

## SECTION III



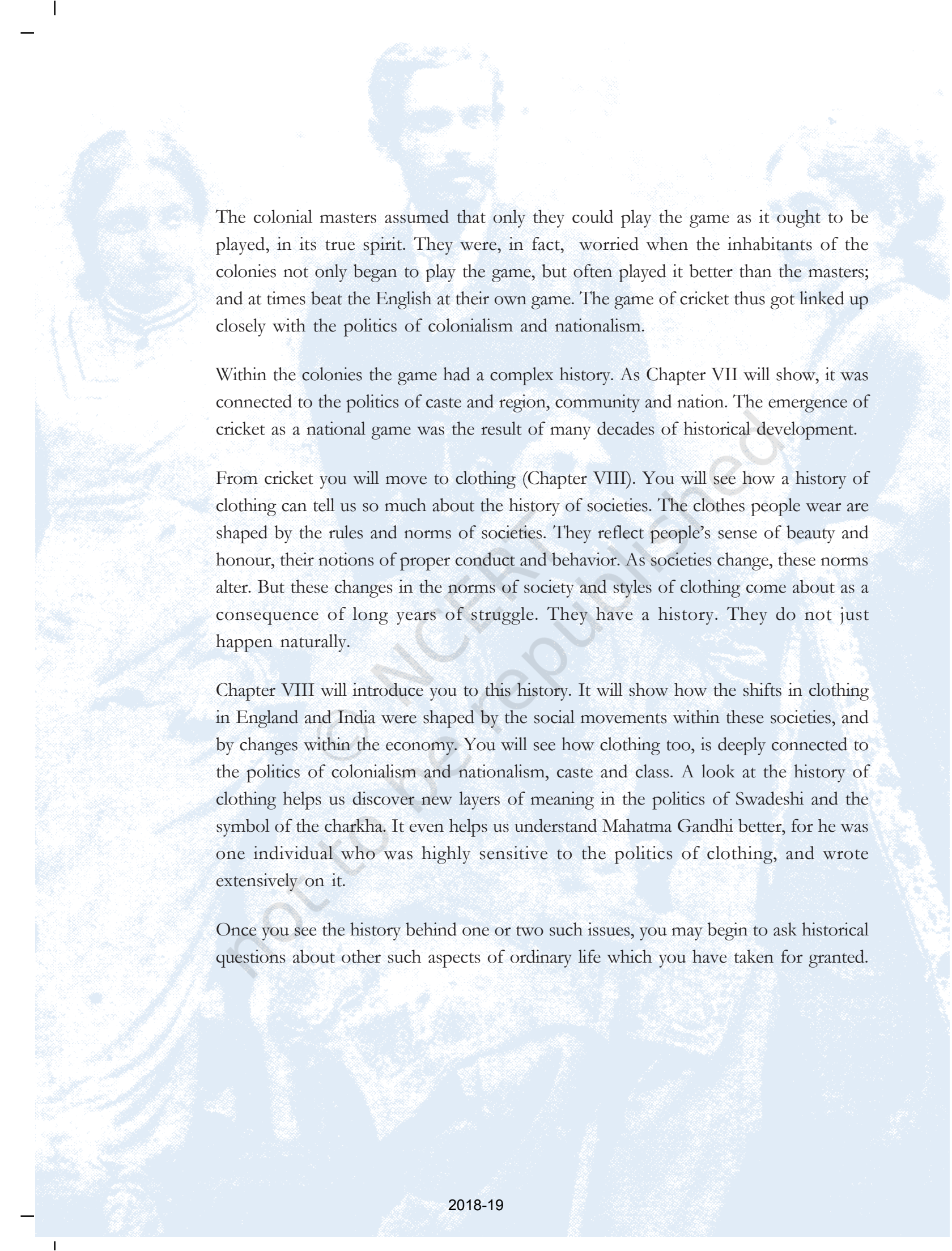
### EVERYDAY LIFE, CULTURE AND POLITICS

Section III will introduce you to the history of everyday life. In this section you will read about the history of sports and clothing.

History is not just about the dramatic events in the world. It is equally about the small things in our lives. Everything around us has a history – the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the music we hear, the medicines we use, the literature we read, the games we play. All these have evolved over time. Since we relate to them in our daily lives, their history escapes us. We never pause to think what things were like a century ago; or how people in different societies see these everyday things – food and clothing for instance – differently.

Chapter VII is on History and Sports. You will study this history through the story of one game that in India has captured the imagination of the nation for some decades. News of cricket today hits the headline of newspapers. Cricket matches are organised to establish friendship between nations and cricketers are seen as ambassadors of the country. The game has, in fact, come to represent the unity of India. But did you know that this was not always so? This chapter will tell you about the long and chequered history of the game.

At one time, a century and half ago, cricket was an English game. It had been invented in England and became intimately linked to the culture of nineteenth century Victorian society. The game was expected to represent all that the English valued – fair play, discipline, gentlemanliness. It was introduced in schools as part of a wider programme of physical training through which boys were to be moulded into ideal citizens. Girls were not to play games meant for boys. With the British, cricket spread to the colonies. There again it was supposed to uphold the values of Englishness.



The colonial masters assumed that only they could play the game as it ought to be played, in its true spirit. They were, in fact, worried when the inhabitants of the colonies not only began to play the game, but often played it better than the masters; and at times beat the English at their own game. The game of cricket thus got linked up closely with the politics of colonialism and nationalism.

