defeating the MCC at Lords on 27th May 1878. Boyle and Spofforth took 6 wickets for 3 runs and 4 wickets for 16 runs respectively.

The tour of Australians to England in 1882 turned out to be a historic one as it gave rise to ‘The Ashes’ – a national prize in a test cricket series played between England and Australia. The Ashes are regarded as being held by the team that won the last series between those sides or, if that series was drawn, by the team that last won such a series. The term originated in a satirical obituary published in a British newspaper, the Sporting Times, immediately after Australia’s 1882 victory at Oval, their first test win on English soil. The obituary is presented below.

_In affectionate remembrance_

_Of_

_ENGLISH CRICKET_

_Which dies at the Oval_

_On_

_29th August, 1882_

_Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances_
The mythical Ashes immediately became associated with the 1882-83 series played in Australia before which the English captain Ivo Bligh had vowed to ‘regain those Ashes’. The English media, therefore, dubbed the tour as the quest to regain the Ashes.

After England had won two of the three tests on the tour, a small urn was presented to Bligh by a group of Melbourne women including Florence Murphy, whom Bligh married within a year. The contents of the urn are reputed to be the Ashes of a wooden bail and were humorously described as ‘the Ashes of Australian cricket’. It is not clear whether that ‘tiny silver urn’ is the same as the small terracotta urn given to the MCC by Bligh’s widow after his death in 1927. The urn has never been the official trophy of the Ashes series, being a personal gift to Bligh. However, replicas of the urn are often held aloft by the victorious teams as a symbol of their victory in an Ashes series. Since the 1998-99 Ashes series, a Waterford Crystal representation of the Ashes urn (called the Ashes Trophy) has been presented to the winners of an Ashes series as the official trophy of that series. Whichever side holds the Ashes, the urn remains in the MCC Museum at Lord’s; it has, however, been taken to Australia to be put on touring display on two occasions--as part of the Australian Bicentenary celebrations in 1998 and to accompany the Ashes series in 2006-07. An Ashes series is traditionally of five tests, hosted in turn by England and Australia, at least, once every four years. As of December 2013, Australia is the holder, having won all the five tests, reclaiming the Ashes with a victory in the third test. The 2013-14 Ashes series played in Australia was a rare ‘back-to-back’ follow up of the 2013 series.
played in England. Overall, Australia and England have won 32 series and 3 series respectively and 5 series have been drawn.

It is said that the golden years of cricket are from 1880 to 1914 which also mark the empire at its zenith. It produced cricketers like Sydney Barnes, Archie Maclaren, C. B. Fry, Gilbert Jessop, Victor Trumper and Ranjit Singh Ji. World War I brought the curtain down on the game’s Golden Age. Some 3000 cricketers went to war, never to return. The later years brought with them such political and economic upheavals that cricket was never to be the same again. (Patherya, 1987)

When first class cricket recommenced after the War in 1919, many of the illustrious cricketers had gone out of the competitive circuit. More than anything, the atmosphere of the country house weekend cricket was never to return. The professional touch replaced it and the cricketers, with one eye on the ledger book and the other on the field of play, set about graduating from the romantic to the realistic. (Patherya, 1987)

A reference to the Imperial Cricket Conference which is the predecessor of International Cricket Council (ICC) will be apposite.

On 15th June, 1909, representatives from England, Australia and South Africa met at Lord’s and founded the Imperial Cricket Conference. Membership was confined to the governing bodies of cricket within the British Empire where test cricket was played. West Indies, New Zealand and India were elected as Full Members in 1926, doubling the number of test-playing nations to six. That year it was also agreed to make a change in membership with election being for the governing bodies of cricket in the countries within the Empire to which cricket teams were sent or which sent teams to England. However, the United States did not meet these criteria and was not made a member. After the formation of Pakistan in 1947, it was given Test status in
1952, becoming the seventh Test-playing nation. In May, 1961, South Africa left the Commonwealth and, therefore, lost membership.

In 1965, the Imperial Cricket Conference was renamed the International Cricket Conference and new rules were adopted to permit the election of the countries from outside the Commonwealth. This led to the expansion of the ICC with the admission of Associate Members. Associate members were entitled to one vote each, while the Foundation and Full Members were entitled to two votes on the ICC resolutions. Foundation Members retained a right to veto. In 1989, the Imperial Cricket Conference was converted to International Cricket Council (ICC), making it the international governing body of cricket.

The ICC has 106 members: 10 Full Members that play official test matches, 37 Associate Members and 59 Affiliate Members. The ICC is responsible for the organisation and governance of major international cricket tournaments, most notably the Cricket World Cup. It also appoints the umpires and referees who officiate at all sanctioned test matches, one-day international and T 20 internationals. It promulgates the ICC Code of Conduct, which sets professional standards of discipline for international cricket, and also co-ordinates action against corruption and match-fixing through its Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU). The ICC does not control the bilateral fixtures between the member countries (which include all test matches). It does not govern domestic cricket in the member countries and it does not make the laws of the game, which remain under the control of the MCC.

N. Srinivasan, the president of Tamilnadu Cricket Association, India, is the President of the ICC, who succeeded Alan Isaac, the former chairman of New Zealand Cricket. The current CEO is David Richardson who succeeded Haroon Lorgat and the President is Mustafa Kamal from the Bangladesh Cricket Board.
Turning to the history again, the two most important developments between the two World Wars were the emergence of Don Bradman in Australia and the body line conceived by Douglas Jardine and executed by Harold Larwood to restrict Bradman’s phenomenal affinity with huge scores. It is argued that batsmen are a fair copy of the times they live in. Bradman emerged at a time when the great depression was setting in. He was a product of the circumstances. He neither gave a quarter on the field nor expected it. Years after his debut when his reputation mounted, he couldn’t afford to fail (Patherya, 1987). It would not be incorrect to say that he is, perhaps, the first international sports icon. The resentment against the use of bodyline was to prompt a far-reaching backlash. The Dominions Secretary in Australia feared a split within the Empire. The Australian Prime Minister, Joe Lyons, although opposed to the use of this strategy, put pressure on his Board to modify its wording of protest to the MCC for the fear that several huge Australian loans, due for conversion in London, would be threatened, indirectly risking his country’s economy. During his ceremonial visit to Lord’s in 1933, King George V questioned Gubby Allen about the tactics used in Australia in the previous winter. ‘I didn’t know you took an interest in cricket, Sir,’ Allen said. ‘I take great interest in my subjects’, replied the monarch. My Secretaries mark items in papers for my attention--sometimes I also look elsewhere. (Patherya, 1987)

After the World War II and the consequent loss of erstwhile colonies, the hegemony of the English cricket was reduced and space had to be provided to the new independent nations such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, apart from West Indies and Australia. However, the popularity of test cricket continued under the banner of the Commonwealth of Nations. In course of time, one-day International was introduced by Kerry Packar, which was promoted by satellite technology, namely, television.
‘The sixties were a mild preface to the decade that followed. Fringe considerations held centre stage, cricket administrators acquainted themselves with fresh problems—declining standards of on-field behaviours, commercial rivalries and the introduction of overseas players into country cricket’. (Patherya, 1987) Against this background, limited-over cricket recorded a hesitant entry into the programme of the English Summer. Preference for one-day matches was increasing due to the declining attendance in the county championship games. The causes were many. The County Committees were alarmed because of the decreasing assets and the increasing liabilities. Cricketer Trevor’s ascribed it to a variety of social changes. He named television, national habit of car cleaning, the new found craze for learning to play electric guitar and other new pastimes as the reasons responsible. Some felt that factors such as full employment and the taxation of the well-to-do accounted for this disenchantment.

A MCC-sponsored committee in 1956, under the chairmanship of Harry Altham, was constituted to enquire into the problem, suggested a knockout competition as a remedial measure. Lord’s initially hesitated but, in the face of a fragile framework of county finance, the innovation was put to the test.

The success of the Gillette Cup in 1963 and after sparked the concept of limited-overs cricket (LOC) as the appropriate Sunday-afternoon entertainment. Bagenal Harvey promoted for Rothmans a series of such games played by international cricket teams against teams of county standing. With the freshly conceived rules, limiting a bowler’s run-up to 15 yards and batting time per side to 40 overs, the success of the venture from a purely financial angle had been ensured.

The four-and-a-half hour’s television slot had a catalytic effect. 10,000 turned up for the game between the Cavaliers and Worcestershire in 1967. When the ‘circus’
moved to Lord’s, the MCC, generally cold to the idea of cricket not at its most traditional, left a few gates unopened, leading to confusion outside the ground. The last head count revealed 15,000. The potential of the shorter game had been established.

The public response made the administrators awake to reality. As soon as the financial viability of the (LOC) was proved, they relieved the Cavaliers of their monopoly in 1969. The Test Board and the County Cricket Board announced their own 40-over Sunday League between the counties, forbade any player to play for the Cavaliers and persuaded the BBC to weekly telecast a game ‘live’. Rothmans found its coveted sponsorship going to the rival John Player. Three years later, in 1972, the establishment expanded further. The Benson and Hedges Cup--55 overs a side--was born. Cigarette manufacturing companies, not permitted to advertise on TV, found indirect exposure by sponsoring the game.

In 1970-71, rain accounted for the loss of a test during the Ashes series in Australia and the two teams agreed to a reduced 40-over encounter on the last day. Australia won by 5 wickets but, more noticeable, a crowd of 46,000 attested the prospect of the LOC for future use and it was to go international soon.

A year-and-a-half later, the Prudential Trophy was introduced to become the precursor of the international LOC matches in England. In 1975, the World Cup was an incredible success, followed by a similar response in 1979 and 1983. In between, one-day international matches proliferated.

