



IJMRRS

**International Journal for Multidisciplinary
Research, Review and Studies**

ISSN: 3049-124X (Online)

Volume 1 - Issue 3

2024

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**Unpacking linkages of ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’
Through an overlooked moment of Indian Cricket**

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Abstract

How did these linkages between a ‘game originally of western origin’ and idea of ‘nation’ unfold in the years immediately succeeding India’s independence? If ‘cricket’ increasingly came to be associated with ‘Indian nationalism’ in the first half of twentieth century, then how did this association between ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’ survive after the departure of ‘colonial masters’? A possible answer to these questions would be that since realization of ‘Indian’ ideal on cricketing pitch preceded the realization of the ‘Indian’ ideal in political sphere and in other domains of social and cultural spheres (Kidambi 2019), so India’s independence hardly brought any change in the ways ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’ were linked and thought about until 1930s-1940s. Such an understanding, however, tends to overlook the peculiar historical context that emerged in post-war years and in which the relationship and bonds between relatively weaker British Empire and their non-white colonies were redrawn (Darwin 1991). In many ways, tours of commonwealth sides to play ‘unofficial tests’ with India in 1949-50 and 1950-51 brought all these tensions to the fore. This paper is an attempt to locate some of these debates that emerged in the wake of tours of commonwealth eleven to India in 1950-51. The focus is on the workings of the Cricket Control board of India (hereinafter referred to as the Indian board) and debates over the right composition of Indian team. Each set of debates above mentioned cast fresh light in ways the idea of India as a cricket playing nation was constituted and imagined after its independence.

Key Words: Postcolonial cricket, Indian nationalism, British Commonwealth, British India

1. Introduction and Theoretical context

One of the ways in which the imprints of the colonial past on India's social and cultural life are analyzed and studied is cricket. It has been demonstrated in several scholarly accounts that cricket brings forth and captures complexities of India's dialogue with its colonial past in a manner few other domains of public life do (Appadurai 1995, Kidambi 2019, Guha 1998). The existing body of scholarship has also attempted to account for the increasing popularity of cricket in Indian public life during colonial and post-colonial period despite its predominantly elite victorian values and ideals. While some scholars see affinity between its prim victorian norms such as its unpredictability, its unwritten codes of conduct and cultural values of Indian society (i.e. its hierarchical caste-based social order) as the key reason of its indigenization in Indian context (Nandy 1989), others argue that cricket is appropriated in Indian imagination 'through a set of complex and contradictory processes that parallel the emergence of Indian nation' (Appadurai 1995). For the proponents of the later view, the idea of 'cricket' and 'nation' was linked throughout late nineteenth and twentieth century colonial India (Kidambi 2019) and unfolded through a process 'where patronage, politics, and play became mutually intertwined' (Kidambi 2019, p. 2-5). This body of scholarship, thus, favors an approach that sees interaction among wide range of processes- processes by which cricket is 'patronized', 'managed', 'publicized' and linked to the broader discussions about 'nation', 'class' and 'race'[\[1\]](#)-crucial for indigenizing and thereby liberating cricket from its Englishness.

Despite being somewhat inconsistent in their theoretical approaches, these two strands of thought share a common point. They argue that indigenization of cricket in Indian context is a 'process' which has many dimensions and thus not reducible to any particular set of social and historical conditions. In fact, there always exists a tension between 'elite victorian forms' and 'indigenized forms' and the process of indigenization is never complete. This, in other words, suggests that search for the 'complete break' from elite victorian ideals of cricket fails to serve any purpose in

Indian case. Though one can always think of crucial ‘turning points’ in the longer trajectory of cricket’s evolution as modern sports in India. Scholars writing on history of Indian cricket have consistently highlighted the significance of first ‘Indian’ cricket team tour to playing fields of imperial Britain in 1911[2] and India’s victory over West Indies in 1971[3] for the larger questions of cricket’s indigenization and links it offered with ‘empire’, ‘nation’, ‘race’ and ‘gender’.