Within the colonies the game had a complex history. As Chapter VII will show, it was connected to the politics of caste and region, community and nation. The emergence of cricket as a national game was the result of many decades of historical development.

From cricket you will move to clothing (Chapter VIII). You will see how a history of clothing can tell us so much about the history of societies. The clothes people wear are shaped by the rules and norms of societies. They reflect people's sense of beauty and honour, their notions of proper conduct and behavior. As societies change, these norms alter. But these changes in the norms of society and styles of clothing come about as a consequence of long years of struggle. They have a history. They do not just happen naturally.

Chapter VIII will introduce you to this history. It will show how the shifts in clothing in England and India were shaped by the social movements within these societies, and by changes within the economy. You will see how clothing too, is deeply connected to the politics of colonialism and nationalism, caste and class. A look at the history of clothing helps us discover new layers of meaning in the politics of Swadeshi and the symbol of the charkha. It even helps us understand Mahatma Gandhi better, for he was one individual who was highly sensitive to the politics of clothing, and wrote extensively on it.

Once you see the history behind one or two such issues, you may begin to ask historical questions about other such aspects of ordinary life which you have taken for granted.

# History and Sport:

## The Story of Cricket

Cricket grew out of the many stick-and-ball games played in England 500 years ago, under a variety of different rules. The word 'bat' is an old English word that simply means stick or club. By the seventeenth century, cricket had evolved enough to be recognisable as a distinct game and it was popular enough for its fans to be fined for playing it on Sunday instead of going to church. Till the middle of the eighteenth century, bats were roughly the same shape as hockey sticks, curving outwards at the bottom. There was a simple reason for this: the ball was bowled underarm, along the ground and the curve at the end of the bat gave the batsman the best chance of making contact.



**Fig. 1 – The oldest cricket bat in existence.**  
Note the curved end, similar to a hockey stick.

How that early version of cricket played in village England grew into the modern game played in giant stadiums in great cities is a proper subject for history because one of the uses of history is to understand how the present was made. And sport is a large part of contemporary life: it is one way in which we amuse ourselves, compete with each other, stay fit, and express our social loyalties. If tens of millions of Indians today drop everything to watch the Indian team play a Test match or a one-day international, it is reasonable for a history of India to explore how that stick-and-ball game invented in south-eastern England became the ruling passion of the Indian sub-continent. This is particularly so, since the game was linked to the wider history of colonialism and nationalism and was in part shaped by the politics of religion and caste.

Our history of cricket will look first at the evolution of cricket as a game in England, and discuss the wider culture of physical training and athleticism of the time. It will then move to India, discuss the history of the adoption of cricket in this country, and trace the modern transformation of the game. In each of these sections we will see how the history of the game was connected to the social history of the time.



**Fig. 2 – An artist's sketch of the cricket ground at Lord's in England in 1821.**

# 1 The Historical Development of Cricket as a Game in England

The social and economic history of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cricket's early years, shaped the game and gave cricket its unique nature.

For example, one of the peculiarities of Test cricket is that a match can go on for five days and still end in a draw. No other modern team sport takes even half as much time to complete. A football match is generally over in an hour-and-a-half of playing time. Even baseball, a long-drawn-out bat-and-ball game by the standards of modern sport, completes nine innings in less than half the time that it takes to play a limited-overs match, the shortened version of modern cricket!

Another curious characteristic of cricket is that the length of the pitch is specified – 22 yards – but the size or shape of the ground is not. Most other team sports, such as hockey and football lay down the dimensions of the playing area: cricket does not. Grounds can be oval like the Adelaide Oval or nearly circular, like Chepauk in Chennai. A six at the Melbourne Cricket Ground needs to clear much more ground than a lofted shot for the same reward at Feroz Shah Kotla in Delhi.

There's a historical reason behind both these oddities. Cricket was the earliest modern team sport to be codified, which is another way of saying that cricket gave itself rules and regulations so that it could be played in a uniform and standardised way well before team games like soccer and hockey. The first written 'Laws of Cricket' were drawn up in 1744. They stated, 'the principals shall choose from amongst the gentlemen present two umpires who shall absolutely decide all disputes. The stumps must be 22 inches high and the bail across them six inches. The ball must be between 5 and 6 ounces, and the two sets of stumps 22 yards apart'. There were no limits on the shape or size of the bat. It appears that 40 notches or runs was viewed as a very big score, probably due to the bowlers bowling quickly at shins unprotected by pads. The world's first cricket club was formed in Hambledon in the 1760s



**Fig. 3 – The pavilion of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in 1874.**

and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was founded in 1787. In 1788, the MCC published its first revision of the laws and became the guardian of cricket's regulations.

The MCC's revision of the laws brought in a series of changes in the game that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. During the 1760s and 1770s it became common to pitch the ball through the air, rather than roll it along the ground. This change gave bowlers the options of length, deception through the air, plus increased pace. It also opened new possibilities for spin and swing. In response, batsmen had to master timing and shot selection. One immediate result was the replacement of the curved bat with the straight one. All of this raised the premium on skill and reduced the influence of rough ground and brute force.