The success of the LOC format was based on varied reasons that appealed. A result was guaranteed, spectators saw both sides bat and bowl in a single day and the quickened tempo of the game attracted casual enthusiasts. Over the years, the image of family entertainment developed, the subtle intricacies of the game taking a
temporary backseat. The LOC appealed to man, woman and child. When Gillette withdrew its sponsorship after eighteen years in 1980, its prime complaint was that its name was being associated more with the LOC than the razor blades.

The unpredictable nature of the LOC was the biggest draw. It was entirely possible for a strongly-fancied side to lose to a weaker team (for a side at 199 chasing 203 for 1 with only one ball left), having equal chance of triumph or failure.

The LOC had established itself by the mid-seventies. Successful as it was, the players continued, however, to be poorly paid. The new concept was still being nursed in a traditional cocoon. The man behind the sudden and unprecedented breakout was an Australian television magnate, Kerry Packer.

Denied television rights of test matches for the Channel Nine in 1977, he signed 53 leading cricketers of the world for sizable playing fees and organised a parallel movement, the ‘World Series Cricket’. When the establishment sought to ban the breakaway cricketers from representing international cricket, Packer went to the court and won.

In retaliation, the recruits were over-looked for the test selections at some stage or the other by their respective countries. Packer’s first season in 1977-78, investing on innovations and targeting for the hitherto uninitiated enthusiasts, faced an indifferent response. Packer’s moral victory in the following season was overwhelming. Cricket at night was Packer’s masterpiece. It was not an entirely new concept. The first night game in Australia had been played in Sydney way back in the thirties when name Packer was still associated with warehouses. ‘The dew made the ball most difficult to hold’, commented a publication at time, ‘and the experiment was not persevered with’.
Packer’s other gimmicks encouraged the first-time spectators to return. Coloured clothing, despite denouncements that the players looked like waiters in a Ruritanian musical comedy, appealed. Sight screens were black and the balls were white. The cricket writers, following the players’ movements to predict the approximate course of the ball, admitted that the change in colour was now a visual blessing.

In addition, free transport to the ground at a couple of centres, on-ground entertainment, newspaper advertisements publishing the season’s fixtures, marketing of T-shirts related to the matches, composition of catchy jingles and advance ticket sales--all helped to sustain spectator response.

Channel Nine’s coverage of the matches was light years ahead of the prevailing standards. Eleven cameras, deployed simultaneously, ensured that a bowler’s action or the following stroke was recorded from every conceivable angle. The slow action-replay was a celebrated success.

But the umpires were not amused. Their decisions came under exacting scrutiny. Run outs were exposed and leg before verdicts were debated. The volume of armchair judgments increased alarmingly and more cricketers publicly dissented than ever before. That international supervision, that might actually have improved since (say 1950), was overlooked. And the modern umpire, for the cause of technological advancement, became a victim.

For the second time in ten years, the establishment thrived from where the private enterprise had left. Packer was granted his prized television rights in 1979 and, in the ensuing truce with the establishment, agreed to disband his troupe. The format of the World Series Cricket, now officially conducted, was reorganised on a triangular basis in each Australian season. Packer’s mega-gimmick had come to stay.
Not all were happy with Packer’s influence on the game. The veteran Australian spinner, Bill O’Reilly, was disturbed. ‘It is not the game of cricket as I know it’, he wrote. ‘It is Americanization. It is ridiculous to call it cricket. It should be known as ‘kickit’ or ‘snickit’ or ‘casht’. People who watch it are spending their money the way they want to. But the damage is being done in referring to it as international cricket……. this is big business. It is a strong desire to make money’.

This extensive question has been considered necessary to appreciate the background to the commercialisation of cricket in England and Australia. The subsequent transformation to T-20 is the logical extension of the principles of economic dynamism when leisure became an expensive commodity.

Macroeconomic fundamentals in Britain were undergoing a sea change under the Prime Ministership of Margaret Thatcher and that impacted the viability of the test cricket. This coupled with the advent of television, which popularised the one-day internationals of 50-overs games and the phenomenal rise of the virtual spectators in the South Asian countries, particularly in India, shifted the focus of the game to India. Indeed the Indian entrepreneurial initiative displayed by the BCCI put India at the centre stage when it lifted the World Cup of 1983, necessitating the formation of International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1989 with a new ICC Code and the consequential decline of the MCC in terms of importance. India was in the driving seat in the ICC, wielding great power in the affairs of the ICC. Now one can turn to the evolution of the game of cricket in India.

The growth and development of the game of cricket in India may be divided into the phases mentioned below.

i) Exclusive British Phase

ii) Ethnic Indian Phase
iii) Princely States Phase

iv) Indo-British Phase

v) Post-Independence Phase
   a) 1947 to 1983
   b) 1984 onwards

**Exclusive British Phase**

The first mention of cricket in India, as is commonly known, goes back to 1721 when British sailors played a match among themselves in the port of Cambay. ‘Sports, like the Flag, first established itself along the coast of India before making its way into the untamed hinterland. The early records of the Indian cricket—the first hat-trick, the first tie, and the first century—all relate to the military men. The first cricket club outside Britain was the Calcutta Cricket Club (CCC) founded in 1792 in the headquarters of the British power. The CCC played in the ample Maidan that skirted—and still skirts—the Fort William. The ‘manly exercise of cricket’ was followed in the evenings by dinner and dances where the cricketers ‘might try their ability in another way’. Twelve years later the CCC sponsored a Grand Match of Cricket between the Old Etonians and a team drawn from the lesser members of the East India Company. This match was notable for two firsts—the first hundred scored on the India soil (by Robert Vansittart) and the first bets placed on a cricket match in India. The Old Etonians defied the odds-- two to one against them-- to win by an innings.’ *(Guha, 2002)*

Also in 1792 was the first evidence of cricket in Madras—courtesy of a painting of that. Meanwhile, the game was taking root in the third of the great port cities of the Raj. Thus, the Bombay Gazette of 6th October, 1825, carried a cheerfully exhortative announcement under the heading ‘Cricket Revived’.
'The cricket players are now preparing to resume their exercise for the cold season and several, grand matches between men in the Queen Royals, from the framed counties of Hampshire, Success and Kent, are on the [cards]…….

A meeting will take place tomorrow at four o’clock on the ground near the Racket Court, and the play will continue at the same hour, on every succeeding Thursday throughout the cold weather.

Tents, it is understood, are to be pitched for the accommodation of ladies, and, as the cricketers are all to be dressed in an appropriate uniform, we anticipate one of the most gay and animated scenes that has ever graced our island.’ (quoted in Guha, 2002)

Cricket and other sports were, as this excerpt suggests, a source of much comfort to the expatriate Englishman. Using the British power, he could impose order on the essential randomness of the country he had come to rule over. There was always, in India, the fear of death by war or disease. ‘Two monsoons’, it was said, was all the colonials could reasonably expect to live through. Here sport came to be a consolation through which the expatriate could re-create memories of life in England. It may be noted that this early announcement of cricket in Bombay used the phrase ‘our island’. Through their entertainments, the British people could imagine that they had even brought their country with them.

It appears that, in the beginning, the British had no intention of teaching the natives to play cricket. They had invented the game at Home and played it in India as a welcome retreat from the utter strangeness of the life abroad. The forum by which the retreat was effected was the other British invention, i.e., the social club. These clubs were set up in the cities and cantonments, and sometimes in the wilderness too. The local club provided the main focus of the exile’s social life. It generally ‘boasted of very few
books’ but provided space in which to play and drink afterwards. Some Anglo-Indians were so devoted to their clubs that they refused to go back to England after retirement. They built a home near the club, spent the days in its library and the evenings in the bar, and instructed their heirs that they wished to be buried somewhere within the striking distance of the eighteenth green.

The racial exclusivity of the colonial clubs was complete and long-lasting (in most cases, they stayed all-white until the transfer of power in August, 1947). The ‘life and work of the majority of the members’, wrote a luminary of one such club, required them daily, and in an increasing degree, to mix with their Indian fellow-subjects, not only in work or business but also socially………… and it was surely not asking too much that a man might have after his day’s work, a place he could for an hour or two take his ease in the society of men of his own race, and those whose habits and customs were the same as his own.’

This sentiment continued over the years. After retirement, the old colonial generally looked back on the club as the high point of his life in India. When, in 1964, a cricket club in southern Calcutta came to celebrate its centenary, a former member wrote feelingly of ‘My Days of Enjoymnt at Ballygunje’. When the invitation came to contribute to the commemorative souvenir, said Bernard Owens, ‘In my mind’s eye I saw the morning scene, faithfully enacted over the years. It is 11.10, and the game starts at 11. The roller has been harboured by the mali’s hut besides the Store Road gate, and two small children with their nannies are playing on it. The bell has rung to take down the nets. Stragglers or both sides, clad in multi-coloured blazers, carrying cricket bats, are leisurely crossing the ground. A few early spectators are choosing chairs and points of vantage. Old friends are greeting each other. The bearded and turbaned Khansamah has already served some early customers. By 11.20 two empires
from the batting side have been requisitioned, the fielders appear tossing the ball from hand to hand. The wicket keeper, who has forgotten his box, dashes to join his comrades, and the openers, rehearsing the shots they fondly hope to make, eventually reach the wicket. The scorers push their table into the sun and the game is on…”

This remembrance relates to the 1920s, when the Indians had begun clamouring in numbers for political independence. It was written nearly two decades after they had attained that independence. Yet, for this member, the Ballygunje Cricket Club was a corner of a foreign field that would be forever England. True, play did not start on time--the tropics promoted leisureliness--but the game’s idioms and its actors were recognisably English. Only the grounds men who rolled the pitch and the bearer who mixed the drinks were not. Another recollection in the same volume underlines how the Indian had, strictly speaking, not part of the cricket itself. ‘I was at Ballygunje’, remembered A. A. Leslie, ‘When George Craik hit a ball out of the ground on the Old Ballygunje Road side, a tikka gharry was passing with the coachman fast asleep. The ball dropped in the gharry but it did not wake the coachman and the horse went on quite unconcerned. The gharry was chased by the chokras and the ball retrieved by one who demanded a rupee for its return…”

A post-colonial critic would look back at these stereotypical views of the lazy and grasping native. What should interest one, however, is not how the native is represented but where he was placed. It, thus, appears that the Indian might roll the pitch or serve the whisky. He might even watch cricket and (at a price), retrieve the ball or throw it for the sahibs to bat back. He was not expected to play the game.