2. Research Questions

But how did these linkages between a ‘game originally of western origin’ and idea of ‘nation’ unfold in the years immediately succeeding India’s independence? If ‘cricket’ increasingly came to be associated with ‘Indian nationalism’ in the first half of twentieth century, then how did this association between ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’ survive after the departure of ‘colonial masters’? A possible answer to these questions would be that since realization of ‘Indian’ ideal on cricketing pitch preceded the realization of the ‘Indian’ ideal in political sphere and in other domains of social and cultural spheres (Kidambi 2019), so India’s independence hardly brought any change in the ways ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’ were linked and thought about until 1930s-1940s. Many would further point out the ‘quasi-official’ character of the support colonial regime (Appadurai 1989, p.92-93) provided to cricket to argue that it was largely ‘moral’ and ‘cultural’ in its commitments[4] and hence developments taking place in the political sphere did not affect growth of cricket as a relatively autonomous domain of Indian public life. For the adherents of such views, linkages that cricket offered with ‘nation’, ‘race’ and ‘gender’ during what is often called as ‘heyday of British Raj’ continued to be operated in the same way after India’s independence.

3. An overlooked moment in the history of Indian Cricket?

Such an understanding, however, tends to overlook the peculiar historical context that emerged in post-war years and in which the relationship and bonds between relatively weaker British Empire and their non-white colonies were redrawn (Darwin 1991). In a global climate increasingly

becoming bipolar, British Empire attempted to maintain its interests in global politics through the British commonwealth of nations[5]. There is however much historical work to show that British efforts to keep India and other non-white colonies under commonwealth were part of the larger politics of cold-war (Darwin 1991) but India's decision to stay in 'British commonwealth' even after becoming a 'republic' proved to be very crucial for the fate of Indian cricket. It was this decision that ultimately reassured the Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC) [6] about India's continuing ties with Britain and forced ICC[7] to grant India permanent membership status in its board on 27-28 June, 1950 as a cricket playing nation (Bose 2006).

In many ways, tours of commonwealth sides to play 'unofficial tests'[8] with India in 1949-50 and 1950-51 brought all these tensions to the fore. The tour of 1950-51 was approved by the Imperial Cricket conference right after India was granted permanent membership status in ICC. It was decided that the commonwealth side, composed of players of countries part of British Commonwealth, will play five 'unofficial tests' against Indian side including twenty-seven first class matches. There emerged intense debate and discussion on wide range of issues including utility of such tours in helping the cause of Indian cricket, failure of Indian team and particularly its batsmen in posing serious challenge to opposition, question of etiquettes of game and biases on part of Indian selection committee and its inability to put a competitive side against touring commonwealth team. This paper is an attempt to locate some of these debates that emerged in the wake of tours of commonwealth eleven to India in 1950-51. The focus is on the workings of the Cricket Control board of India (hereinafter referred to as the Indian board) and debates over the right composition of Indian team. Each set of debates above mentioned cast fresh light in ways the idea of India as a cricket playing nation was constituted and imagined after its independence.

4. Some remarks on archival source

The sport pages of English daily 'The Times of India' (TOI) serve a source[9] to do so. The choice of this newspaper as archival source is guided by its distinct British roots. In 1946, although TOI passed from British ownership into the hands of an Indian industrialist Seth Ramkrishna Dalmia (Jeffrey 1994), it continued to use 'victorian prose' imprints of which were evident on its sport

pages till 1960s (Bose 2006 110-115). The sport pages of TOI further deserves attention as it was very much part of the Anglo-Indian world that had crucial stakes in ways cricket was played and popularized in colonial India. Richard Cashman (1980) has described in detail how ‘The Times of India shield tournament’ was one of oldest established corporate tournaments that patronized many stalwarts of Indian cricket right from 1930s[\[10\]](#). Thus, the sport pages and particularly newspaper’s coverage of cricket throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century were in many ways part of the investments that British India did in order to bring natives into the world of cricket.

