

Cricket Celebrated as the Only Sports in India: An Analysis

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Abstract: *Sports Journalism, in India is still developing, though there are different multifaceted sports played and trained in. Cricket remains a premier choice. A recent research done by BBC claims that in India 38% of Indians want to play and make a career in Cricket. The general population perception of people, is that sports like Football are international. Hockey, Kabaddi, Boxing etc are played and taught but are not as popular as Cricket. Therefore Cricket is India's de facto national sport but the extent of its dominance in the country's broadsheet newspaper was to be examined, for which, this research has been done. Times Of India was analysed, since it is the most read English newspaper and caters to the urban population and youth. It was also valuable to determine whether there was a significant share given to other sports. So for the sake of comparison, time frame selected was such that, Pro Kabaddi League and India vs West Indies Cricket tournament was going on. According to the research, Cricket gets both more coverage and prominence.*

Keywords: Cricket, Media Coverage, Media Representation, Quantitative Analysis

1. Introduction

Sports have always been an integral part of our life. The history of sports takes us back to Greek civilization where games like foot race and chariot race were played.¹ With time and advancement in technology the games have also been evolved.

Sports in the 19th century received media attention and first Sports journal "American Turf Register" was published in 1829, it covered horse racing. After that sports journals regarding Cricket, rowing etc were published. The coverage of sports in newspaper started in 1830s when penny newspapers covered local events. Sports in India have a long history which is believed to be starting from Ancient and medieval era.²

"I've failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." – Michael Jordan

The world-renowned basketball player Michael Jordan is always thought of as the one who took the shot no one else could make, the one who transformed the game. In these simple lines quantifying his failures, Jordan shows that getting to success is never easy, and that the failures are what make us who we are.

Sports Communication

Sports communication is a part of communication which spends significant time in the investigation of communication in a sports setting. It can incorporate the investigation of relational and hierarchical communication (both verbal and non-verbal) between members inside a specific game (for example players, mentors, administrators, officials, coaches and physiotherapists, and overseeing bodies); communication between sports members, fans, and the media; and how sports are spoken to and imparted in the

media. Sports communication is something that occurs at various levels going from preschool to school level.³

History of Sports in India

The history of sports in India takes us back to the Vedic era. The motto of traditional Olympic Games i.e. "For the Honour of my country and the Glory of sport" resembled the Atharvaveda mantra "Duty is in my right hand and the fruit of victory in my left".⁴

Various games like Chess, Snooker, Cards, and Snakes and ladders were originated in India and then these games were transmitted to various parts of the world.⁵ Moreover, with times further changes and modernisation were done to these games. When Mughals were ruling India another game known as "Pehlwani" was originated. Furthermore, Polo also originated in India during the colonial period in the 19th century.⁶ India under British rule (British India) competed in a number of Olympic Games and won several medals, notably in Field Hockey.

In the post Independence era, India hosted the first ever Asian games in 1951 and again in 1982. To promote sports in the country ministry of youth affairs and sports was set up in 1982. Over a period of time, the South Asian superpower has hosted a number of sports events. Not only India hosted top-level tournaments but also participated in the top level tournament around the world. Indian Cricket team won the cricket world cup in 1987 and then again in 2011. In 2011 they hosted the event. Moreover, Indian athletes started participating in the Olympics Games, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. With investment in sports in the country, Indian athlete started to perform and won medals at the International tournament. Indian athlete achieved great height in sports. Some of them are Marry Kom, Saina

³ Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., & Nadeau, J. (2014). Sport Communication: A Multidimensional Assessment of the Field's Development. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 7(3), 289-316. doi:10.1123/ijsc.2014-0034

⁴ Sharma, S. (2019, March 20). Sports fanaticism in India - history and where are we today. Retrieved from <https://www.sportskeeda.com/cricket/sports-fanaticism-in-india-history-and-where-are-we-today>

⁵ <https://www.kreedon.com/badminton-india-looking-back-history/>

⁶ <http://www.indianpolo.com/manipurpolo/history.asp>

¹ Guttman, A. (2009). Sport in Ancient Times - By Nigel B. Crowther. *Historian*, 71(2), 408-409. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6563.2009.00240_51.x

² Sports and games of the 18th and 19th centuries. (2003). *Choice Reviews Online*, 41(02), 41-0987-41-0987. doi:10.5860/choice.41-0987

Nehwal, Sania Mirza, Sachin Tendulkar etc. Sachin Tendulkar is the only sportsperson to win the Bharat Ratna.