The weight of the ball was limited to between 5½ to 5¾ ounces, and the width of the bat to four inches. The latter ruling followed an innings by a batsman who appeared with a bat as wide as the wicket! In 1774, the first leg-before law was published. Also around this time, a third stump became common. By 1780, three days had become the length of a major match, and this year also saw the creation of the first six-seam cricket ball.

While many important changes occurred during the nineteenth century (the rule about wide balls was applied, the exact circumference of the ball was specified, protective equipment like pads and gloves became available, boundaries were introduced where previously all shots had to be run and, most importantly, over-arm bowling became legal) cricket remained a pre-industrial sport that matured during the early phase of the Industrial Revolution, the late eighteenth century. This history has made cricket a game with characteristics of both the past and the present day.

Cricket's connection with a rural past can be seen in the length of a Test match. Originally, cricket matches had no time limit. The game went on for as long as it took to bowl out a side twice. The rhythms of village life were slower and cricket's rules were made before the Industrial Revolution. Modern factory work meant that people were paid by the hour or the day or the week: games that were **codified** after the industrial revolution, like football and hockey, were strictly time-limited to fit the routines of industrial city life.

In the same way, cricket's vagueness about the size of a cricket ground is a result of its village origins. Cricket was originally played



**Fig. 4 – The laws of cricket drawn up and revised by the MCC were regularly published in this form. Note that norms of betting were also formalised.**

## New words

Codified – Made into a formalised system with clearly established rules and laws

on country commons, unfenced land that was public property. The size of the commons varied from one village to another, so there were no designated boundaries or boundary hits. When the ball went into the crowd, the crowd cleared a way for the fieldsman to retrieve it. Even after boundaries were written into the laws of cricket, their distance from the wicket was not specified. The laws simply lay down that 'the umpire shall agree with both captains on the boundaries of the playing area'.

If you look at the game's equipment, you can see how cricket both changed with changing times and yet fundamentally remained true to its origins in rural England. Cricket's most important tools are all made of natural, pre-industrial materials. The bat is made of wood as are the stumps and the bails. The ball is made with leather, twine and cork. Even today both bat and ball are handmade, not industrially manufactured. The material of the bat changed slightly over time. Once it was cut out of a single piece of wood. Now it consists of two pieces, the blade which is made out of the wood of the willow tree and the handle which is made out of cane that became available as European colonialists and trading companies established themselves in Asia. Unlike golf and tennis, cricket has refused to remake its tools with industrial or man-made materials: plastic, fibre glass and metal have been firmly rejected. Australian cricketer Dennis Lillee tried to play an innings with an aluminium bat, only to have it outlawed by the umpires.

But in the matter of protective equipment, cricket has been influenced by technological change. The invention of vulcanised rubber led to the introduction of pads in 1848 and protective gloves soon afterwards, and the modern game would be unimaginable without helmets made out of metal and synthetic lightweight materials.



**Fig.6 – The legendary batsman W.G. Grace coming out to bat at Lord's in 1895.**  
He was playing for the Gentlemen against the Players.

**CRICKET!**

A GRAND MATCH  
WILL BE PLAYED IN  
**LORD'S GROUND,**  
MARLBORNE,  
On **MONDAY, JULY 31, 1848,** & following Day.  
The Gentlemen against the Players.

Gentlemen.	PLAYERS.	Players.
Sir F. BATHURST		BOX
E. ELMHURST, Esq.		CLARK
N. FELIX, Esq.		DEAN
H. FELLOWES, Esq.		GUY
R. T. KING, Esq.		HILLYER
J. M. LEE, Esq.		LILLYWHITE
A. MYNN, Esq.		MARTINGALE
W. NICHOLSON, Esq.		PILCH
O. C. PELL, Esq.		W. PILCH
C. RIDDING, Esq.		PARR
G. YONGE, Esq.		WIDEN

**MATCHES TO COME.**  
Wednesday, August 2nd, at Lord's—Harrow against Winchester  
Thursday, August 3rd, at Lord's—Eton against Harrow  
Friday, August 4th, at Lord's—Winchester against Eton

DARK'S newly-invented LEG GUARDS, also his TUBULAR and other INDIA-RUBBER GLOVES, SPIKED SOLES for CRICKET SHOES, & CRICKET BALLS, to be had of R. Dark, at the Tennis Court.

Cricket Bats and Stumps to be had of M. Dark, at the Manufactory on the Ground.

Admittance 6d. .... Stabling on the Ground. .... Ordinary at 3 o'clock.

Morgan, Printer, 38, Chancery Street, adjoining the Marlborough Theatre.

**Fig.5 – This poster announces a match at Lord's in 1848.**

It shows the difference between the amateurs and the professionals by calling the two sides the Gentlemen and the Players.

Advertisements for nineteenth century matches looked like theatre posters suggesting the dramatic nature of the game.

## 1.1 Cricket and Victorian England

The organisation of cricket in England reflected the nature of English society. The rich who could afford to play it for pleasure were called amateurs and the poor who played it for a living were called professionals. The rich were amateurs for two reasons. One, they considered sport a kind of leisure. To play for the pleasure of playing and not for money was an aristocratic value. Two, there was not enough money in the game for the rich to be interested. The wages of professionals were paid by **patronage** or **subscription** or gate money. The game was seasonal and did not offer employment the year round. Most professionals worked as miners or in other forms of working class employment in winter, the off-season.