This clearly reflected in ways the newspaper treated the Commonwealth eleven tours to India on its pages. The proceedings of every single ‘unofficial’ test match were reported on the front page with detailed scorecard and analysis. Not only unofficial fixtures between commonwealth eleven and Indian eleven but first-class matches between touring side and state associations were reported prominently on sport pages. The preferential treatment of cricket also became apparent in ways the space devoted to the coverage of the commonwealth tour of 1950-51 varied in the period of July 1950- Feb 1951. In July, there were in total nine days when at least one news item carrying updates on tour were published. This number increased to 11 in August, 21 in September and finally in the period of Oct 1950-Feb 1951 (the period in which unofficial ‘tests’ and first class matches were scheduled to be played), updates on commonwealth tour were published almost regularly sometimes with detailed and critical commentaries. The most significant in this regard was the weekly sport column entitled ‘Bori Bunder Gossip by Leon’ which frequently discussed Indian and English cricketers, their performances, policy issues vital for the promotion of cricket in India in a highly critical undertone. Though I could not ascertain the identity of the columnist, I found commentaries published in this column of great archival importance. I am particularly attentive to these commentaries in the second last part of my paper’s analysis.

5. An ‘Indian’ Board working in the ‘British’ Way?

It has already been mentioned that tours of commonwealth eleven to India were planned in a period when it was redrawing its cricketing ties with Britain and struggling to ensure its ‘stake’ in world cricket. The permanent membership status to ICC in June 1950 was a ‘big’ moment for Indian

cricket in this regard and this reflected most revealingly in ways Board of Cricket Control of India emerged as the controlling body for the management of affairs of Indian cricket. It is worth noting in this respect that the question of permanent membership to ICC was linked to the need to be governed by a single controlling body from the very beginning (Guha 1998). The permanent place in ICC, however, imbued board an authority it hardly enjoyed in pre-war periods as Indian governing body while negotiating for foreign tours and rules and logics of game. This became increasingly evident in the events occurring in and around the 1950-51 tour of commonwealth eleven to India. Thus, 'all the requests for cricket tours to and from India were approved by Imperial Cricket Conference' reported TOI citing Mr. A.S. de Mello, the president of board in India (p.11, The Times of India, 29 June 1950). The board further submitted a draft itinerary for Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) tour in India in 1951-52 to play five-tests of five-day duration (p.8, The Times universally acceptable of India, 14 July 1950). Most of the time, these requests including many others met with little resistance and were generously approved by ICC.

There is of course a larger sociological significance of these sporting exchanges and negotiations that were established between Board and ICC. Bourdieu (1978) has highlighted that exchanges of these kinds are largely part of the 'process of rationalization' through which 'a corpus of rules are developed' which in turn entitle sporting associations 'to exercise a disciplinary power[11]' (Bourdieu 1978). Though it could not be ascertained if Indian board attempted to negotiate on rules and logics of the game with ICC till 1970s. The far reaching consequences of this process were to become, however, evident after the 1980s-90s when the board started dictating terms and conditions[12] in ways cricket was organized and played across the world.

But if India managed to 'claim' its stakes in world cricket through a legitimate sporting body, its actual workings demonstrated a great deal of reliance on British linkages. These linkages resurfaced most visibly in the Coaching Scheme Board of Cricket Control of India planned in the wake of the 1950-51 tour of commonwealth eleven to India. The Times of India reported on 17 Aug, 1950 that C.W. Hallows of Lancashire and George Gunn of Nottinghamshire have been appointed as coaches for the coming tour by board. It was also mentioned that the board has constituted a coaching sub-committee to draw up a comprehensive scheme of coaching not only for 'young professionals' but for 'budding coaches'. Commenting on the proposed scheme, newspaper again reported on 12 Sep, 1950, "These budding coaches will be given a month's course

in cricket coaching inclusive of lectures by Hallows and Gunn” ...the president of board also proposed a four months coaching scheme for youth in one of the four centers Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi” (p.8, The Times of India). In many ways, this coaching scheme reaffirmed the elite and metropolitan social base of cricket in India but most importantly it showed the need to coach and train budding Indian professionals and coaches who 'required' technical mastery over the game so as to put a 'competitive' side against opposition. Appadurai (1989) has discussed in detail how such coaching schemes and imports of English and Australian professional cricketers were part of the 'patronage' and 'monarchical and aristocratic ideal of empire' fantasies of small and large princes in many parts of India throughout late nineteenth and twentieth century (Appadurai 1989, 91-97).