**Ethnic Indian Phase**

The entry of the Indians into the game of cricket did not take place until the middle of the nineteenth century. The first community to take up cricket were the westernised,
enterprising Parsis, pioneers in many field and unashamedly anglophile monarchists. They were, observes Gelha, a comprador class who allied themselves with the British for great mutual benefits. They began as merchants and commission agents and over time graduated to the colonial judicial and the civil services.

Since most of the Parsis lived in the western part of India, predominantly in Bombay, the origin of the Indian Cricket was in Bombay. In fact, Bombay is referred to as the nursery of the Indian cricket and the Parsis, as the avid gardeners of the Indian cricket, cultivated the culture of cricket. Mostly self taught, the pioneering Parsis manufactured their own bats and balls and in early years, and the sport was referred to as ‘bat-ball’ rather than cricket by them.

In 1848, the Parsis in Bombay founded the Oriental Club, dissolved itself in two years, to be replaced by the Young Zoroastrian Club, still going strong 150 years after its inception. The Young Zoroastrian Club was founded by the emerging business houses of the Tatas and the Wadias. The club’s prime mover, however, was one Hiraji Gosta, also known as Cuka Daru. He charged his members 2 annas a month and those who found this beyond their reach could pay 1 pice for every day they practised. The Young Zoroastrians played every day on the Maidan, disregarding the English journalist who wrote that they presented a ‘comic sight’, playing the game ‘in their strange accouterments of Bandis and payjamas’.

At least, thirty Parsi clubs were formed in the 1850s and 1860s, named after Roman gods and British statesmen, for example, Jupiter, Mars, Gladstone and Ripon, The emerging Parsi bourgeoisie welcomed the growth of cricket for strengthening their ties with the overlord and for renewing the vitality of a race that had lived too long in the tropical sun. One eminence, Sir Cowasji Jehangir B Bart, advertised in the community paper, Rast Goftar, that he would distribute cricket kit free to anyone who
cared to ask for it. Another, Sorabji Shapoorji Bengalee, C.I.E., endowed a prize for the best Parsi Club. His grant generously allowed for a band to be in attendance during the matches, for the tents to be pitched for the convenience of the players, and for the food to be provided for them and for other spectators as well.

This prize matches, held annually between 1868 and 1877, and enormously consolidated the Parsi interest in cricket. Individual achievements meshed nicely with the community solidarity. Thus, when the Zoroastrian Cricket Club won the tournament in 1869, it distributed its prize money of 100 rupees--25 rupees for a newly constructed Parsi gymnasium, 20 rupees for Parsis recently improvised by cholera, 5 rupees for the poor box, 20 rupees to buy bats for its ablest players and 30 rupees reserved for the club’s kitty. Sorabji Shapoorji Bengalee’s gift worked marvellously in overcoming any residual inhibitions that the orthodox people had as regards the English game. As one observer remarked, ‘old folks that were always denouncing ‘ball-bat’’ were seen in the forenoon wending their way to the cricket ground and basking there in the sunshine, witnessing the prize-matches…’. The cultural conservatism was easily vanquished by the spirit of competition. (Guha, 2002)

In 1877, the Parsis played a landmark match against the elitist Bombay Gymkhana which was then exclusively European. Although they lost by 63 runs, it motivated them to play better and tour England, the home of cricket. From 1884, the Bombay Gymkhana vs. the Parsis matches became an annual event watched by thousands. The Parsis cricketers won some of these matches, which encouraged them to challenge the Poona (now Pune) European Gymkhana. This was known as the Bingular Cricket match.
In 1885, a group of Parsi cricket-lovers thought of building a Parsi Gymkhana in Bombay. They acted swiftly and three months later constructed a spacious tent, the precursor of the majestic Parsi Gymkhana built in 1887 at the picturesque Kennedy Sea Face, Marine Drive. It still stands as a monument of the early Parsis’ indefatigable character, supported by generous donations from the industrialists like Jamsetji Tata and others.

In 1886, the Parsis toured England. This was the first overseas tour undertaken by an Indian team in any sport. It was eight years before the first South Africa cricket tour of England and decades before the West Indian cricket teams visited England and New Zealand.

A number of Parsi clubs mushroomed at the turn of the century and, in 1910, an Inter-Parsi Club Tournament, called the Shapur Spencer Cricket Challenge Cup, was inaugurated. The participating clubs were Baronet, Dadar Parsi Colony, Elphinstone, Esplanade Liberals Lancelot, John Bright, Naoroz, Parsee Colony, Parsee Engineers, Parsi Cyclists, Parsi Venus, Prince Rising Star, Sassanian and Young Zoroastrians. Some of these clubs existed for a long time and the others still do as homage to their inspiring ancestors with cricket in their blood and the will power in their genes to advance.

Why did the early Parsis take to cricket so avidly? It is said that they hero-worshipped the British and their customs. However, according to J. M. Framjee Patel in *Stray Thoughts on Indian Cricket* (published in 1905), the ancient Parisans had played similar games, viz., ‘Chigan Gui’ (bat and ball) and ‘Goiye Bazi’ over 1200 years ago in Iran. Thus, cricket to the Parsis was a blend of the Iranian genes and the British culture.
Apart from their own initiative, the young Parsis boys were introduced to cricket in the late eighteenth century by an English schoolmaster, Mr. Boswell, in Bombay. The seed was germinating, the plot was thickening and the Parsis were going to places. The first Parsis to play cricket remain anonymous, but not the first Hindu. His name was Ramchandra Vishnu Navlekar and he entered the field in 1861. Five years later, he helped from the Bombay Union Cricket Club and its membership restricted to the men of his Prabhu caste. Meanwhile, the Hindu students of the Elphinstone High School were competing with their Parsi fellows to catch the attention of their cricket-minded Principal, H. P. Jacob. In 1877, some Marathi students of the school founded a Hindu Cricket Club. At first, this had only a handful of members, each paying 2 annas a month. The financial base of the club was assured when the Gujarat Hindus, who were prosperous traders, joined. The membership slowly increased and with that there was a rise in the quality of their cricket.

The Parsis imitated the British rules of cricket. The Hindus, in turn, were spurred by the Parsis. The students who formed the Hindu Cricket Club claimed that they were ‘shabbily treated’ so far as the supply of bats and balls were concerned and the English schoolmasters made sure that those first reached their favoured subjects. The Hindu boys played in dhotis and without shoes and made ‘all the mistakes of novices’. The Parsis were ‘much more advanced than they’, owing ‘to their greater imitation of everything European’. However, the progress of the Parsis made the Hindus only more ambitious and wistful, determined to start their own teams and play the game in proper clothing and with the correct techniques.

As these clubs came up one by one and the players made their way with bat and ball to the Maidan, still the only large open space that was available for recreation. Dozens of cricket matches were played there every weekend. ‘There is no more agreeable
sight to me’, remarked a famous Parsi Mayor of Bombay, than of the whole Maidan, overspread by a lot of enthusiastic Parsi and Hindu cricketers, keenly and eagerly engaged in this manly game.

At first the Europeans thought little of attempts by their subjects to take to their national game. An army regiment, after pressure was put on it, agreed to play against a Parsi club but as ‘Officers with Umbrellas vs. Natives with Bats’. The distaste of the army men was visible. Thus, a Bombay journalist wrote, sneeringly, when batting with running, they threw the ball when fielding in the same fashion as boarding school girls.

The criticisms made impact and reforms were effected. The dhoti and the dagli were abandoned in favour of cream flannels. The pitch was watered and rolled, and the grass on the outfield was cut down to 3 inches. Sporting firms imported all the necessary equipment--bats with handles made of single and double cane in sizes fit for adults and for children; Duke’s balls, double and triple seam; leg-guards, shoes and wicket-keeping gauntlets of ‘superior quality and well ventilated’; batting gloves (‘best imported, vulcanized, tubular India rubber’) and bags for carrying cricket kit, made of ‘ strong green cloth’, with leather binding and brass locks besides; and stumps and cricket nets with poles and ropes to put them in place. Those who could not afford these English-made products did with serviceable imitations produced by the local craftsmen. (Guha, 2002)