The social superiority of amateurs was built into the customs of cricket. Amateurs were called Gentlemen while professionals had to be content with being described as Players. They even entered the ground from different entrances. Amateurs tended to be batsmen,

### New words

Patronage – Agreement by wealthy supporter to give financial support for a specific cause

Subscription – Collected financial contribution for a specific purpose (such as cricket)

### Source A

Thomas Hughes (1822-1896) studied at Rugby School during the headmastership of Thomas Arnold. Based on his school experience, he wrote a novel, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. The book, published in 1857, became popular and helped spread the ideas of what came to be called muscular Christianity that believed that healthy citizens had to be moulded through Christian ideals and sports.

In this book Tom Brown is transformed from a nervous, homesick, timid boy into a robust, manly student. He becomes a heroic figure recognised for his physical courage, sportsmanship, loyalty and patriotism. This transformation is brought about by the discipline of the public school and the culture of sports.

#### —EXTRACT—

'Come, none of your irony, Brown,' answers the master. 'I'm beginning to understand the game scientifically. What a noble game it is, too!'

'Isn't it? But it's more than a game. It's an institution,' said Tom.

'Yes,' said Arthur, 'the birthright of British boys old and young, as habeas corpus and trial by jury are of British men.'

'The discipline and reliance on one another which it teaches is so valuable, I think,' went on the master, 'it ought to be such an unselfish game. It merges the individual in the eleven; he doesn't play that he may win, but that his side may.'

'That's very true,' said Tom, 'and that's why football and cricket, now one comes to think of it, are such much better games than fives' or hare-and-hounds, or any others where the object is to come in first or to win for oneself, and not that one's side may win.'

'And then the Captain of the eleven!' said the master, 'what a post is his in our School-world!...requiring skill and gentleness and firmness, and I know not what other rare qualities.'

Extract from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes

leaving the energetic, hardworking aspects of the game, like fast bowling, to the professionals. That is partly why the laws of the game always give the benefit of the doubt to the batsman. Cricket is a batsman's game because its rules were made to favour 'Gentlemen', who did most of the batting. The social superiority of the amateur was also the reason the captain of a cricket team was traditionally a batsman: not because batsmen were naturally better captains but because they were generally Gentlemen. Captains of teams, whether club teams or national sides, were always amateurs. It was not till the 1930s that the English Test team was led by a professional, the Yorkshire batsman, Len Hutton.

It's often said that the 'battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton'. This means that Britain's military success was based on the values taught to schoolboys in its public schools. Eton was the most famous of these schools. The English boarding school was the institution that trained English boys for careers in the military, the civil service and the church, the three great institutions of imperial England. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, men like Thomas Arnold, headmaster of the famous Rugby School and founder of the modern public school system, saw team sport like cricket and rugby not just as outdoor play, but as an organised way of teaching English boys the discipline, the importance of **hierarchy**, the skills, the codes of honour and the leadership qualities that helped them build and run the British empire. Victorian empire builders justified the conquest of other countries as an act of unselfish social service, by which backward peoples were introduced to the civilising influence of British law and Western knowledge. Cricket helped to confirm this self-image of the English elite by glorifying the amateur ideal, where cricket was played not for victory or profit, but for its own sake, in the spirit of fair play.

In actual fact the Napoleonic wars were won because of the economic contribution of the iron works of Scotland and Wales, the mills of Lancashire and the financial houses of the City of London. It was the English lead in trade and industry that made Britain the world's greatest power, but it suited the English ruling class to believe that it was the superior character of its young men, built in boarding schools, playing gentlemanly games like cricket, that tipped the balance.

### New words

Hierarchy – Organised by rank and status



**Fig. 7 – A cricket match at Lord's between the famous public schools Eton and Harrow.** While the game itself would look similar wherever it is played, the crowd does not. Notice how the upper-class social character of the game is brought out by the focus on gentlemen in bowler hats and ladies with their parasols shading them from the sun. From Illustrated London News, July 20 1872.



**Fig.8 – Croquet, not cricket, for women.**

Sports for women was not designed as vigorous, competitive exercise. Croquet was a slow-paced, elegant game considered suitable for women, especially of the upper class. The players' flowing gowns, frills and hats show the character of women's sports. From Illustrated London News, 20 July, 1872.

## Source B

### Sport for girls?

Till the last part of the nineteenth century, sports and vigorous exercise for girls was not a part of their education. Dorothea Beale, principal of Cheltenham Ladies College from 1858 to 1906, reported to the schools Enquiry Commission in 1864:

'The vigorous exercise which boys get from cricket, etc., must be supplied in the case of girls by walking and ... skipping.'

From: Kathleen, E. McCrone, 'Play up! Play up! And Play the Game: Sport at the Late Victorian Girls Public School'.

By the 1890s, school began acquiring playgrounds and allowing girls to play some of the games earlier considered male preserves. But the competition was still discouraged. Dorothea Beale told the school council in 1893-1894:

'I am most anxious that girls should not over-exert themselves, or become absorbed in athletic rivalries, and therefore we do not play against the other schools. I think it is better for girls to learn to take an interest in botany, geology etc., and not make country excursions.'

From: Kathleen, E. McCrone, 'Play up! Play up! And Play the Game'.