Sports dynamics in the country

Cricket is the most popular sport in the country. And no doubt football is the most popular sports in the world, but it is at the developing stage in the country. The inception of ISL (Indian Super League) has spread football plague among the people, and the future of Indian football is bright.

The impact of Cricket is too such a extent that a kid turns five years old the first sports he/she is introduced is cricket only and the first equipment they get is Cricket Ball. The first sport which every Indian plays is Cricket only. The disturbing fact is all the sports in the country are not given equal attention and support. Cricket in India is worshiped as a religion in the country which automatically attracts more attention. India is a cricket dominant country but others sports like Football, Kabaddi, and Badminton etc are growing up and is at developing stage in the country. India has recently world medals in Badminton, Wrestling and Boxing at world Championship which shows others sports are also growing in the country and professional are not only restricted to cricket only.

Kabaddi is one of the primitive sports of the country. India men and women Kabaddi team have only lost once in the world Championship. In every Kabaddi world Cup Indian teams have participated they have reached the finals and lost once only. In order to Promote Kabaddi in the country and aware people about it Pro Kabaddi League was started back in 2014. The league attracted investors eye and it has completed 7 seasons by now. Many celebrities such as Abhishek Bachan, Amir Khan, Virat Kohli etc. Have joined hand together to promote Kabaddi in the country. Also Government has taken initiative in developing sports in the country, Ministry of Youth Affairs and sports recently launched Khelo India scheme which provided opportunities for the school children.

India has witnessed another big sporty event recently. For the first time ever in the history of Indian sports NBA (National Basketball League) game was held in Mumbai, India. Two NBA teams -- the Sacramento Kings and the Indiana Pacers entertained the jam packed stadium. Sacramento Kings faced a narrow defeat by 132-131 in the first match against Indiana Pacers. Indiana Pacers registered a comfortable win in the second match and defeated Sacramento Kings by 130-106.

Sports in India is achieving new heights every single day and the day is not far when each and every sports in the India will be equally popular among the youth and people of the country.

2. Review of Literature

Kane, (1989);Kinnick, (1998) has stated that, there are less representations of athletic female though the number of women sports players have increased.⁷

⁷ Kane, M. J. (1989). The post title IX female athlete in the media: Things are changing, but how much? *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*, 60(3), 58-62.

Zoonen (1991) has stated that, "Mass media are perceived as the main instruments in conveying respectively stereotypical, patriarchal, and hegemonic values about women and femininity."⁸

Bernstein Alina and Blain Amity *Journal of Media & Communication Studies* (ISSN 2231 – 1033) Copyright 2016 by ASCO 2016, Vol. 6, No. 1 Amity University Rajasthan 95 Neil (2002) has put forward that, mediated sports is concerned with commodification and immense marketing strategies. They also stated that, "media treatments of gender, race and sport; with nationalism and globalization; and with violence, fandom and audience experiences."⁹

Buysse J. Ann M. and Embser- Herbert Sheridan Melissa (2004) has stated that, "The mass media play a significant role in the transmission of dominant cultural values, especially in the perpetuation of images of gender difference and gender inequality."¹⁰

Asish Paul & Gopa Saha Roy, 2015 "comparative study of print Media coverage of Indian Athletes in London Olympics found out that," the total coverage of the English newspaper, the Telegraph (36039 sq. cm.) was more than the other two Bengali and Hindi newspapers (9224 sq. cm. and 2599 sq. cm. respectively). The female performers got more attention (34942 sq. cm.) than the male performers (12920 sq. cm.). All the three newspapers provided maximum coverage in the competition phase rather than the other two phases. The English newspaper provided more attention in preview of the main competition also in comparison to the other two newspapers. It has concluded that the coverage of the print media depends mainly on the performance of the athletes, popularity of the performers and intensity of the competition.