The Maidan where the Parsis and the Hindus used to play became a focus for tension after the formation of the European-only Bombay Gymkhana (Hindi version for ‘Club’) in 1875. This brought all the sporting activities of the ruling elite--cricket, archery, football, tennis and rifle shooting--into one social club, all of them being conducted in one ground, the Maidan. The Gymkhana was granted exclusive use of
one-third of this area, leaving the Parsis, Hindus and Muslims to play their matches in the remaining two-third portion. Thus, three thousand Europeans controlled one-thirds of the area with the rest of it being available to the remaining non-commissioned whites and the 65,000-strong Indian population. This situation was tolerated initially and the first match between the Parsis and the Bombay Gymkhana was played. The simmering tension over the division of the Maidan burst open in 1879, when two English polo clubs merged with the Bombay Gymkhana and were given permission to play two-evenings-a-week on the non-Gymkhana part of the land. It was a cruel and unfair decision which not only gave the English the de facto right to use two-thirds of the entire area but also ruined the playing surface of the non-Gymkhana cricketers. The ill-felling that was caused gave rise to a bitter dispute which led to a titanic and closely-argued bureaucratic exchange of papers between the club, the Parsi civic leaders and the Bombay government. The outcome eventually went in favour of the Parsis in 1882. Subsequent appeals and a change of Governor, however, gave the area back to the polo players in 1884, leading to renewed local outrage. Undaunted, the Parsis formed the very well-funded Parsi Gymkhana in 1886 and petitioned to the government for a designated part of the Maidan. A further erudite exchange of petitions brought about a deft solution. A reclaimed land from the sea, a mile or so from the Maidan, was made available, so long as ‘all costs’ were met by the Parsi Gymkhana. This may have been graceless but it was not a practical problem to the Parsis as the president of the Gymkhana was the fabulously wealthy Sir Jamsetjee Jejebhoy. So, eventually, the native cricketers of Bombay were able to play without having to dodge the holes left by the hooves of their colonial masters’ polo ponies.
The Parsi Gymkhana soon grew in strength. It toured England in 1886, losing nineteen games and drawing eight. The captain, D. H. Patel, modestly said in his farewell speech that ‘It was not with the object of gaining victories that we made the voyage to England’. However, a second tour in 1888 did bring eight wins to offset eleven defeats. Both tours were organised by Charles Alcock of Surrey whose mark can be found so much on Victorian sport. The Parsi tour improved playing skills. In 1889, they finally beat the Bombay Gymkhana by three runs. In the following year, the Parsi Gymkhana met G.F. Vernor’s touring eleven, an amateur side featuring Lord Hawke. The tourists had won six and drawn one of their games by the time they reached Bombay and they thrashed the Bombay Gymkhana by an innings. On 30th January, they played with the Parsi Gymkhana. In a nail-biting two-day match, the Parsi side won by four wickets, with their fast bowler Mehallasha Pavri taking 7 colonial wickets for 34.

Indian cricket enjoyed a further psychological fillip later that year when Lord Harris became the Governor of Bombay. After a shaky start, during which he dismissed the Indian petitions that sought the return of the land appropriated by British polo players, he became a great supporter and patron of the game and permitted the reclaimed land on the sea front to be rented to provide an open space for cricket for the Hindus, Parsis and Muslims. Harris also inaugurated the Presidency match, the leading domestic competition until the Ranji Trophy began in 1934-35, a two game series, in Bombay and Poona, between the Europeans and the Parsis. The first fixture in 1892 ended in a rain-ruined draw, but over the next fourteen years, twenty six matches were played, of which the Parsis won ten, and three were abandoned for monsoon, plague, etc. Bowing to pressure from the other communities, the Presidency tournament expanded to become a national competition. The Hindus joined in 1907, making it the
Triangular Tournament and it became the Quadrangular Tournament when the Muslims took part in 1912. Years later, in 1937, it became the Pentangular Tournament due to the inclusion of a new side called ‘The Rest’, made up of the Indian Christians and the Jews. It continued until 1945, when it was stopped because of fears that its openly sectarian structure might be inflammatory. Mahatma Gandhi, the spiritual guide of the nation, was one of those who were deeply critical of its structure (Major, 2007).

By the late nineteenth century, Bombay had emerged as the first city of Indian cricket, a position which it had comfortably maintained since then. But the game was also taking root elsewhere. Wherever the British settled, in ports and plantation towns, they started clubs and gymkhanas to steal time away from the natives to play their own patented games among themselves. Outside the club walls, the natives would imitate them. In Calcutta, where the people in the lower social strata preferred football, the gentrified Bengali, or bhadralok, took more readily to cricket. Early patrons included the Princes of Natore and Cooch Behar. A better player than either of them was Sarada Ranjan Ray, the W.G. of Bengal, a bearded opening batsman, the serving Principal of Vidyasagar College, and the future great-uncle of the film-maker Satyajit Ray. The spread of the game was also aided by the intrepid Parsis, one of whom, M. Framji, became the first Indian professional cricketer when he took employment with the Calcutta Gymkhana in 1878.

Moving south, there was the Madras Cricket Club, set up in 1846, with its lovely ground at Chepauk on the land acquired from the Nawab of the Carnatic. Indians could not play at Chepauk but they could watch. A precocious spectator was Buchi Babu, a Telegu-speaking boy, who was taken in a pram by his English nanny to see the Madras Cricket Club play. Buchi Babu was the grandson and heir of M.
Venkataswami Nayudu, who had made handsome money as commission agent of the firm, E.I.D Parry’s. In the garden of the family’s spacious Mylapore bungalow, Buchi Babu played cricket, at first with his grooms and later with other children of high-born families. These boys started the Madras United Cricket Club, which used to play against, and occasionally defeat, the English club across the way. For years to come, the Indian Cricket in Madras was dominated by the Brahmin and Nayudu families of Mylapore.

Cricket was brought to the ancient city of Poona by the army which conquered the Peshwas and then they themselves set up camp there. In the cantonment stands the Poona Club, with its tree-ring ground, where cricket has been played continuously for 120 years. Across the river, on the Indian side of the city, cricket commenced in the old kabutar khana or pigeon loft of the Peshwas. Then came the plague of 1896, which took a toll of lives but gave a curious opportunity to those it spared. Fearing contagion, the residents of the crowded paths moved to temporary shelters outside the town, near where Poona University now stands. Open space lay on all sides, beckoning young boys to set up stumps and play strokes not feasible in the lanes of the old town. (Guha, 2002)

**Princely States Phase**

Any discussion on the history of the game of cricket in India would be incomplete without a reference to the promotional role played by the princely states. British agents located in the princely states were quick enough to discover that these Rajas and Maharajas were extremely eager to curry favour with the ruling gentry and no expenditure was large enough to achieve that objective. The British agents were not found lacking in obliging because they were assured of a grand treat and a most leisurely pastime without any expenditure whatsoever. The vehicle for such social
interactions was the game of cricket between the Maharajas’ teams and the expatriates drawn from military and civilians. This phenomenon began after the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 and become a way of life in the princely states since 1890s. What is of significance is that this phase coexisted with ethnic Indian phase discussed earlier.

The Maharajas of Kashmir, Patiala and Kapurthala started taking keen interest in cricket and inter-state matches were played between various teams. These three states had regular teams for the game. There are numerous anecdotes about their eccentricities. The anecdote mentioned below is worth quoting.

There was an international cricket match at the Patiala Gymkhana club in which the state team and the British team were competing. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was the captain of the state team. Mr. Jardine, the famous Test Cricket player was captaining the British team. The state cricket team under the captaincy of the Maharaja was not as strong as the British team consisting of fast bowlers and superb batsmen. The Maharaja’s advisor, Mr. Frank Tarrant, a famous Australian bowler, Prime Minister Sir Liaquat Hayat Khan, Diwan Walaiti Ram, Secretary, Southern Punjab Cricket Association and Sirdar Buta Ram were anxious to see the Maharaja’s team win at any cost and requested the Maharaja to arrange for receptions and banquets at the palace to which the members of the British team, the members of the state team, the Principal Minister and the officials of the Government were invited.

The banquet was given on the eve of the cricket match. Delicious food and intoxicating wines were served at the reception and banquet. The banquet was followed by a variety entertainment in which the dancing girls of the court danced and sang before the guests of the Maharaja. The members of the British team indulged in merry making with the dancing girls and drank Scotch Whisky and the choicest wines and, before the party broke up, most of the members of the British team were
intoxicated and were taken to the guest house in cars escorted by the aids de-camp of
the Maharaja.

The members of the Maharaja’s team were secretly told not to drink so that they
remained fit enough to play the next morning. The banquet terminated in the early
hours of the morning and the British team had no time for rest and, when the players
appeared on the cricket field, they were fagged out and performed poorly, whereas the
members of the Maharaja’s team were active and alert and scored well. The same
tactics were adopted throughout the five days of the match with the result that the
Maharaja’s team won the match and it was advertised all over that the Maharaja’s
team beat the British team. Nobody in the town knew about the secret of the success
of the Maharaja’s team in the cricket match. Every evening when the cricket match
was over, a huge crowd was entertained at the club by enthralling music conducted by
the famous musician, Max Gager, who came from Vienna and was in charge of the
State Orchestra.

What is of more significance in the Indian context is the role played by the Maharaja
of Patiala. As the tempo of cricket in Indian went on increasing, the Viceroy of India
also started having his own team called the Viceroy’s XI.

In 1933, in the time of the Viceroyalty of Earl of Willingdon, who was the patron of
the Cricket Control Board of India, cricket took a serious turn in the sense that politics
were mixed up with cricket.

Bhupinder Singh, Mohinder Bahadur Maharaja Adhiraj of Patiala, was the Vice-Patron
of the Cricket Control Board of India and Mr. R. E. Grant Govan was elected as the
President. The Maharaja of Patiala was the patron and founder of the Southern Punjab
Cricket Association and was also a member of the MCC, a unique honour in those
days and, being associated intimately from the beginning with the development of
cricket in India, he became a prominent figure in the cricket field, much to the envy and jealousy of the Earl of Willingdon and his wife.

Soon the rivalry between the Maharaja and Lord Willingdon started as to who should dominate the Cricket Control Board of India. Mr. Grant Govan, President of the Board, was the stooge of the Viceroy and his consort, the Countess of Willingdon. The Viceroy, and particularly Lady Willingdon, wanted Mr. Grant Govan to continue as the President, and his own Military Secretary, Major Briton Jones, to be the head of cricket affairs, much to the dislike of the Maharaja of Patiala and the Indian members of the Board, especially the Nawab Sir Liaquat Hyat Khan, Prime Minister of Patiala, and Dewan Walaiti Ram, Secretary Southern Punjab Cricket Association.

The Maharaja of Patiala by his meritorious services to the Board wielded a powerful influence in the cricket sphere, much to the chagrin of the Viceroy. Because of this jealousy, he began involving the Maharaja in political intrigues and encouraged his political advisers to pin-prick the Maharaja in order to lower his prestige.