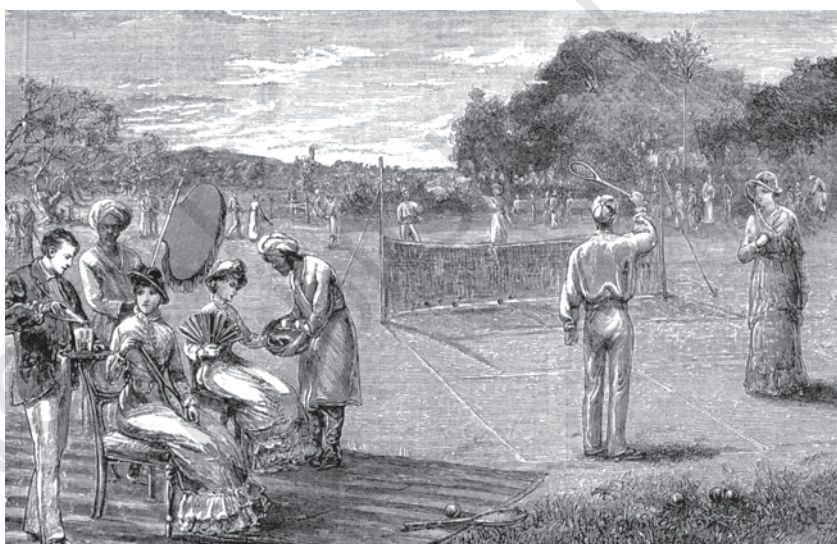
## Activity

What does the sports curriculum of a nineteenth century girls' school tell us about the behaviour considered proper for girls at that time?

## 2 The Spread of Cricket

While some English team games like hockey and football became international games, played all over the world, cricket remained a colonial game, limited to countries that had once been part of the British empire. The pre-industrial oddness of cricket made it a hard game to export. It took root only in countries that the British conquered and ruled. In these colonies, cricket was established as a popular sport either by white settlers (as in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies and Kenya) or by local elites who wanted to copy the habits of their colonial masters, as in India.

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 organised 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



**Fig.9 – An afternoon of tennis in the plains of colonial India.** Notice how the artist tries to show that the game was for recreation as well as exercise. Men and women could play games together for recreation not competition.  
From: Graphic, February 1880.



**Fig.10 – A leisurely game for recreation, being played against the backdrop of the Himalayas.** The only Indians in the picture seem to be the servants seen near the pavilion.

### New words

Mulattos – People of mixed European and African descent

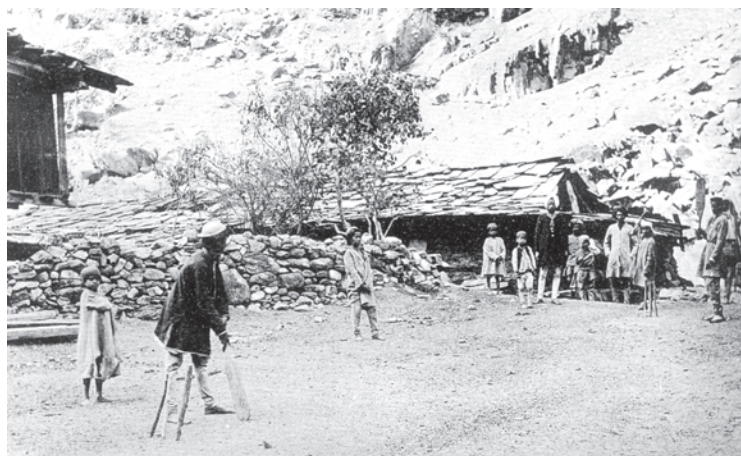
amount of informal cricket on beaches, in back alleys and parks, club cricket till as late as the 1930s was dominated by white elites.

Despite the exclusiveness of the white cricket elite in the West Indies, the game became hugely popular in the Caribbean. Success at cricket became a measure of racial equality and political progress. At the time of their independence many of the political leaders of Caribbean countries like Forbes Burnham and Eric Williams saw in the game a chance for self-respect and international standing. When the West Indies won its first Test series against England in 1950, it was celebrated as a national achievement, as a way of demonstrating that West Indians were the equals of white Englishmen. There were two ironies to this great victory. One, the West Indian team that won was captained by a white player. The first time a black player led the West Indies Test team was in 1960 when Frank Worrell was named captain. And two, the West Indies cricket team represented not one nation but several **dominions** that later became independent countries. The pan-West Indian team that represents the Caribbean region in international Test cricket is the only exception to a series of unsuccessful efforts to bring about West Indian unification.

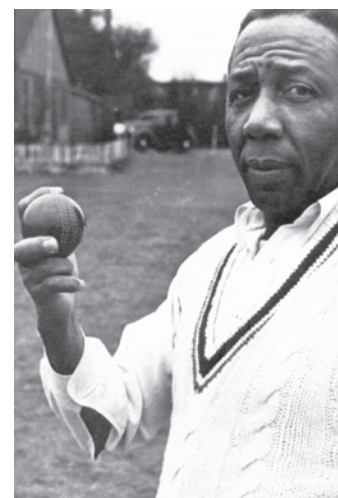
Cricket fans know that watching a match involves taking sides. In a Ranji Trophy match when Delhi plays Mumbai, the loyalty of spectators depends on which city they come from or support. When India plays Australia, the spectators watching the match on television in Bhopal or Chennai feel involved as Indians – they are moved by nationalist loyalties. But through the early history of Indian first-class cricket, teams were not organised on geographical principles and it was not till 1932 that a national team was given the right to represent India in a Test match. So how were teams organised and, in the absence of regional or national teams, how did cricket fans choose sides? We turn to history for answers, to discover how cricket in India developed and to get a sense of the loyalties that united and divided Indians in the days of the Raj.

