

Indo-Pak Cricket Resumption: A Peace Plan for Resolving the Conflict

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan and India, the most important states of Asian region, have been in constant state of conflict since their inception in 1947. Both the states, once part of British sub-continent, had severe clashes with each other over the difference of opinion on religion, social norms, cliché and life styles. Both the countries have undergone hostile relationships. The turmoil was observed on social political and economic aspects. However, masses of both the states possess and feel equal sentiments for cricket that has become a victim of long lasting political venom and weak diplomatic ties between the two. It's been ages Indian cricket team has visited Pakistan for any tournament and whenever both the teams have played against each other anywhere in the world, frenzy, amusement, passion and vigor was observed. This study aims at analyzing and evaluating the factors hindering the sports of both the countries and depriving its masses from interacting with each other. The nature and typology of the conflict is intangible political conflict. A conflict progression model or nested model is applied to make an attempt to resolve the conflict. Primary as well as secondary research was carried out to examine the role of Pakistan Cricket Board in resuming Indo-Pak cricket, the way forward they have adopted and role of government in reshaping sports activities. Semi-structured Interviews were conducted from PCB officials to have an insight on the ongoing status of dialogue between the cricket boards of both the countries. It can be concluded from the research that Indo-Pak cricket conflict is outgrowth of rigidity and failure of diplomatic relations between the two states. If the governments adopt the recommended peace plan that includes the participation of higher leadership, middle level leadership and leadership at grass root levels, only then the issue can be transformed and can be put forward for resolution. This attempt can result in socio-political and economic prosperity of the region along with strengthening the sports between both the states.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Political Conflict, Nested Model, Peace Plan, Indo-Pak Cricket

What is a Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Conflict is an expression of disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. So it's a state of dispute

between two parties over some issues. Many people perceive conflict as negative thing but having a conflict in an organization or between the states is normal. Where there would be conflict, there will be negotiations and mutual talks. Conflict is a healthy way to initiate a process to resolve it by mediation. It always brings optimistic growth strategies along that can not only resolve the conflict but gives more ways to flourish and communicate with others. One thing that needs to remember during any conflicting situation is that resolution of conflict is not the ultimate solution to any problem but managing the conflict well is one healthy process to deal with a conflict. For example if a conflict is resolved, but after some time, it triggers again, that will come up in more deleterious way. So it's better to deal every conflict with brain without the creation of any utopia in regard to the resolution of any conflict. (Peace Pledge Union, United Kingdom)

According to John Burton

“A dispute evolves around conflicting, but negotiable interests, conflict develops around nonnegotiable issues of basic human needs deprivation. Settlement implies negotiated or arbitrated solutions, while resolution is concerned with satisfaction of basic human needs of all parties involved.”

What is Indo-Pak Cricket conflict?

Pakistan and India, the most important states of Asian region, have been in constant state of conflict since their independence in 1947. Both the states, once part of British sub-continent, had severe clashes with each other over the difference of opinion on religion, social norms and life styles.

To discuss Indo-Pak relations is not an easy task, a critical analyses on this subject matter entails much sensitivity as emotions of the people from both the states are strongly associated with the competing historical background. Emotions are attached with the struggle movement, with independence as well as post independence situation. Emphasizing on the identity of nation states, there exist two competing discourses and narratives. Each side likely happens to be convinced with their side of narrative and refutes the narrative of the other on bi-lateral relations between both the states. The situation in both the countries regarding grievances against each other is not different. What New Delhi complains, Islamabad would be complaining the same. Hence, situation is alike at social, political and economic spheres. The negative sentiments against each other are imparted through various social changes, advancement in media and curriculum to some extent. The negativity inculcated has host of reasons through various channels, the contextual variables and the policy decisions towards each other has further aggravated and made the relations more hostile at different points of time. Over the years, exchanges such as cricket matches, visits by academicians, professionals, peace activists and journalists constructively contributed to building

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mutual understanding and friendship. Cricket is like sports-nationalism in the South Asia. The passion is pervasive in 6 out of 8 SAARC members: namely; India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal (Nepal is in the process of cobbling-up its team).