The role of Indian board in importing C.W. Hallows and George Gunn and drawing a coaching scheme for the commonwealth tour can be read along similar lines. The 'patronage fantasies' of board were clearly linked and guided by elite and imperial ideals of the game. Most of the then members and office-bearers of the board included Indian ex-cricketers, coaches and administrators who were socialized in the Anglo-Indian world through cricket and were further brought in the world of cricket administration through their active linkages with British empire in the colonial period[\[13\]](#). In fact, the constitution of Indian board as the single controlling body of cricket in 1928 was largely the result of 'patronage fantasies' of Indian princes (Guha 1998). However, if, actual workings of 'Indian' board were mere extensions of British linkages and 'patronage fantasies' of princes, it was further tied with board's own fantasies of a 'national' ideal where a 'nation' could be 'governed' and 'represented' through a 'body' composed of small number of influential 'elites'. Although, the board adopted a new constitution after India's independence setting rules of affiliations for regional and state associations and thus ensuring their stakes in 'Indian' cricket (p.10, The Times of India, 15 Aug 1950), the power to take crucial decisions virtually remained in the hands of president, vice-presidents and treasurer of the board[\[14\]](#). It is indeed an 'ironical' and 'intriguing' aspect of 'Indian' cricket that it became a game of 'national' passion at the hands of a 'small' number of elites.

6. India 'Invented' or India 'Given' on Cricketing Pitch?

By the time tours of commonwealth eleven to India were planned and announced, 'India' had already made its debut as a 'test' unit with England in 1932. In fact, even before 'India' made its debut as 'test' unit, the first cricket team representing 'India' has toured England, a story of which has been brilliantly captured by Prashant Kidambi recently. Also, by the 1950s, the Cricket Control board of India has relatively consolidated itself as a single controlling body of Indian cricket affairs. The board had constituted selection committees which were entrusted with responsibility to select the players for ongoing and upcoming tours. It goes without saying that the Cricket Championship of India (Ranji Trophy) had created a decent pool of Indian cricketers by the 1950s. So, unlike the previous tours, Indian team was not to be 'invented' when the Commonwealth side visited India to play unofficial 'tests' in 1950-51.

Yet, anxieties and issues over what constitutes an ideal Indian team resurfaced during unofficial 'tests'. The question of right 'composition' of 'Indian' team was at the heart of these anxieties which, in turn, revealed that the idea of India on cricketing pitch was still 'contested' one. Right from the start of the tour, there were broader questions on what exactly defined the 'national' interest of a country going through a transitory phase and seeking legitimacy in the world of cricket and how it could be achieved through a well composed Indian cricket team. One of the responses to these concerns by the Indian board was that younger talent should be given an opportunity to acquire experience from commonwealth cricketers (p.15, The Times of India, Nov 19, 1950).

But, as the tour commenced and progressed, this policy came under intense scrutiny for its actual implementation on ground. The debate emerged especially after 'well-known' and 'star' Indian cricketers replaced 'local' players representing their state association teams in first class matches that were scheduled as fillers between each consecutive unofficial 'tests'. Thus, Mr. Leon, in a bold criticism of this practice, wrote in his weekly column 'Bori Bunder Gossip by Leon': "In center after center we have seen well-known cricketers from other parts invited to fill the places which should have been reserved for young local talent and we have invariably been given the same stereotyped excuse for this procedure. The crowd will pay to watch only the pick of India's stars pitted against foreign tourists....in view of the big financial commitments involved, the sponsors of matches cannot afford to incur the risk of losses" (p. 15, The young Cricketers in India getting very raw deal, The Times of India 19 Nov 1950).