## 2.1 Cricket, Race and Religion

Cricket in colonial India was organised on the principle of race and religion. The first record we have of cricket being played in India is from 1721, an account of recreational cricket played by English sailors



**Fig. 11 – A rough-and-ready cricket game being played by Indians in a village in the Himalayas (1894).**  
In contrast to Figure 10, notice the home-made wickets and bat, carved out of rough bits of wood.



**Fig. 12 – Learie Constantine.**  
One of the best-known cricketers of the West Indies.

### New words

**Dominion** – Self-governing areas under the control of the British crown

in Cambay. The first Indian club, the Calcutta Cricket Club, was established in 1792. Through the eighteenth century, cricket in India was almost wholly a sport played by British military men and civil servants in all-white clubs and gymkhanas. Playing cricket in the privacy of these clubs was more than just fun: it was also an escape from the strangeness, discomfort and danger of their stay in India. Indians were considered to have no talent for the game and certainly not meant to play it. But they did.

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. In fact, there was a quarrel between the Bombay Gymkhana, a whites-only club, and Parsi cricketers over the use of a public park. The Parsis complained that the park was left unfit for cricket because the polo ponies of the Bombay Gymkhana dug up the surface. When it became clear that the colonial authorities were prejudiced in favour of their white compatriots, the Parsis built their own gymkhana to play cricket in. The rivalry between the Parsis and the racist Bombay Gymkhana had a happy ending for these pioneers of Indian cricket. A Parsi team beat the Bombay Gymkhana at cricket in 1889, just four years after the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, an organisation that was lucky to have amongst its early leaders the great Parsi statesman and intellectual Dadabhai Naoroji.



**Fig. 13 – The Parsi team, the first Indian cricket team to tour England in 1886.**

*Note that along with the traditional cricket flannels, they wear Parsi caps.*

The establishment of the Parsi Gymkhana became a **precedent** for other Indians who in turn established clubs based on the idea of religious community. By the 1890s, Hindus and Muslims were busy gathering funds and support for a Hindu Gymkhana and an Islam Gymkhana. The British did not consider colonial India as a nation. They saw it as a collection of castes and races and religious communities and gave themselves the credit for unifying the sub-

#### New word

**Precedent** – Previous action which provides reason to repeat it

continent. In the late nineteenth century, many Indian institutions and movements were organised around the idea of religious community because the colonial state encouraged these divisions and was quick to recognise communal institutions. For example, the Governor of the Bombay Presidency while dealing with an application from the Islam Gymkhana for land on Bombay's seafront wrote: '... we can be certain that in a short time we shall get a similar application from some Hindu Gymkhana ... I don't see how we are to refuse these applicants; but I will ... refuse any more grants once a Gymkhana has been established ... by each *nationality*'. (emphasis added). It is obvious from this letter that colonial officials regarded religious communities as separate nationalities. Applications that used the communal categories favoured by the colonial state were, as this letter shows, more likely to be approved.

This history of gymkhana cricket led to first-class cricket being organised on communal and racial lines. The teams that played colonial India's greatest and most famous first-class cricket tournament did not represent regions, as teams in today's Ranji Trophy currently do, but religious communities. The tournament was initially called the Quadrangular, because it was played by four teams: the Europeans, the Parsis, the Hindus and the Muslims. It later became the Pentangular when a fifth team was added, namely, the Rest, which comprised all the communities left over, such as the Indian Christians. For example, Vijay Hazare, a Christian, played for the Rest.

By the late 1930s and early 1940s, journalists, cricketers and political leaders had begun to criticize the racial and communal foundations of the Pentangular tournament. The distinguished editor of the newspaper the *Bombay Chronicle*, S.A. Brelvi, the famous radio commentator A.F.S. Talyarkhan and India's most respected political figure, 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.

## Box 1

### Caste and cricket

Palwankar Baloo was born in Poona in 1875. Born at a time when Indians weren't allowed to play Test cricket, he was the greatest Indian slow bowler of his time. He played for the Hindus in the Quadrangular, the major cricket tournament of the colonial period. Despite being their greatest player he was never made captain of the Hindus because he was born a Dalit and upper-caste selectors discriminated against him. But his younger brother, Vithal, a batsman did become captain of the Hindus in 1923 and led the team to a famous victory against the Europeans. Writing to a newspaper a cricket fan made a connection between the Hindus' victory and Gandhiji's war on 'untouchability':

'The Hindus' brilliant victory was due more to the judicious and bold step of the Hindu Gymkhana in appointing Mr Vithal, brother of Mr Baloo – premier bowler of India – who is a member of the Untouchable Class to captain the Hindu team. The moral that can be safely drawn from the Hindus' magnificent victory is that removal of Untouchability would lead to swaraj – which is the prophecy of the Mahatma.'