A Chronology of Events that Deteriorated India-Pakistan Cricket Ties

1991: Shiva Sena dismantled Cricket pitches

2000: Pitches were dug-up in Delhi at Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium

2001: Attack on Indian Parliament

2008: Mumbai Attacks

2009: Attack on Sri Lankan Cricket Team in Pakistan

Source: (Tribune.com)

All these events have led to the deteriorating ties between India and Pakistan.

Cricket Diplomacy

Cricket has helped in bridging the divide, allowing the fans from both sides to travel to the other country to watch the match and enjoy mutual hospitality. Such exchanges have shaped people's perceptions positively in both countries towards each other. Term cricket diplomacy was coined in 1987 when General. Zia went to watch a match in Jaipur, India. General Musharraf followed suit almost two decades later, coming to watch an India-Pakistan match in New Delhi during his state visit in April 2005. Last example was Prime Minister Gillani's presence in India-Pakistan World Cup Match in 2011 (Mohali). In 1987 General Zia-ul Haq flew to Jaipur, in India, to witness a match. General Musharraf followed suit almost two decades later, coming to watch an India-Pakistan match in New Delhi during his state visit in April 2005.

After that up till now, Cricket between both the countries has become one such victim of the artificially created web of differences. Hence, deadlock prevails on cricket between both the countries on Pakistani grounds. One can count two reasons behind this dead lock, one is the political mood as mentioned above and second is security condition in Pakistan (that has always been referred to attack on Sri Lankan Team). After that security lapse, International Cricket has diminished from Pakistan almost to a great extent. The only attempt Pakistan could have to restore international cricket is to invite our neighboring country (India) to have series with Pakistani team, the invitation was not accepted due to security reasons prevalent in Pakistan. Despite the assurance from PCB and government of Pakistan, Indian government seemed always reluctant to allow BCCI to hold a series in Pakistan. (Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi, 2010)

Research Methodology

Qualitative as well as quantitative research design is applied to evaluate the Indo-Pakistan cricket conflict. Primary and secondary sources are used to collect data to analyze the possible solution to resolve the conflict. A semi-structured interview questionnaire comprising of five questions was designed to assess the role of PCB, measures taken so far and the way forward to resolve the conflict.

Purpose of the study

Purpose of this study is to handle this issue through research, evaluate the loopholes in the systems, and analyze the historical roots and importance of Indo-Pak Cricket. This research would provide a vivid picture to the cricket board of both the countries to propose a positive case in front of their governments to leave rigidity. Playing on neutral grounds gives benefit to international spectators and sponsors only not to the local sponsors and hard core fans of cricket. However, it was of dire need to touch upon this topic so that a situation can be clear about the possibility of holding cricket series between the two to strengthen cricket as well as bi-lateral ties of both the countries.

Nature of the Conflict/Typology of the conflict according to Joshua Goldstein

Indo-Pakistan cricket conflict seems to be a conflict of sports activity but if one pays a deeper insight on the issue then conflict turns out to be a political conflict as cricket of both the countries have become the victim of political rivalry and rigidity between both the countries that is a great obstacle in the way of successful diplomacy and cricket restoration. Officials say, cricket between both the countries will be resumed on the day when diplomatic ties will get back to normal. So it's an intangible political conflict.

Theoretical Application

The conflict of cricket restoration falls under the category of inter-stat level conflict where two countries India and Pakistan (the traditional rivals since their existence) are in constant political rift that is affecting the sports of both the countries. A sport event has been politicized due to long term conflicting approaches and perceptions of both the states that have reached to a verge where India is not of the stance to send her cricket team to Pakistan at any cost. Though they justify their refusal by claiming it as the team will not be secured in the chaotic condition of Pakistan and an international team (Sri Lanka) has also been attacked few years back so they are reluctant to have any kind of series with Pakistan.

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Moreover, in theoretical approach, this conflict can be traced under Material, social and symbolic worlds of conflict. Jayne Seminare sees “human beings as existing, simultaneously, in three distinct yet over-lapping worlds. The symbolic world, the social world and the material world. Imbalances in human relationships in these three worlds lead to a violent conflict”. And a constant imbalance leading towards a constant conflict between India and Pakistan is now having a negative impact on cricket, though it should be left alone from the politics but unfortunately fall prey to this inter-state conflict. Lack of communication (A symbolic world imbalance), lack of flexibility in any kind of issue resolutions is causing a great hindrance in the resumption of cricket.