When Jardine visited India in 1934, the British power was at its zenith, and the British Viceroy would not tolerate a Maharaja to be selected in a British team. Somehow or the other, the Maharaja, through his friends and also on account of his being a member of the MCC, made Jardine, the captain of the British team, agree to his playing in the team. The Viceroy having heard of it asked Jardine whether it was true that he was going to ask the Maharaja of Patiala to play in his eleven. Jardine replied that he, as captain, could include any member belonging to the MCC, if he so desired. Lord Willingdon explained to Jardine that the Maharajas were directly under him, the Viceroy, and he did not think that a Maharaja should be included in the English team without his consent. Jardine remained unmoved by the Viceroy’s remarks and refused to change his mind. He then asked his wife to persuade Jardine to change his mind. The
Countess of Willingdon, who was known for her tactics, diplomacy and intrigue, took out Jardin for a stroll into the magnificent and beautiful gardens of her residence and, stroking Jardin’s arm, she tried to persuade him not to let the Maharaja play in his team. Jardine being a great sportsman did not give in to the Countess and the Maharaja eventually was included in the British team. This deepened the rivalry between Lord Willingdon and the Maharaja, culminating in open hostility. The Viceroy’s immediate reaction was to involve the Maharaja in politically cooked up murder cases. An enquiry was ordered to be conducted by the agent to the Governor General, Punjab States, Sir James Fitz Patrick. This enquiry was called the ‘Indictment of Patiala’. It went on for several years and before the conclusions were drawn up, the Earl of Willingdon had caused a letter to be addressed to King George who was then the Emperor of India, recommending the dethronement of the Maharaja. An elaborate case was prepared against the Maharaja who was depicted in such black colours that the Emperor would have no hesitation in agreeing to the recommendations of the Viceroy.

The Maharaja, through his secret agents in Delhi, came to know of the plot for his dethronement and visited Delhi to consult his friends as to how he should get hold of the relevant official documents so that he could counteract the mischief which the Viceroy was intending to play against him.

A friend of the Maharaja, Mr. J. N. Sahni, a well-known personality in Delhi, knew an Englishman ‘XY’ Officer-in-Charge, Fire Brigade, who was the lover of Miss ‘Z’, Personal Assistant to the Viceroy. A sum of Rs.1,00,000 was promised to the Englishman to get hold of the file concerning the Maharaja and, in turn, approached the personal assistant, Miss Z. She agreed to let out the secret of the Viceroy and hand over the file at 10 p.m. from the Viceroy’s house to Mr. XY for a
few hours in the night. She accordingly brought file to the Englishman who in a private taxi brought it to the Kashmere Gate where Mr. J. N. Sahni had already collected 12 fast typists and within a few hours a file of 200 pages was typed and, before the day broke, the original file was returned to Ms. Z and it was put back in the office record. She was given a sum of Rs.50,000 for this work and a similar amount was retained by Mr. XY for himself. She undertook this precarious job thinking that the gratification received by her was enough for her life time and, that with the change in the office of the Viceroy, she would be sent back to England after completing her term of service with the then Viceroy. As the term of Lord Willingdon was to expire after about six months, she thought that, by staying on in her job, she would not make more than Rs.50,000 during this short period, whereas she could spend this amount in purchasing a nice house in England and thereafter take up some job with some industrialist or politician in her country. As soon as the file was replaced by Miss Z in the drawer of Viceroy’s private office table, she submitted her resignation on the plea that her mother was seriously ill in England and she should leave the country immediately. The Viceroy agreed to her request. She merrily sailed from Bombay within forty-eight hours and, once out of the country, she was out of the reach of the law even if the secret was out. She chuckled with delight with the success of her escape. Maharaja Bhupindar Singh, along with his confidential Ministers and officials, was reading the copies of letters typed out from this file in a house nearby as soon as those were typed. Having come to know the draft of the letter prepared by the Viceroy for submission to the Emperor of India and all the contents of the file, he went back to his own capital at 6.30 a.m. and consulted his Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister Sirdar K. M. Panikkar and two other confidential officials as to what steps he should take to forestall the coming evil and the possibility of the Emperor as
the Constitutional Monarch agreeing to the recommendations of the Viceroy. A letter was drafted with the help of his advisors, contradicting and denying the charges levelled against him by the Viceroy. Within a few hours the letter was drafted and ready. Sirdar K. M. Panikkar, the Foreign Minister, was specially deputed to go to England to effect delivery of that letter personally to the Emperor. In that letter, the Maharaja brushing aside the charges as mere fiction, stated that his personal relations with the Viceroy had become strained on account of the fact that Lady Willingdon had demanded form him a pearl necklace worth 30 lakhs of rupees when she visited his palace and saw the crown jewels and, as the Maharaja refused to agree to such an audacious demand, the Viceroy was enraged and told the Maharaja that he would teach him a lesson by complaining to the Emperor about the maladministration and atrocities committed by him and recommending his dethronement. This letter was of sixteen pages and contained an indictment of the Viceroy and Countess Willingdon and ingenious arguments were given to show that the Viceroy’s charges against the Maharaja were based on his personal enmity consequent on his refusal to part with the necklace. In this letter, the Maharaja further said that Lady Willingdon was a women of intriguing character and that she was meddling with state affairs for her own personal greed and, in collaboration with her friend, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayar, a member of the Viceroy’s council, was trying to dethrone him so that he might be removed not only from the throne of Patiala but also from the throne of the Cricket Control Board of India, where the Maharaja virtually ruled with the Secretary of the Board, Mr. Anthony De Mello. In order to strengthen his hands further against the mischief and intrigue of Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, the Maharaja could manage to get invited a few members of Parliament deputed from England to India to find out the real state of affairs, which was not only political but also relating to the personal
relationship of the Viceroy with the ruling princes. A mission consisting of Major Courtauld, the Honourable Edward Russell and two other members of Parliament came to India. The Maharaja invited them to come to Patiala as his guests. This invitation they accepted. After their visit to Patiala, they were taken to a hill resort called Chail in Simla Hills which was the summer capital of the Government of Patiala. There, after a grand hospitality offered to them, which the guests appreciated, the Maharaja took courage in revealing a plan to them. The Maharaja prepared a list of all the money which the Earl of Williongdon and Countess of Willingdon had taken from the ruling Princes of India and gave this list to the Mission. The list was prepared with details giving the names of the rulers and their ministers who gave huge sums of money to the Viceroy and his consort. Some of the names included were the Maharaja of Datia and his Prime Minister Sir Aziz Ahmed, the Maharaja of Gwalior, the Nawab of Rampur and his Prime Minister, and Nawabzada Sir Abdul Samad Khan.

The list mentioned the actual amount of money paid to the Viceroy by them. When the mission returned to England they gave the list to the Secretary of State for India who forwarded it to the King Emperor. The Mission further reported to the Secretary of State, Sir Samual Hoare, that the Viceroy and his wife were most unpopular in India and were extracting money by intimidating the Indian Princes. Sirdar K. M. Panikkar on his arrival in London personally handed over the letter of the Maharaja to the Emperor at an audience arranged through special influence at the Buckingham Palace in his private study and, after the Emperor had read the letter, he was wild with rage and said in a quivering and excited tone that he had already heard many complaints against the Willingdons and that they should not be allowed to continue to
stay in India and harass his beloved Maharajas and Chiefs who were loyal to the throne and his person.

The Emperor assured Sirdar K. M. Panikkar that the Maharaja would not be dethroned under any circumstances and that he would not take any notice if the recommendations made by the Viceroy, if received. A telegram of felicitations in code language was sent to the Maharaja by Sirdar K. M. Panikkar. There was great rejoicing in the inner circles of the Maharaja of Patiala where the Maharanis, Runis and other women of the harem and the trusted friends of the Maharaja had assembled to celebrate the happy occasion and the festival continued till the early hours of the morning. Lord Willingdon, not knowing what had transpired, sent the letter to the Emperor, recommending the dethronement of the Maharaja and, as soon as the Emperor read the letter, he called the Secretary of State for India and told him that the letter should be thrown into the waste paper basket and that the Viceroy should be recalled. He shouted in anger that he already knew the cause of this complaint. After this complaint the Viceroy’s position became weak and the Maharaja became bold. He seldom attended the reception given by the Viceroy and, as a matter of fact, he was heard using insulting language to Lady Willingdon to her face on more than one occasion. Once Lady Willingdon met the Maharaja at a reception given by the Princes of India in Delhi and asked the Maharaja if she could stay in the beautiful romantic pavilion at Pinjore, which was interspersed with fountains and an ornamental garden in Mughal style. The Maharaja bluntly told her that the pavilion was not intended to be used by anyone else excepting himself and the other members of the family and that it was the tradition of his house not to allow its use by any foreigner for fear of hurting the religious susceptibility of his Maharanis. Seeing the success of the crusade which the Maharaja launched against the Viceroy and feeling that his stock-
The tour of Jardine’s team in India showed how the British wanted to keep their prestige even in cricket. It may be mentioned that when Jardine’s team played a match against Viceroy’s XI, the tourists had made over 400 runs and were expected to declare next morning. Christie, an ICS official from Uttar Pradesh who was the captain of the Viceroy’s XI, had the wicket rolled for 20 minutes instead of the normal seven or ten minutes. When Jardine protested against this, Christie said in his blimpy manner, ‘Hang it all! In any case, we took it that you were going to declare and as the Viceroy’s team should bat, I had the wicket rolled a little longer. Damn it, what does it matter?’ Jardine retorted that he would not take his team to the field unless Christie tendered him an unqualified apology. The Europeans, who were there in great numbers, were enraged and all rushed to Jardine’s dressing room to explain that this was a different country to his own. If the Indian public ever came to know that this was the attitude of an English captain towards the Viceroy’s XI, the British prestige would suffer a terrible setback. But Jardine just said, ‘Christie must apologies to me in the Viceroy’s box, and if he does not, my side won’t play’. He added that, even if the King of England was playing against him, he still would not go to the field unless an apology was tendered as the wicket had been rolled against the rules of the game. Thereupon, the Viceroy summoned Christie to his box and said ‘My dear fellow, cough it up’. (Guha, 2002).