In fact, this practice of including 'star' players at the expense of 'local' or 'regional' players culminated in a very embarrassing incident when the George Duckworth, the manager of touring side objected the inclusion of Indian test players Vinu Makand, Rege and the Pali Umrigar in the Madhya Pradesh eleven for fixtures against commonwealth eleven. Duckworth said that tourists would refuse to play at such centers in future as the practice caused tremendous strain on their players. Mr. Leon again took a dig at Indian board and wrote: "I am sure there must several thousands of us who are anxious to know why the board ignored the practice that has vitally affected youthful talent in this country and why in apparent disregard of the existence of affiliated associations all over the country" (p.11, Hints were futile but the threat succeeded, The Times of India, Dec 24, 1950).

In many ways, this remark that 'local' or 'regional' instead of 'star' cricketers should be exposed to touring sides and concerns over their abrupt exclusion from final eleven were part of the larger debate though which the idea of an ideal Indian test team was expected to be realized in future. Mr. Leon in his same weekly column, therefore, consistently criticized Indian board for arranging unofficial commonwealth tours and argued to strengthen Cricket Championship of India instead as 'it was training ground for potential Indian test players' (p.4, Let us concentrate on National Tournament, The Times of India, 12 Feb 1950). The columnist was particularly critical of the fact that schedule of unofficial 'tests' coincided with the Cricket Championship of India due to which domestic cricket was 'accorded scant consideration' (p. 15, The young Cricketers in India getting very raw deal, The Times of India 19 Nov 1950). It was further highlighted in the same column that the board was weakening the cause of Indian cricket by fixing more and more matches of commonwealth eleven with governors, rajas and maharajas and bypassing state associations (p.11 Let us not exploit cricket for Other ends, The Times of India, 31 Dec, 1950). During the commonwealth tour, omission of few Indian players from the Indian eleven created huge controversy in ways Indian team was composed. The name of Rusi Modi and B.C. Alva were crucial in this regard who played from Bombay and Madras respectively. Their exclusions, despite fine performances were termed 'mysterious' and 'strange' and were largely considered the result of selection committees' inability to collaborate with affiliated state associations in a careful and steady manner by Mr. Leon in his weekly column (Mysterious are the ways of selectors of India's representative sides, The Times of India, 4 Feb 1951).

Thus, as has been mentioned earlier, the question of what represented the right composition of Indian team remained contentious during unofficial commonwealth tours. Linked with these contentions, however, were two different approaches through which Indian cricket was supposed to flourish in the post-independence period. The Indian board favored ‘unofficial’ tests with commonwealth eleven with ‘star’ Indian cricketers appearing for Indian eleven and state associations and hence providing Indian cricket popularity and international exposure it needed. As against this, Mr. Leon and many other critics argued that the cause of Indian cricket would be served best if domestic cricket was given adequate attention and boost.

The tension between two approaches, however, indicated a much deeper and fundamental problem in the ways cricket was organized in British period and thereafter in independent India. It has been argued that cricket in colonial India was organized around a system where ‘nation was not the exemplary unit’ (Appadurai 1989). It was different from England where ‘counties, not communities’ were lower-level constituencies. Much has been written on how in colonial India, competitive cricket was organized on communal lines (with teams composed on the basis of caste, ethnic group, race or religion) (Guha 1998, Appadurai 1989) and how the link between ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’ was neither ‘natural nor inevitable’ (Kidambi 2019) and in fact ‘invented’. Though, the practice of organizing cricket along communal lines stopped by 1940s (Appadurai 1989) and ‘Indian’ board simultaneously emerged as a single controlling body of country with different state associations affiliating with it, the practice of organizing cricket along ‘regional’ or ‘local’ identities did not completely disappear. Rather, these identities remained quite intact in ways state cricket associations and the Indian board worked. This was reflected, most revealingly, in ways state cricket associations named themselves (Holkar association, Barauda association etc) and worked to strengthen their ‘regional’ and ‘local’ interests on the cricket field[\[15\]](#). Also, there were several incidents when the so called Indian ‘board’ was alleged for working in the interest and influence of particular groups and regions[\[16\]](#).