*A Corner of a Foreign Field by Ramachandra Guha.*



**Fig. 14 – Palwankar Baloo (1904).**

A Dalit, Baloo's enormous cricketing talent made sure that he could not be kept out of the team, but he was never allowed to take over as captain.

### 3 The Modern Transformation of the Game

Modern cricket is dominated by Tests and one-day internationals, played between national teams. The players who become famous, who live on in the memories of cricket's public, are those who have played for their country. The players Indian fans remember from the era of the Pentangular and the Quadrangular are those who were fortunate enough to play Test cricket. C.K. Nayudu, an outstanding Indian batsman of his time, lives on in the popular imagination when some of his great contemporaries like Palwankar Vithal and Palwankar Baloo have been forgotten because his career lasted long enough for him to play Test cricket for India while theirs did not. Even though Nayudu was past his

#### Source C

##### **Mahatma Gandhi and colonial sport**

Mahatma Gandhi believed that sport was essential for creating a balance between the body and the mind. However, he often emphasised that games like cricket and hockey were imported into India by the British and were replacing traditional games. Such games as cricket, hockey, football and tennis were for the privileged, he believed. They showed a colonial mindset and were a less effective education than the simple exercise of those who worked on the land.

Read the following three extracts from Mahatma Gandhi's writing and contrast them to the ideas on education and sport expressed by Thomas Arnold or Hughes (Source A).

'Now let us examine our body. Are we supposed to cultivate the body by playing tennis, football or cricket for an hour every day? It does, certainly, build up the body. Like a wild horse, however, the body will be strong but not trained. A trained body is healthy, vigorous and sinewy. The hands and feet can do any desired work. A pickaxe, a shovel, a hammer, etc. are like ornaments to a trained hand and it can wield them ... A well-trained body does not get tired in trudging 30 miles .... Does the student acquire such physical culture? We can assert that modern curricula do not impart physical education in this sense.'

'What Is Education', 26 February 1926, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 34.

'I should, however, be exceedingly surprised and even painfully surprised, if I were told that before cricket and football descended upon your sacred soil, your boys were devoid of all games. If you have national games, I would urge upon you that yours is an institution that should lead in reviving old games. I know that we have in India many noble indigenous games just as interesting and exciting as cricket or football, also as much attended with risks as football is, but with the added advantage that they are inexpensive, because the cost is practically next to nothing'

Speech at Mahindra College, 24 November 1927, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*.

'A sound body means one which bends itself to the spirit and is always a ready instrument at its service. Such bodies are not made, in my opinion, on the football field. They are made on cornfields and farms. I would urge you to think this over and you will find innumerable illustrations to prove my statement. Our colonial-born Indians are carried away with this football and cricket mania. These games may have their place under certain circumstances .... Why do we not take the simple fact into consideration that the vast majority of mankind who are vigorous in body and mind are simple agriculturists, that they are strangers to these games, and they are the salt of the earth?'

Letter to Lazarus, 17 April 1915, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 14.

cricketing prime when he played for India in its first Test matches against England starting in 1932, his place in India's cricket history is assured because he was the country's first Test captain.

India entered the world of Test cricket in 1932, a decade and a half before it became an independent nation. This was possible because Test cricket from its origins in 1877 was organised as a contest between different parts of the British empire, not sovereign nations. The first Test was played between England and Australia when Australia was still a white settler colony, not even a self-governing dominion. Similarly, the small countries of the Caribbean that together make up the West Indies team were British colonies till well after the Second World War.

### 3.1 Decolonisation and Sport

Decolonisation, or the process through which different parts of European empires became independent nations, began with the independence of India in 1947 and continued for the next half a century. This process led to the decline of British influence in trade, commerce, military affairs, international politics and, inevitably, sporting matters. But this did not happen at once; it took a while for the relative unimportance of post-imperial Britain to be reflected in the organisation of world cricket.

Even after Indian independence kick-started the disappearance of the British empire, 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.

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.

#### New words

Segregation – Separation (of people) on the basis of colour or race

## 4 Commerce, Media and Cricket Today

The 1970s were the decade in which cricket was transformed: it was a time when a traditional game evolved to fit a changing world. If 1970 was notable for the exclusion of South Africa from international cricket, 1971 was a landmark year because the first one-day international was played between England and Australia in Melbourne. The enormous popularity of this shortened version of the game led to the first World Cup being successfully staged in 1975. Then in 1977, even as cricket celebrated 100 years of Test matches, the game was changed forever, not by a player or cricket administrator, but by a businessman.

Kerry Packer, an Australian television tycoon who saw the money-making potential of cricket as a televised sport, signed up fifty-one of the world's leading cricketers against the wishes of the national cricket boards and for about two years staged unofficial Tests and One-Day internationals under the name of World Series Cricket. While Packer's 'circus' as it was then described folded up after two years, the innovations he introduced during this time to make cricket more attractive to television audiences endured and changed the nature of the game.

Coloured dress, protective helmets, field restrictions, cricket under lights, became a standard part of the post-Packer game. Crucially, Packer drove home the lesson that cricket was a marketable game, which could generate huge revenues. Cricket boards became rich by selling television rights to television companies. 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.

The technology of satellite television and the world wide 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.