These princely states did not hesitate to incur massive expenditure on building infrastructure, for example, the Maharaja of Patiala built an extensive cricket ground.
at Chail, the summer capital of the state. The meetings of the Cabinet used to take place there and the Prime Minister, Ministers and other officials used to attend those meetings by travelling from the winter capital, Patiala. At Chail, there is an extensive cricket ground, unique in the world, at an altitude of about 7,500 feet above sea level, where cricket matches between the state team and teams from outside were played. Even teams from England and other places were invited to come and play cricket matches. The ground has a lovely setting with high mountains in the background. One could see from this ground the Himalayan peaks of Badri Narain, Kailash Parbat and other gigantic mountains covered with snow. (Guha, 2002).

The discussion may be concluded with a reference to the film ‘Lagan’. Set in 1893, ‘Lagan’ is the tale of a team of village men playing cricket against an oppressive colonial regime in the village of Champaner in Kutch to save their lives, families and land. At the outset of the film, captain Russell, the arrogant British army officer-in-charge of the cantonment at Champaner, was outraged because a young, spirited, peasant boy, Bhuban, describes cricket as the ‘feringhee’ version of ‘gilli danda’, a game which he had been playing since his childhood. Captain Russell challenged Bhuvan in the presence of the provincial Raja and the rest of the villagers to beat the English team in a cricket match, failing which the entire province would be charged three times their share of annual tax i.e., ‘Lagan’. Should these country bumpkins succeed in the impossible task of defeating the English team, their taxes and those of the entire province would be revoked for three years. With the odds so heavily against him, since twice the tax was already upon the village, Bhuvan accepted the challenge notwithstanding the opposition from his fellow villagers.

The cricket match thus becomes an arena for asserting the indigenous strength against the might of the colonial state. The sporting prowess of the villagers and their ultimate
victory helped them emphasise that their ‘Indian’ identity was in no way inferior to the whites. Natives’ mastery over the colonial sport of cricket emerged as the leveller between the colonizer and the colonized. The film, however, goes beyond the cricket field. The aspirations of the villagers of Chamapaner to enjoy their own agricultural produce and the victory of rural goodness over imperial craftiness can be seen as an evocation of a Gandhian critique. Champaner becomes a filmic embodiment of a pristine village community, untainted by the vices of industrial modernity. The Indian farmer takes the centre-stage in the film, emerging as a modern citizen asserting his/her right of self-determination by successfully ousting the foreigner from his/her domain.

In the last scene of the film there is a voice lamenting that, despite his value on the sporting field, Bhuvan, the central character in the film, has been relegated to the dusty shelves of newspaper archives.

**Indo-British Phase**

The history of Indian sport can only be understood in light if the fact that sport was always included as a crucial binding factor in the British Empire. Forged in the 19th century by traders, military officers, missionaries and proponents of ‘muscular Christianity’, the sporting bond was not only maintained and extended by the governing circles, but carefully cultivated among a selective section of the population through informal forms of exchange rather than authoritative imposition. Sport became a source of considerable cultural power, conveying through its different forms, a moral and behavioural code – the Games Ethic – to connect and unite the far-flung British territories in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, North America, Oceania and, of course, the British Isles. The introduction of all organised western sports in India from 1920 onwards can be traced to this idea.
The formation of the Cricket Control Board of India and by 1930 marks the beginning of coordinating cricket on the pattern of the MCC and India was granted the status to play test matches by the Imperial Cricket Conference.

The origin of the Cricket Control Board of India lies in a casual conversation that took place in Delhi’s lovely Roshanara Gardens in February 1927. The participants were the MCC captain, A. E. R. Gilligan, the Maharaja of Patiala, and an ambitious Delhi businessman, R. E. Grant-Govan. To this select audience, the visiting captain suggested that there should be a regular exchange of cricket visits between England and India. C. K. Nayudu’s slaughter of his best bowlers in Bombay had convinced Gilligan that the erstwhile pupils could now play on more or less equal terms with their masters.

Grant-Govan had a secretary, A. S. D’Mello, who matched him in ambition and had more energy besides. Born in Karachi in 1898, and of Goan extraction, D’Mello studied in England and returned to become a boxwallah in Delhi. Now he and his boss sent circulars to the clubs in the different provinces and followed up with personal visits. The upshot was the formation in December 1928 of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), with Grant-Govan as the founder President and D’Mello as the founder Secretary. The first meeting was held in Bombay, a city that under usual circumstances, would be expected to house the new Board too. As a critic observed that, if Indian cricket was born in Bombay to its present growth and strength, the home of the new Board must also be in the same parent city. However, the promoters knew that if they were to retain control it must be headquartered elsewhere. With money from the Maharajas and building permits from the civil servants, the President and the Secretary initiated the construction of a cricket ground in Delhi. The Board planned to locate its office adjacent to the ground’s new pavilion.
In May 1929, Grant-Govan and D’Mello travelled to London to participate in a meeting of the Imperial Cricket Council (ICC). Lord Harris, then seventy-eight, was President of the ICC. Now, in his one certifiable contribution to the Indian cricket, he agreed to a tour of the sub-continent by the MCC in the winter of 1930-31, to be followed by a return visit in 1932. India’s standing had been enormously helped by the performance of its hockey players during those days. In 1928, they had easily won the gold medal at the Amsterdam Olympics. This was followed by a successful tour of Europe in which one player alone, Dhyan Chand, scored seventy-five goals. A journalist accompanying the team recalled a conversation in a London pub, the gist of which seems to have been: ‘Whatever the Indians might be unable to do [such as run their country], there is one thing they could certainly do, and by Jove, how! How they can play hockey!’ The deeds of Dhyan Chand and company helped Grant-Govan and D’Mello persuade the ICC that Indians might be able to hold their own in other sports as well.

The following winter the Board’s twin promoters were in Bombay during the Quadrangular week, seeking out hosts and sponsors for the tour of 1930-31. Early the following year, however, Gandhiji decided to make one of his periodic interventions with the course of Indian cricket. On 26th January, 1930, he led the members of the Congress in taking an ‘Independence Pledge’ on the banks of the river Ravi in Lahore. The pledge denounced the British for having ‘ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually’.

Six weeks later, the master of civil disobedience began the walk to the sea known as the Dandi March. The walk took twenty days, with public meetings held in villages and towns en route. A bemused administration made no move to stop Gandhiji. On 6th April, he reached the sea, aiming to break an archaic law forbidding individuals from
making salt. As Gandhiji picked up a fistful of salt, he said he was shaking the foundations of the British Empire. Following his example, volunteers in the other parts of the country broke the salt and forest laws, picketed liquor shops and distilleries, and organised sit-down strikes. By the end of the year, a staggering 60,000 Indian had been put behind bars.

The MCC tour of India was hastily called off and so was the 1930’s Quadrangular for Bombay was a centre of nationalist activity, with daily bonfires of foreign cloth, marches in support of striking peasants, street-corner speeches and the display of exhortative posters. In October, 1930, the P.J. Hindu Gymkhana passed a resolution forbidding its team from taking part in the carnival. The other sides also withdrew but some club cricket was allowed to be played. The newspapers carried reports of a match between the Bombay Gymkhana and a team of Indian Christians. The P.J. Hindu Gymkhana also played a friendly tie against the St. Xavier’s College.

After a year in jail, Gandhiji was released and made his way to the Viceroy’s palace in New Delhi to parley on equal terms with the representative of the Emperor. In September, 1931, he set sail for London to attend a Round Table Conference regarding India’s future. Gandhiji was the Congress’ sole representative and there were spokespersons for the Princes, the Sikhs, the Muslims and the Untouchables. The last two were, from Gandhiji’s point of view, the real problems. The Muslims had stayed aloof from the latest round of civil disobedience. And the Untouchables were represented in London by the formidable B. R. Ambedkar, who insisted that the Untouchables must elect their own legislators from a separate electorate in which caste Hindus would not participate. This, to Gandhiji, was ‘the unkindest cut of all’. The claims of the other minorities he could understand but he thought that he represented the Untouchables himself.
The conference failed, for the British were reluctant to devolve power to the provinces and the Indians were fighting among themselves anyway. While Gandhiji was away in London, the civil disobedience was resumed. Men like Jawaharlal Nehru and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan were put in jail. The new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was determined to replace his predecessor Lord Irwin’s policy of indulgent understanding with stern repression. In January, 1932, a month after his return, Gandhiji was also arrested and sent to Yeravada jail.

While Gandhiji languished in the jail, the Indian cricket team to tour England was being chosen. Trial matches were organised at the Maharaja’s grounds in Patiala and at the Roshanara Club in Delhi. Ranji was the chairman of the selection committee but he had forbidden his nephew Duleep, already a cricketer for England, to participate. Three promising Bombay batsmen, Champak Mehta, L. P. Jai and Vijay Merchant, withdraw from the trials in support of Gandhiji’s call for civil disobedience. Another Bombay batsman, P. Vithal, did play in the trials but in 1911 he was told he was too young and in 1932 he was told he was too old. Unlike his brother Baloo, Vithal would never play at Lord’s. As an admirer bitterly remarked, he was thus ‘stopped from going to Pandhari’. For the non-Maharasthtrians, these few and evocative words shall need a gloss. To prohibit this superb cricketer from playing at the Home of Cricket, suggested Vithal’s friend, was akin to prohibiting the deity he had been named after from being present at the great shrine in Pandharpur built for his worship.

