

Chapter 7 The story of Cricket

Question-1

Describe one way in which in the nineteenth century, technology brought about a change in equipment and give one example where no change in equipment took place.

Solution:

Television channels made money by selling television spots to companies who were happy to pay large sums of money to air commercials for their products to cricket's captive television audience. Continuous television coverage made cricketers celebrities who, besides being paid better by their cricket boards, now made even larger sums of money by making commercials for a wide range of products, from tyres to colas, on television. Television coverage changed cricket. It expanded the audience for the game by beaming cricket into small towns and villages. It also broadened cricket's social base. Children who had never previously had the chance to watch international cricket because they lived outside the big cities, where top-level cricket was played, could now watch and learn by imitating their heroes.

Question-2

Explain why cricket became popular in India and the West Indies. Can you give reasons why it did not become popular in countries in South America?

Solution:

While British imperial officials brought the game to the colonies, they made little effort to spread the game, especially in colonial territories where the subjects of empire were mainly non-white, such as India and the West Indies. Here, playing cricket became a sign of superior social and racial status, and the Afro-Caribbean population was discouraged from participating in organized club cricket, which remained dominated by white plantation owners and their servants. The first non-white club in the West Indies was established towards the end of the nineteenth century, and even in this case its members were light-skinned mulattos. So while black people played an enormous amount of informal cricket on beaches, in back alleys and parks, club cricket till as late as the 1930s was dominated by white elites. The colonial flavour of world cricket during the 1950s and 1960s can be seen from the fact that England and the other white commonwealth countries, Australia and New Zealand, continued to play Test cricket with South Africa, a racist state that practised a policy of racial segregation which, among other things, barred non-whites (who made up the majority of South Africa's population) from representing that country in Test matches. Test-playing nations like India, Pakistan and the West Indies boycotted South Africa, but they did not have the necessary power in the ICC to debar that country from Test cricket.

That only came to pass when the political pressure to isolate South Africa applied by the newly decolonised nations of Asia and Africa combined with liberal feeling in Britain and forced the English cricket authorities to cancel a tour by South Africa in 1970.

Question-3

Give brief explanations for the following:

- 1. The Parsis were the first Indian community to set up a cricket club in India.*
- 2. Mahatma Gandhi condemned the Pentangular tournament.*

3. *The name of the ICC was changed from the Imperial Cricket Conference to the International Cricket Conference.*

4. *The significance of the shift of the ICC headquarters from London to Dubai.*

Solution:

1. *The Parsis Were the First Indian Community to set up a Cricket Club in India*

The origins of Indian cricket, that is, cricket played by Indians are to be found in Bombay and the first Indian community to start playing the game was the small community of Zoroastrians, the Parsis. Brought into close contact with the British because of their interest in trade and the first Indian community to westernise, the Parsis founded the first Indian cricket club, the Oriental Cricket Club in Bombay in 1848. Parsi clubs were funded and sponsored by Parsi businessmen like the Tatas and the Wadias. The white cricket elite in India offered no help to the enthusiastic Parsis. 2. Mahatma Gandhi Condemned the Pentangular Tournament
Mahatma Gandhi, condemned the Pentangular as a communally divisive competition that was out of place in a time when nationalists were trying to unite India's diverse population. A rival first-class tournament on regional lines, the National Cricket Championship (later named the Ranji Trophy), was established but not until Independence did it properly replace the Pentangular. The colonial state and its divisive conception of India was the rock on which the Pentangular was built. It was a colonial tournament and it died with the Raj.

3. *The Name of the ICC Was Changed from the Imperial Cricket Conference to the International Cricket Conference*

The regulation of international cricket remained the business of the Imperial Cricket Conference ICC. The ICC, renamed the International Cricket Conference as late as 1965, was dominated by its foundation members, England and Australia, which retained the right of veto over its proceedings. Not till 1989 was the privileged position of England and Australia scrapped in favour of equal membership.

4. *The Significance of the Shift of the ICC Headquarters from London to Dubai*

The technology of satellite television is a simple fact which shifted the balance of power in cricket: a process that had been begun by the break-up of the British Empire was taken to its logical conclusion by globalisation. Since India had the largest viewership for the game amongst the cricket-playing nations and the largest market in the cricketing world, the game's centre of gravity shifted to South Asia. This shift was symbolized by the shifting of the ICC headquarters from London to tax-free Dubai.

Question-4

How have advances in technology, especially television technology, affected the development of contemporary cricket?

Solution:

The technology of satellite television and the worldwide reach of multi-national television companies created a global market for cricket. Matches in Sydney could now be watched live in Surat. This simple fact shifted the balance of power in cricket: a process that had been begun by the break-up of the British Empire was taken to its logical conclusion by globalisation. Since India had the largest viewership for the game amongst the cricket-playing nations and the largest market in the cricketing world, the game's centre of gravity shifted to

South Asia. This shift was symbolized by the shifting of the ICC headquarters from London to tax-free Dubai. Television coverage changed cricket. It expanded the audience for the game by beaming cricket into small towns and villages. It also broadened cricket's social base. Children who had never previously had the chance to watch international cricket because they lived outside the big cities, where top-level cricket was played, could now watch and learn by imitating their heroes.