Margaret Carlisle Duncan in her research "Coverage of Women's Sports in Four Daily Newspapers", finds out that there was a huge statistical difference in the quantity of men's and women's stories, the total number of column inches, and the number of photographs of male and female athletes. Stories exclusively about men's sports were, on average, longer and appeared more often on the front page than those about women only. These findings are consistent with several other studies, most of which have focused on magazines, documenting the underrepresentation of women and girls in the printed sports media.

Ajibua, Oladitan, Oyerinde, and Bewaji jointly concluded that the trend on unbalanced reporting about female athletes

⁸ Van, Zoonen, L. (1991). Feminist perspectives on the media. In J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (Eds.), *Mass media and society*, London: Edward Arnold, pp. 33-54.

⁹ Bernstein, A. & Blain, N. (2003). *Sport and the Media: The Emergence of a Major Research Field*. In Bernstein, A. and Blain, N. (eds.), *Sport, Media, Culture: Global and Local Dimensions*. London: Frank Cass, pp 1-30

¹⁰ Buysse, J.A.M. & Embser- Herbert, S.M. (2004). *Constructions of Gender in Sport- An Analysis of Intercollegiate Media Guide Cover Photographs, Gender and Society*, Vol. 18 No. 1, February 2004, pp 66-81.

should be discouraged. In rural parts of Africa, it's very evident that children's wearing T shirts with their favorite sports star. These stars act as a role model for our younger generation. The increased visibility of male athletes can result in more endorsement of money from sponsors (Ajibua & et. Al,2013). Gender discrimination practices still exist in favor of male athletes in the coverage of sports news and pictures in the Bengali and English daily newspapers published in West Bengal (Sil & et. Al, 2015). The conclusion was that there existed a patchy coverage of women sports in the local medias of UK. The coverage of women football is negligible when compared to that of their counter parts in the local dailies. The percentage of local coverage is much lower when compared to that of national media (Adams & et. Al,2013)

3. Methodology

A Quantitative Study will be done.

News Articles and Pieces related to Kabaddi and cricket tournament (India Vs West Indies) happening at the same time will be analysed. Method of analysis will be Content Analysis. The parameters for the content analysis will be taken from pre published researches.

Parameters selected:-

- 1) No. of articles
- 2) Size of article
- 3) Placement
- 4) If picture used

Sampling: Simple random Sampling will be done under which articles related to the topic will be picked. The newspaper selected for the sampling purpose is TIMES OF INDIA.

Times of India is a English national daily newspaper published from India. The reason for choosing Times of India for this study is because The Times of India is the largest circulated English daily in the country. Its circulation is around 2,640,770 copies per publishing day. It is the 3rd largest circulated newspaper in the country (first two are the Hindi newspapers) and 2nd largest selling English dailies in the world.

According to Audit Bureau of Circulation figures 2018, TOI is at number one position in circulation among the English newspapers in the country and it is followed by The Hindu occupying second place. In 2018, for the audit period of January-June, the average qualifying sale for TOI was 2,826,164 copies.

Media Research Users Council (MRUC) conducts study of Indian press and its readership and also ranks these newspapers on the basis of "Average Issue Readership" (AIR). Their findings for 2019 suggest that among English dailies Times of India has attained the first position with an Average Issue Readership of 15236.

Problem Statement

Cricket is not just a sport but is celebrated as a religion which overshadows other sports and they don't get the

required attention. Though certain sports like kabaddi, tennis, badminton and football are gaining mileage but they still don't get the required attention. In this research, journalistic importance given to different sports will be analysed.

Research Objectives

- To examine the proportion of coverage of Cricket (India Vs West Indies Series) and Kabaddi (Pro Kabaddi League) in Times of India taking the timeframe of 3rd August to 17th August, 2019.
- To examine the importance given to Cricket and Kabaddi through the comparison of their coverage.