Model of conflict: progression or nested model can be used to bring the issue on the surface and instead of blaming BCCI for not allowing the Indian cricket team, talks should held on the top level, getting down towards middle level leadership and then to grass-root level with the help of agents and actors of change and conflict resolution.

A comprehensive yet similar strategy (Progression or nested model) might help to bring the issue on the surface. (Covert-Overt) and might be resolved if the entire society gets involved on their specific parts.

Discussion and Peace Plan to Resolve the Conflict

Discussion of the Interviews Conducted by PCB Officials and a Political Analyst

Semi-structured interview questionnaire was designed to gain an insight of the people involved in this process and are struggling to restore cricket between India and Pakistan.

Respondent were:

Mr. Ali Zia (Senior Manager, National Cricket Academy Pakistan)

Mr. Intekhab Alam (Former Coach Pakistan Cricket Team and Manager of the team)

Mr. Zafarullah Khan (A Political Analyst with pro-peace approaches in his writing and analyses)

The first question was asked about the stance on Indo Pak Cricket conflict. Three of the respondents had a uniform stance that the conflict is not of cricket, it is a conflict between the governments due to which cricket is victimized, otherwise, people of both the states and cricketers are so eager to have series with each other. Mr. Intekhab Alam also shared an anecdote from his stay in India for two years; he could not observe a single element of negativity in the cricket world neither in the masses. In fact, everyone was looking forward to have series between the both. According to them, there was a breakthrough (Indo-Pak series little time back in India) that was a great idea to initiate a process. Political situation is a trouble and sudden change was felt from Indian Side right after

Mumbai attack and rift of both the countries on Kashmir, Siachin and Sir Creek issue. So trouble is not in cricket boards, it resides with the governments.

Second question was designed to analyze the reluctant attitude of BCCI in holding a series between India and Pakistan. Mr. Intekhab Alam was of the view that BCCI does not seem to be reluctant, in fact, the government is reluctant. The other two respondents were of the view that attack on Sri Lankan cricket team was major blow to international cricket in Pakistan that has made all the teams reluctant to visit Pakistan. BCCI has the same stance along with some changing political moods.

Third question was asked to evaluate the intention of PCB behind sending Pakistan cricket team to India. All the respondents argued that they were looking for a reciprocal gesture. However, it did not happen, but may happen in the future.

Fourth question was aimed identifying the measures that have been taken so far. First two respondents have responded over this question and said, formal and semi-formal talks have been done with ICC but no fruitful outcome is observed due to constant rift on the series of events between both the countries.

According to the last question asked from the interviewees in which there are asked to propose or strategize the Indo-Pak cricket conflict. A part of peace plan is derived from the respondents' views. According to the respondents:

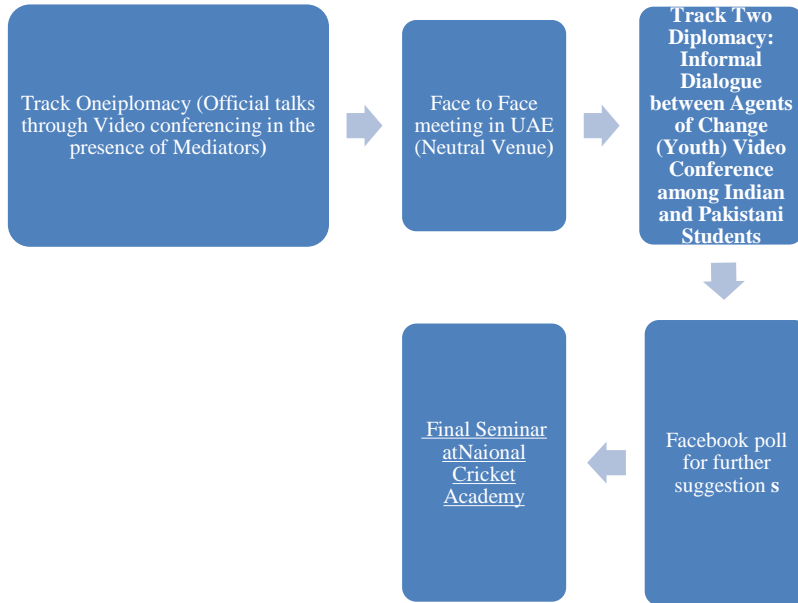
- i- Government officials should have a round of negotiations with each other and try to normalize the relations so that pitch for cricket can be designed. It's a difficult task but needs a perpetual attempt from both the sides.
- ii- Tournaments should be held between junior teams first or inter-university tournaments, so that academia can take part in melting the ice.
- iii- Students like you should work on such projects, and share with PCB. We will try our best to cooperate.