There were, of course, several incidents when hostilities between Indian board and state cricket associations came on the surface clearly. Thus, Delhi cricket association denied to do adequate arrangements for the first unofficial test between commonwealth eleven and Indian side which was scheduled in New Delhi on Nov 4, 1950 and the board had to step in to settle the dispute. This dispute was the larger part of state associations unwillingness and disinterest for the

commonwealth tour. So even if, by the 1950s, there existed a single controlling body representing Indian cricket with state cricket associations representing their own regional interests, the idea of India on cricket pitch essentially remained contentious: It has to be invented to overcome the contingencies its unique history offered.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The broader objective of this paper has been to recover the history of a ‘moment’ and the linkages this ‘moment’ offered between ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’ immediately after India’s independence. Specifically, it focused on the 1950-51 tour of commonwealth eleven to India to investigate if India’s independence and its permanent membership to Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC) affected the ways in which ‘nation’ was imagined through ‘cricket’ in colonial India and in pre-war years. The workings of the Board of Cricket Control of India and debates over what constituted an ideal Indian team have been centrally discussed in doing so. It has been demonstrated that the relationship between ‘nation’ and ‘cricket’ in the years succeeding India’s independence was not as ‘natural’ as it seems today. What made this relationship essentially ‘tensed’ was the unique ‘history’ and ‘forces’ through which cricket was indigenized and appropriated in the Indian imagination in the colonial period. India’s independence, of course, complicated, this history and permanent membership to ICC was a crucial moment in this regard. The most significant outcome of India’s independence was the rise of Indian Cricket board as the single controlling body of Indian cricket’s affairs. But, as this paper has shown, there was never a complete juncture as far as cricket was concerned.

Many would be dismissive of the significance of the ‘moment’ I have investigated in this paper. The sociologists and historians writing on Indian cricket have found nothing interesting in unofficial tests and debates that emerged in the wake of these tours. These tests are, at best, discussed in passing references. While I demonstrate the significance of this moment for the light it casts on the relationship between ‘cricket’ and ‘nation’, I do not in any way suggest that this was ‘the’ moment in the history of Indian cricket. It is also true that the history of cricket in India contains so many decisive moments that are more significant (for example, India’s first test win in 1952 against England). What I instead propose is that we need more ‘nuanced’ analysis of the cricketing moments and the linkages they offer between nation, class, gender and race. This

analysis may or may not be consistent with the existing sweeping generalizations, but it'll definitely help us to locate and understand the complexities of cricket as a domain of public life. In other words, 'if story of cricket depends on the vantage point from where it is told', as Appadurai argues, we need to closely examine what exactly the vantage point is.

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^[1] For the larger argument See, APPADURAI, A. (1995). Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket. In BRECKENRIDGE C. (Author), *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World* (pp. 23-48). University of Minnesota Press.

^[2] Kidambi (2019) has recently captured the story of the first All India cricket tour of Great Britain and Ireland in 1911. He has termed this tour 'historic' and 'extraordinary' in ways the idea of India took shape on the cricket pitch long before the country gained its political independence. See,

KIDAMBI. P (2019). *Cricket Country: An Indian Odyssey in the Age of Empire*. Oxford University Press.

[3] Appadurai (1989) has highlighted that victories over West Indies in 1971 marked the psychological inauguration of a new boldness in Indian cricket. APPADURAI, A. (1995). Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket. In BRECKENRIDGE C. (Author), *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World* (pp. 23-48). University of Minnesota Press.

[4] I take this point from Appadurai (1989). He has emphasized that Cricket was seen as an ideal way to socialize natives into new modes of intergroup conduct and new standards of public behavior by colonial regime. However, implicit in these moral and cultural commitments was the political belief that cricket will smoothen and solidify the bonds of Empire.