A more important sign that the centre of gravity in cricket has shifted away from the old, Anglo-Australian axis is that innovations in cricket technique in recent years have mainly come from the practice of sub-continental teams in countries like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Pakistan has pioneered two great advances in bowling: the *doosra* and the 'reverse swing'. Both skills were developed in response to sub-continental conditions: the *doosra* to counter aggressive batsmen with heavy modern bats who were threatening to make finger-spin **obsolete** and 'reverse swing' to move the ball in on dusty, unresponsive wickets under clear skies. Initially, both innovations were greeted with great suspicion by countries like Britain and Australia which saw them as an underhanded, illegal bending of the laws of cricket. In time, it came to be accepted that the laws of cricket could not continue to be framed for British or Australian conditions of play, and they became part of the technique of all bowlers, everywhere in the world.

One hundred and fifty years ago the first Indian cricketers, the Parsis, had to struggle to find an open space to play in. Today, the global marketplace has made Indian players the best-paid, most famous cricketers in the game, men for whom the world is a stage. The history that brought about this transformation was made up of many smaller changes: the replacement of the gentlemanly amateur by the paid professional, the triumph of the one-day game as it overshadowed Test cricket in terms of popularity, and the remarkable changes in global commerce and technology. The business of history is to make sense of change over time. In this chapter we have followed the spread of a colonial sport through its history, and tried to understand how it adapted to a post-colonial world.

#### New Words

Obsolete – No longer in use

**Box 2****Hockey**

Modern hockey evolved from traditional games once current in Britain. Amongst its sporting ancestors, hockey can count the Scottish game called shinty, the English and Welsh game called bandy and Irish hurling.

Hockey, like many other modern games, was introduced into India by the British army in colonial times. The first hockey club in India was started in Calcutta in 1885-1886. India was represented in the hockey competition of the Olympic Games for the first time in 1928. India reached the finals defeating Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland. In the finals, India defeated Holland by three goals to nil.

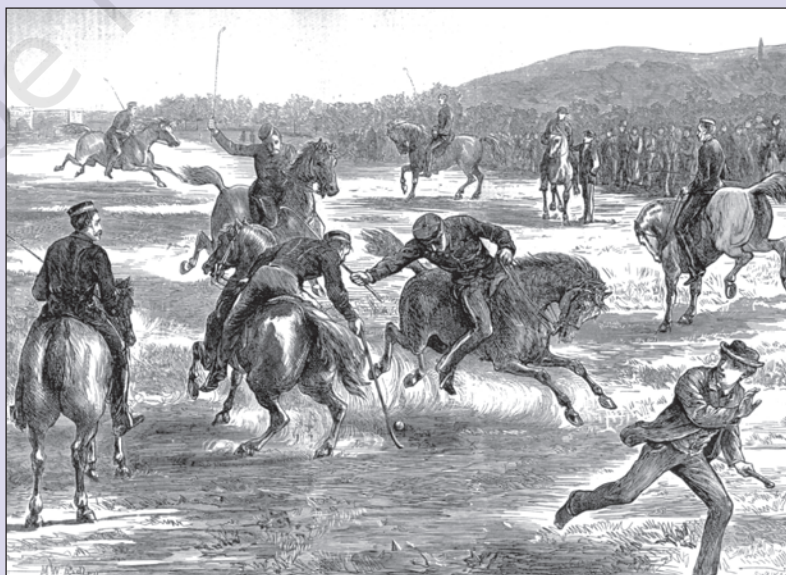
The brilliance and skill of players like the great Dhyan Chand brought India a string of Olympic gold medals. Between 1928 and 1956, India won gold medals in six consecutive Olympic Games. During this golden age of Indian dominance, India played 24 Olympic matches, and won them all, scored 178 goals (at an average of 7.43 goals per match) and conceded only seven goals. The two other gold medals for India came in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

**Box 3****Polo**

Polo was greatly favoured as a game suitable for military and athletic young men. Following one of the earliest games in England, a report in the *Illustrated London News* declared:

‘As an exercise ... for military men this bold and graceful sport is likely to give increased dexterity in the use of the lance or sabre, or other cavalry weapons, as well as a firmer seat in the saddle, and a faculty of quickly turning to the right hand or to the left, which must be effective in the melee of battle.’

From: *Illustrated London News*, 1872.



**Fig. 15 – Polo Travels West**  
(From: *Illustrated London News*, 20 July 1872)  
Polo is a Central Asian game that came to India and was taken west by colonial officials. Sultan Qutubuddin Aibak died in 1210 A.D. when he slipped from his horse playing polo.

## Activities

1. Imagine a conversation between Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School, and Mahatma Gandhi on the value of cricket in education. What would each say? Write out a conversation in the form of a dialogue.
2. Find out the history of any one local sport. Ask your parents and grandparents how this game was played in their childhood. See whether it is played in the same way now. Try and think of the historical forces that might account for the changes.

Activities

## Questions

1. Test cricket is a unique game in many ways. Discuss some of the ways in which it is different from other team games. How are the peculiarities of Test cricket shaped by its historical beginnings as a village game?
2. 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.
3. 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?
4. Give brief explanations for the following:
  - The Parsis were the first Indian community to set up a cricket club in India.
  - Mahatma Gandhi condemned the Pentangular tournament.
  - The name of the ICC was changed from the *Imperial* Cricket Conference to the *International* Cricket Conference.
  - The shift of the ICC headquarters from London to Dubai
5. How have advances in technology, especially television technology, affected the development of contemporary cricket?

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