The 1932 side nicely reflected the balance of communal interest: 7 Hindus, 4 Muslims, 4 Parsis and 3 Sikhs. The captain was the Maharaja of Porbandar, who, it was alleged, owned more Rolls-Royces than he had made runs. Mercifully, he played little on tour and agreed to step down for the only test match so that C. K. Nayudu
could be the captain in his stead. England won the test but not without difficulty. In the other matches, the Indians defeated as many as nine first class counties. The undoubted successes of the tour were Nayudu and the fast bowling combination of Mohammed Nissar from Punjab and Amar Singh, former student of Gandhiji’s own school, King Alfred’s in Rajkot. Nayudu, chosen one of Wisden’s Five Cricketers of the year, batted consistently well, never better than while making 118 against the MCC. It was in this knock that he hit a six of which it was said, ‘the ball was last seen leaving the Home of Cricket in an easterly direction’.

The Indian cricketers, said one reporter, had made a better impression than had their politicians in 1931, perhaps, the ‘English like sports better than politics, and it is just as well.’ For ‘what the Round Tables might fail to achieve the Naidus alone might succeed’.

Interestingly, two Indians appeared for their counties against the tourists – Duleep Singhji played for Sussex and the Nawab of Pataudi for Worcestershire. Both had disdained to appear in the colours of All India, hoping rather to be chosen for that winter’s tour of Australia by England. Both were selected, although Duleep dropped out due to illness. While India was still ruled by the British, such anomalies were possible. It is notable, though, that neither was asked to play for England against India in the solitary test of 1932. (Guha, 2002)

This was followed by the visit of Lord Jardine’s team to India in 1934 and a discussion of this team’s experience has already been made earlier. The commencement of Second World War took a toll on international cricket in India and it was revived only after the war when India had obtained independence.
**Post-Independence Phase**

(i) 1947 to 1983

When India became free, some Anglophobe nationalists called for the game to disappear along with its promoters, the British. In this, they were spectacularly unsuccessful. What was previously an urban sport penetrated deep into the countryside. Indigenous games like Kabaddi and Kho-Kho never had a chance. Cricket has also vanquished sports like hockey, where India was once the acknowledge world leader. The doings of the national cricket team are followed all over the country. The best players enjoy the iconic status otherwise reserved for the Hindu gods and the film stars. Their faces peep out of highway billboards and on television they recommend all kind of consumer products. The Bombay batsman Sachin Tendulkar is, perhaps, the best known Indian as well as one of the richest. There are pamphlets and books about him in his native Marathi and in Hindi and Tamil too. When Tendulkar was batting against the Pakistani swing-bowler, Wasim Akram, the television audience exceeded the entire population of Europe. (*Guha, 2002*)

To this list may be added M. K. Pataudi, Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Deb and Saurav Gangly. With new enthusiasm, the BCCI started activating its state associations on a nationalistic line and emphasis was given on the areas mentioned below.

1) Arranging annual international test matches during the winter in India with countries like England, Australia, West Indies, Pakistan, New Zealand and Sri Lanka and taking Indian teams to these countries in summer

2) Creating a pool of national-level players by holding domestic tournaments such as Ranji Trophy, Dullep Trophy and Irani Trophy
3) Encouraging sporting clubs by the regional associations to promote cricket

4) Building infrastructure in the Indian cities and upgrading the existing infrastructure and stadia in the metropolitan cities

5) Creating a market for cricket through the help of the media by branding cricket as a national sport and arranging broadcasting of matches in vernacular languages

6) Gate money from a large number of spectators as a principal source of revenue, supplemented by membership fees and advertisements in souvenirs and displays of banners on field and billboards off field.

(ii) 1983 onward

The advent of the satellite technology revolutionised the game of cricket and the BCCI was quick enough to realise its potential. The limited-overs cricket (LOC) and the one-day International, which emerged as the new forms of cricket, gave it a further boost. The culmination of this process was the lifting of the World Cup by India in 1983. The cricket administration persuaded Doordarshan to broadcast live the international matches and that has created a market comprising almost every Indian. With the economic liberalisation policy of India, the private channels have come into this arena. This development is worth discussing in detail. Kunal Pradhan writes:

‘Nineteen years ago, Mark Mascarenhas, a gruff, beefy man, with a bombastic voice and the cockiness of a hustler, returned to India after broadcasting American college football, boxing and international skiing. He met Jagmohan Dalmiya, a short, hard-nosed Marwari builder, who liked to say ‘thee’ instead of ‘the’ and couldn’t have been more different in terms of background and pedigree. If Dalmiya, who once kept wickets in the local maidan matches, went on to best ride the cricket world like a colossus, his friend Mark was one of the people who ensured that the reign was meaningful.’
Mark and Jaggu (as people called Dalmiya, not always affectionately) shared a profitable alliance. They were like the first prospectors during the gold rush or like the 19th century carpetbaggers in the American south. Together, they cut deals that taught Indian business something that would forever change the face of sport in India. Cricket on TV has become a marketable commodity like no other, bigger than music, cinema, crime and, on most days, politics.

Mascarenhas, who owned World Tell died in 2002 in a car accident, and Dalmiya, mired in controversy, has been relegated to Bengal cricket since 2005. But, over the past two decades, their golden idea has transformed the world cricket completely.

‘Let me tell you what television has done for cricket in India’, Rahul Dravid said, ‘a sport that was largely played and patronised in India by princes and businessmen in traditional urban centres, cities like Bombay, Bangalore, Chennai, Baroda, Hyderabad and Delhi, has begun to pull in cricketers from everywhere. As the earnings from the Indian cricket have grown in the past two decades, mainly through television, the BCCI has spread revenue to the various pockets in the country and improved the cricket fields. The field is now spread wider that it ever has been. The ground covered by Indian cricket has shifted. The deal was that the Nimbus was to pay Rs. 31.5 crore for every international match they covered and that is why the BCCI has become the richest sport body in the world’. (Economic Times, 2011)

The media’s role in popularising cricket could be gleaned through from the excerpts below.

Another crucial factor that has increased the link between cricket and national consciousness is the de-regulation of the television industry that took place in 1993. The success in the World Cup ten years earlier combined with the spread of new television stations brought cricket to whole new audiences throughout India.
Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch’s Star Sports and ESPN channels have become the mainstay for bringing cricket to an ever widening audience. Radio and, more particularly, television have made cricket the most popular game in India..... Men, women and children who had no interest in the game earlier have now become ardent fans because of its broadcast by radio and television.

Cricket on television is a boon for the advertisements because commercials can be shown every four minutes or so, after each over, and this, combined with the need for the new channels to fill their schedules, requires more and more matches being shown.

Multinational corporations (MNCs) have started entering India as the Indian economy is opening up and they need brand ambassadors with whom the population is identified. Cricket players have provided the perfect vehicle for this which, in turn, has boosted the popularity of the star players. The MNCs have exploited the sub-continent’s love for cricket and also for the Bollywood. Using movie stars and cricketers to advertise their products, the MNCs have gained an extraordinary reach in the sub-continent. In India, billboards with cricketers like Tendulkar or movie stars like Shah Rukh Khan holding a Pepsi or Coca Cola are ubiquitous. These also allow the poor people to interact with the global capitalism and help them forget their own situation for a while.

It needs to be noted that, as the Indian economy is being liberalised and ‘big money’ is pouring in a proportion that the population has now more money to spend. The developments have also brought about a growing middle class who, Nandy argues, ‘expanded the scope and range of national consciousnesses.’ He points out that the middle class in India is the standard bearer of nationalism and has encouraged the links between cricket and national consciousness.
The media has deepened this link between cricket and nationalism and nowhere has this been more obvious than in the 2007 World Cup. The Hindustan Times advertised the World Cup with the apt slogans, linking the Indians’ passion for cricket with national consciousness and the major brands. Varun Sahni argues that such links are positive, ‘if your national identity is expressed...predominantly through sport,...that’s actually a rather good thing. A lot of us were very relieved to see German nationalism [for example] re-emerge during the football World Cup, in such a healthy ...non-xenophobic manner, [it was] felt that the Germans have come of age. I think the media makes the most of it’. This hyper-nationalism comes to the fore particularly when India plays Pakistan in cricket. In the run-up to the India/Pakistan match in the quarter finals of the 2003 World Cup, the media went into overdrive portraying this as ‘mimic warfare’. A Bengali newspaper represented the match as war with the cricket pitch as the battleground and a Gujarati newspaper turned the Indian and Pakistani cricket teams into soldiers complete with military uniform and guns.

**Twenty-20**

Another factor which revolutionised the Indian cricket is the introduction of Twenty-20 and the advent of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Although the idea was first tried by ICL but it had a premature death because of opposition from the BCCI. The IPL is today the business model of the BCCI as it, constitutionally, cannot make profit from the business of cricket.

The explosion in the popularity of Twenty-20, the short format of the game, has provided real commercial impetus to a game that has historically lagged behind other major international sports in financial terms. The IPL, run by the Indian cricket’s governing body, the BCCI, is now worth some US$ 1.6 billion. Despite the fact that the six-week tournament has just completed only its seventh season, it is now by far
the most valuable cricket property on the planet. That fact is corroborated by the analysis of sponsorship.

The ICC, world cricket’s governing body and the organiser of the ICC Cricket World Cup and the ICC World Twenty-20, makes US$ 35.5 million a year in terms of sponsorship. The IPL makes US$ 30 million in terms of sponsorship as a central body also plus around US$ 44 million a year through the eight franchises that participate in it.

The BCCI, operating in a nation of a billion cricket fans, is now by far the wealthiest governing body in the game of cricket. It signed a US$ 70 million deal with Air Sahara in 2005 and that deal, worth US$ 17.5 million a year, is still the single most outstanding sponsorship in the game of cricket. As the arbiters of the IPL, many of the BCCI’s sponsorship deals are tied up with those of the Twenty-20 tournaments. Standout deals in the IPL include real estate company DFL’s US$ 10 million a year title sponsorship contract, Hero Honda’s US$ 4.5 million a year associate partnership deal and Kingfisher Airlines’ US$ 5.3 million a year sponsorship deal.