Graphical Representation of Data and Analysis

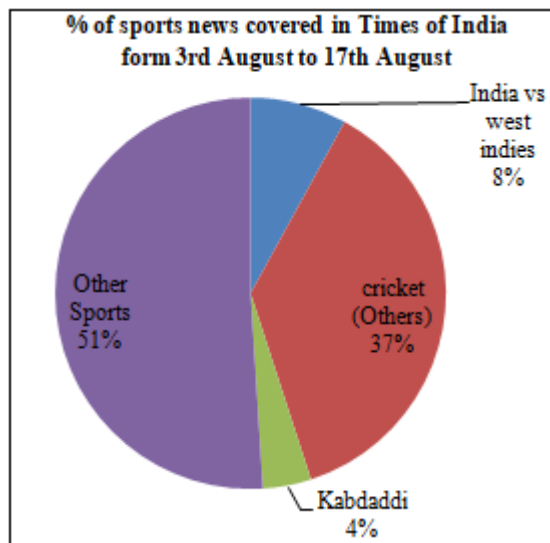


Figure 1

Code Sheet

Date- 3rd August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Top half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Small
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 4th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 5th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	1	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 6th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. of articles	1	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Medium	Medium
Picture used	Yes	Yes

Date- 7th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	1	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Small
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 16th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	Yes

Date- 8th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	3	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2nd Page (Upper half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date-17th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. of articles	1	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Upper half)
Size	Big	Small
Picture used	Yes	No

Date-9th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	1	1
Placement	Main Page (Middle)	2nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Small	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 10th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Dare- 11th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	3rd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 12th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 13th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	3	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Small
Picture used	Yes	No

Date- 14th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	2	1
Placement	Main Page (Upper half)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Big	Medium
Picture used	Yes	No

Date-15th August, 2019

Parameters	Cricket	Kabaddi
No. Of articles	1	1
Placement	Main Page (Middle)	2 nd Page (Bottom half)
Size	Medium	Small
Picture used	Yes	No

4. Findings and Analysis

- Out of the total Articles published 51% share was given to sports other than, cricket and Kabaddi. Cricket was given 43% share, out of which 37% was from other tournaments and 8% was from India vs West Indies and 4% share was given to Kabaddi.
- As portrayed in the Figure 1, 8% of the news are about India Vs West Indies Series. Whereas, only 4% of news are about Pro Kabaddi League.
- Almost 37% of the news are cricket news that too excludes India Vs West Indies series and 51% of the news are related to others sports.
- Clearly there is a domination of cricket when it comes to sports news in Times of India. 45% of news in the Times of India is about cricket only which shows cricket is the dominant sport when it comes to print media.
- 55% of news in Times of India is related to sports other than cricket. A large portion of sports news is dedicated to cricket in Times of India.
- It is found out that Cricket news are always printed on the main page of the sports portion in Times of India.
- Articles and news related to India Vs West Series were always presented on the main page of the sports portion in Times of India. Whereas, the news related Pro Kabaddi league were always present on the 2nd page of the sports portion.
- When it comes to average of articles and news related to India Vs West Indies series per day it was 1.7 articles and news per day and on the other when the averages of news related to Pro kabaddi league it was 1 article per day.
- Pictures play a significant role in attracting the readers. In all the news of India Vs West Indies series picture is used to make it more attractive and to catch attention. Whereas, on the other hand, very rarely picture is used in Pro kabaddi league news. And the pictures which are used were small and not catchy.
- Spacing is one of the main problems in the print media and space allocation needs to be properly done to ensure all the news are placed in perfect order. A large portion of space is given to India Vs West Indies series. Almost all the news of cricket are large in size. When we talk Pro kabaddi League the space allotted is minimal and the news are small in size and is given very less space.
- Proximity doesn't play a role in sports news. A cricket series between India and West Indies which was held in West Indies was given more importance than Pro

kabaddi League which was held in India only. This shows that cricket is the dominant sport in the country.

Gender and Society, Vol. 18 No. 1, February 2004, pp 66-81.

5. Conclusion

Cricket in India is celebrated as the major sport and other sports are rather overshadowed by it. On any given day, in general, Out of the total Articles published 51% share was given to other sports and cricket got the major chunk of 43%

What is shocking is that coverage isn't geo-local in nature. Tournaments happening within the country and specific to the nation are not given as much importance, prominence or coverage. Even from the prospect of prominence, placement and photos used, we see cricket is given more importance. Infographics are used more for cricket and not other sports.

From the point of length, Cricket is given longer articles, as shown in the data above, the placement of article pertaining to cricket, is usually on the front page on the sports section, often given place on the front page of the main newspaper as well and is mentioned in the diary column which talks about articles continued on different internal page.

Initiatives like Pro Kabbadi are brought about to act in a way that brings awareness of other indigenous sports and make them more interesting for the public.

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