[5] The roots of British Commonwealth of nations goes back to the British Empire, when countries around the world were ruled by Britain. At the 1926 conference Britain and the Dominions (semi-independent nations) agreed that they were all equal members of a community within the British Empire. They all owed allegiance to the British king or queen, but the United Kingdom did not rule over them. At a Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting in London in 1949, the London Declaration said that republics and other countries could be part of the Commonwealth. The modern Commonwealth of Nations was born. See, <https://thecommonwealth.org/about-us/history>

[6] Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC) was predecessor of the International Cricket Council (ICC), the world governing body of cricket. It was renamed as the International Cricket Conference in 1965, and took up its current name in 1989.

[7]“In its decision the ICC stressed that it felt the separation of Pakistan had not materially affected the standard of play in India. But the crucial fact was that the cricket body had to be a member of the British Commonwealth. Rule 5 of the ICC was very specific on that point. It stated that membership of the Conference shall cease should a country concerned cease to part of the British Commonwealth”. See, BOSE. M (2006). *The Magic of Indian Cricket: Cricket and Society in India*. Routledge Books.

[8] In July 1948 MCC cancelled their 1949-50 tour of India. So a replacement series of five unofficial Tests against a Commonwealth team made up largely of players from the league cricket (notably Frank Worrell, Bill Alley, skipper Jock Livingston and George Tribe) and organized by the former Lancashire wicketkeeper George Duckworth was arranged.

[9] All the editions of ‘The Times of India’ are accessed from ProQuest historical newspapers archive in the period of 21 July 2020-18 Aug 2020. <https://search.proquest.com/hnptimesofindia/>

[10] Mihir Bose (2006) has given an excellent account of how Tatas–Associated Cement Corporation (ACC) matches in the Times of India shield used to rival Ranji trophy matches in late 1940s-50s at the Brabourne stadium in Bombay and at times attracted a bigger crowd. See, BOSE. M (2006). *The Magic of Indian Cricket: Cricket and Society in India*. Routledge Books.

[11] Indian board repeatedly demanded an explanation from Lala Amarnath, an Indian stalwart (the first batsman ever to score a century for India in Test cricket) for his interview published in The Times of India on April 5, 1950.

[12] A curious case in this regard was the incidence of 1987 world cup when cricket boards of India and Pakistan with the financial backing of the Reliance Group of Industries managed to shift the venue of world cup from England to Indian subcontinent. See, Salve, N. K. P. (1987). *The Story of the Reliance Cup*. New Delhi: Vikas.

[13] For example, the president of the Indian board Mr. A.S. de Mello, who played an instrumental role in founding BCCI, had close links with businessman R. E. Grant Govan, Arthur Gilligan (the captain of the MCC team who visited India in 1927) and Maharaja of Patiala. He even travelled with Grant Govan to England to organize tours of India by South Africa in 1929 and MCC in 1930-31 which were eventually cancelled.

[14] The Indian board was frequently criticized for being a 'one-man' show during commonwealth tour. So, when one of the five representative matches during tour was allotted to Kanpur despite having a matting wicket, Mr. Leon wrote in his weekly column, "Who is actually responsible for these extraordinary acts? Can it be possible that the Board of Control of Cricket in India is in reality a one-man show" (p.11, Let us not exploit Cricket for Other Ends, The Times of India, 31 Dec 1950).

[15] One can only speculate, however, in what ways newer regional sensibilities developing in Indian politics around the same time affected or influenced sphere of cricket.

[16] Two incidence were noteworthy in this regard during commonwealth tour. First, when Kanpur was allotted a representative and last unofficial test match despite having a matting (newly made and untried turf) wicket. (p.11, The Times of India, 31 Dec 1950). Second, when the president of the Indian board Mr. A.S. de Mello exploited his casting vote as the chairman of Ranji Trophy sub-committee to ouster Bombay from the Cricket Championship of India over a disagreement between Gujrat and Bombay in regard to venue of their match (p.9, The Times of India, 18 Feb 1951).