The figures show that the Pepsi, the soft drinks company, makes an annual investment of US$ 11.5 million in cricket. That figure would have been higher had the Pepsi not renewed on an IPL deal at the beginning of the second session. The company had pledged a total of US$ 12.5 million to the IPL over a five-year period but an ambush marketing campaign from the Coca Cola in the competition’s first year forced an early termination of the deal. The Coca Cola spent US$ 4 million on television advertising for the IPL’s first year, signing an exclusivity deal that prevented on-screen competition with the other soft drinks companies. On the second year, the Coca Cola spent some US$ 3 million on direct cricket sponsorship plus an extra US$ 1 million on the Kolkata Knight Riders through its Spirit brand.
In total, the beverages sector has spent some US$3.72 million on cricket sponsorship on the second year, the second highest contribution across the board. Although the Pepsi tops that spending with an annual investment in cricket of US$ 11.5 million (plus US$ 1 million through its 7 Up brand), the sport is popular with the breweries. Marston’s in England and Foster’s in Australia (generally through its Victoria Bitter subsidiary) are both long-term patrons of the sport, sponsoring their respective governing bodies – the England and Wales Cricket Board in England and its counterpart Cricket Australia – as well as a myriad domestic teams. The brewers used to spend some US$ 7.7 million on cricket every year between them. Sports entrepreneur, Vijay Mallya, has been keen to support the IPL since its inception. As well as buying the Bangalore franchise for US$ 111.6 million, he has used both his Royal Challenge whisky brand and his Kingfisher airline and beer brand to back the to the tune of around US$ 8.8 million a year.

The genesis of the IPL, that has changed the face of cricket forever, is already a much written-about, even mythologised moment in the history of the game of cricket. This concept for the tournament is now well known-an Indian cricket league of city-based franchises, comprising the best players from around the world, competing against each other, at home and away, in the shortest format of the game, Twenty-20. That multi-billion dollar concept, so the story goes, was cooked up by Lalit Modi, an ambitious and wealthy man, who had climbed his way up to the higher echelons of the Indian cricket’s governing body, the BCCI, and Andrew Wildblood, a senior vice-president at IMG and the man responsible for all the agency’s business in India, over a tennis match at Centre Court during the 2007 Wimbledon Championship. Within a matter of months, the concept crystallised into reality and the BCCI, following the
auction of the eight franchises and the sale of the global broadcast rights, found itself US$ 1.8 billion richer as a direct result.

‘There’s an element of license to that story,’ recounts Wildblood, ‘but it is true to say that Lalit and I, although we did know each other before, met during Wimbledon in the summer of 2007 and we both had parallel thinking about the potential for India to create, forgive the expression, a cricket product – beyond just the international product – that had commercial value. And we felt that it needed to be something that was completely new; that wasn’t a rearrangement of something that had already happened; that wasn’t something that was just a redecoration.’ The rest, as they say, is history.

The IPL, which began its third season on 12th March, is not a genuinely established commercial powerhouse. The real estate developer, DFL, has gone its third season of a five-year US$ 50 million naming rights contract. Hero Honda is midway through a US$ 22.5 million sponsorship contract. Vijay Mallya’s Kingfisher Airlines paid US$ 26.5 million for the right to emblazon the IPL’s umpires’ clothing and to sponsor the umpires’ decisions for five years.

The global media rights, having been sold to Sony Entertainment Television (SET) and World Sport Group (WSG) for US$ 1.03 billion in 2008, were renegotiated last year following the legal challenges from the two media companies. Once again, Lalit Modi came away with the spoils, securing an extra US$ 70 million a year for the BCCI for what is a very similar deal for the WSG, who retain the global rights to the tournament till 2017 and the SET, going under the new name of Multi Screen Media (MSM), who retains the tournament rights within India till the same date.

Despite those staggering sums, the competition is still apparently ripe with potential. Sponsorship value continues to rise. Some five months before the start of season
three, Samsung, Videocon and Hyundai all signed up as sponsors in deals worth a reported US$ 8.5 million a year each (Sports Pro 2010).

**IPL – The Current Scenario**

The IPL and the controversy have always gone hand in hand.

1. Banning of three players of Rajasthan Royals for betting, spot fixing in 2012
2. Banning of five IPL players for agreeing to illicit practices in 2012 and 2013
3. Termination of contract of Kochi Tuskers Kerala in September 2011 and Deccan Chargers in September 2012 for failing to pay Bank Guarantee
4. Pulling out of the League by Sahara-owned Pune Warriors after the BCCI encashed the bank guarantee as the team failed to pay its franchise fee
5. Sun TV Network bought the Hyderabad franchise for Rs. 425 crore in 2012 and named it Sunrisers Hyderabad
6. Resignation of Shashi Tharoor as Union Minister of State for the involvement of his friend Sunanda Pushkar in Kochi Tuskers
7. KKR-owner banned from the Wankhade Stadium in 2012 after he allegedly abused officials and manhandled a security guard
8. Lalit Modi suspended in 2012 for alleged irregularities and banned for life in September 2013
9. Pune Warrior players detained at a rave party in 2012 and later charged with drug use

These are also a pointer to the national traits in sports.

(I) Politicians (or their cronies) run sports bodies (Sharad Power, Madhav Rao Scindhia, Rajiv Shukla, Arun Jaitley)

(II) Independently unaccountable and yet enjoying the alacrity with which official doors are opened and rules are changed
(III) The Supreme Court itself in 1995 recognised the overwhelming role that cricket has in the national consciousness, deeming the right to view it as entertainment as a part of the protection of the Constitution’s Fundamental Rights (*Sankaranarayanan, 2014*)

(IV) The thirst for cash by players, administrators, television companies, sponsors and crucial book-makers created an orgy of the sort cricket had never seen

Its raison d’être was money when you live by the sword, however you die by it (*Hawkins, 2014*)

This has taken a heavy toll on the IPL. The TV ratings have dropped from 4.8 to 2.9 and an estimated $ 1 billion has been wiped from its value following the Supreme Court’s Judgment on the spot-fixing case on 27th March based on Justice Mukul Mudgal’s report removing N. Srinivasan from the post of President of the BCCI and appointing Sunil Gavaskar as the interim President to handle the IPL.

The entire issue came to head in 2013 following charges of spot-fixing against Gurunath Meiyappan’s role as CEO of Chennai Super King and the son-in-law of N. Srinivasan. The IPL, whose creation made short the work of the Zee group-promoted Indian Cricket League (ICL), has involuntarily and relentlessly been drawn into trouble right from its conceptualisation and fructification by its first Commissioner and Chairman, Lalit Modi. Conflict of interest was, and continues to be, amongst the most contentious issues. While Modi’s relatives, by marriage, the Chellarams, are co-owners of the Rajasthan Royals team, which has been in the news for foreign exchange violations, India Cements, of which Srinivasan is the managing director, owns CSK, which has been the most successful team in the IPL, winning the title twice and making it to the finals as many times.
Financial firepower yoked with celebrity has been as much the IPL’s calling card as cricket, with high-profile owners like, besides Srinivasan, Shah Rukh Khan and Sun TV’s Kalanithi Maran, Mukesh Ambani (Mumbai Indians), Vijay Mallya (Royal Challengers Bangalore), Shilpa Shetty and her husband Raj Kundra (Rajasthan Royals), and Ness Wadia and Preity Zinta (Kings XI Punjab). It is interesting that ‘great entertainment’ always precedes ‘cricket’ when those associated with the IPL talk about it. They do not shy away from calling it a ‘mela’ or ‘circus’. While many cricket lovers, who have no love lost for the T-20 format, are aghast at what they think are extraneous frills that detract from the game. Sports writer Ayaz Menon finds nothing wrong with it. ‘Even the NBA has cheerleaders, music and tamasha. We don’t question that.’

That would be fine as long as the IPL did not have an omnipresent impropriety on it, which came to a head in 2013 with the arrest of three Rajasthan Royals players, S.Sreesanth, Ankeet Chavan and Ajit Chandila, besides several bookies, on charges of spot-fixing. The cops then turned their attention to betting and arrested Meiyappan for his links to bookies. Srinivasan refused calls to step down as the BCCI President since Meiyappan was just a ‘cricket enthusiast’ who had no role in the Super Kings. The BCCI appointed a two-member panel to probe the matter, which also concerned Kundra, who the Delhi Police said had admitted to betting. Challenging the constitutionality of the panel, Aditya Verma, secretary of the Cricket Association of Bihar, filed a petition in the Bombay High Court. The case reached the Supreme Court, which, in October, 2013 set up a three-member committee headed by Justice Mukul Mudgal to look into the issue.

The committee, in its report submitted to the Supreme Court in February, 2014 indicted Meiyappan on charges of betting and passing on information about the Super
Kings, in addition to naming six capped players whom it thought should be investigated. The names have not been made public. However, Harish Salve, who appeared for Verma in the Supreme Court, said Dhoni lied to the Mudgal Committee about Meiyappan’s role in CSK and that there is a conflict of interest since Dhoni is a Vice-President at Indian Cements, which also employs several current and former cricketers like R Ashwin, Dinesh Karthik and Rahul Dravid. The apex court said no employee of India Cements should be with the BCCI. (Economic Times, 2014)

The only answer to this problem is to introduce the principles of corporate governance on lines of the Companies Act 2013 in the affairs of the BCCI and the IPL and make them subject to the CAG Audit.

The commercialisation of modern cricket and the corruptions that have come in its wake have led the commentators to speak wistfully of a time when this was a ‘gentleman’s game’. In truth, there was no golden age, no uncontaminated past in which the play ground was free of social pressure and social influence. Cricket has always been a microcosm of the fissures and tensions within the Indian society – fissures that it has reflected and played upon, mitigated as well as intensified. The cricket-lover might seek to keep his game pure, but the cricket historians find themselves straying, willy-nilly, into those great, overarching themes of Indian history – race, caste, religion and nation – in the wider context of cricket as a game.