It can be analyzed from the literature and responses of the respondents that this conflict can only be resolved if kept away from politics. Fortunately, all the perspectives regarding the resumption exude positivity towards resuming Cricket between India and Pakistan.

The biggest limitation felt throughout the interview sessions was that, no interview could be conducted from any official from the BCCI or Indian government; however, the literature available on the web is deeply studied that somehow portrays the same responses as PCB officials that historical narratives need to be kept aside and give cricket a chance. In fact, according to a newspaper's report, newly elected Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi gave a green signal to restore

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Indo-Pak cricket for better bi-lateral ties.



Proposed Peace Plan to Resolve the Conflict

Mediation Strategy (Resolution)

Mediation strategy will comprise of series of formal and informal dialogues followed by a seminar.

- ✓ Restoration of Indo-Pak Cricket through mutual dialogue
- ✓ Ideas by Agents of Change from (India – Pakistan)
- ✓ Proposal by PCB and Agents representing Pakistan
- ✓ Response by the BCCI and agents representing India
- ✓ Response of ICC
- ✓ Final Mediatory stance by the mediator

Venue: National Cricket Academy, Lahore Pakistan or a neutral venue after mutual consent of all the parties.

Actors Involve

Top Leadership	Middle Range Leadership	Leadership at Grass-root Level
Foreign Office	PCB	Media
ICC	BCCI	Student Community

Mediation Strategy

Basic Bending Process to show sequential and progression in a task

Part 1: Track One Diplomacy (Official talks through Video conferencing in the presence of Mediators)

Part 2: Face to Face meeting in UAE (Neutral Venue)

Part 3: Track Two Diplomacy: Informal Dialogue between Agents of Change (Youth) Video Conference among Indian and Pakistani Students.

Part 4: Facebook poll for suggestions and Interviews from PCB Officials who want to invite Indian team to Pakistan

Part 5: Final Seminar

Venue: National Cricket Academy, Lahore Pakistan.

Members of the seminar:

- ✓ Peace Builders from both the states will be the conveners of the seminars. All the members who were have participate in the talks (Formal and Semi-formal) shall be invited.
- ✓ Foreign Ministers of both the countries
- ✓ Main Sponsors
- ✓ Student community
- ✓ Officials from PCB and BCCI
- ✓ Officials from ICC:

Another round of formal and informal talks will be held in the seminars. Stances and gestures from both the sides shall be heard and observed by the mediators.

Final Verdict by the mediators (Peace Builders)

- Creation of a Neutral security commission:
- ICC should formulate a neutral security commission that will check the security arrangements in both the countries during any series between the two. The decision of the security commission shall be held final and trustworthy.
- Both the countries will make a group of army officials comprised of 20-25 army officials who will accompany the teams wherever they will travel in the respective country.
- The governments of both the countries should coordinate with their respective cricket boards and should leave other political issues aside. There should be no bias in cricket.
- Life insurance and good hostility to be provided to the cricketers so that they can feel like home and can live in friendly environment.
- Junior or local Indian teams should visit first and then National team to be invited. Process should go gradually in order to strengthen the relations between both the states.
- According to the verdicts of both the countries, India should show a little flexibility and should consider the invitations coming from Pakistan.

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- Sponsors should sponsor generously so that finances can be enhanced and be used in the benefit of cricket.
- Finally yet importantly, politics of both the countries should be kept out of sports.
- Media of both the countries should play a positive and potent role in order to buttress the links between both the countries.
- Grounds pitches should also be arranged by neutral team and should be made player friendly in order to avoid any blame afterwards.

Impact of Indo-Pak Cricket Restoration on

Bi-Lateral Relations between both the countries

With the changing governments in both the countries, a positive hope is seen regarding the improvement in bi-lateral relation between India and Pakistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Narendra Modi both agreed on improvising Indo-Pak relation through cricket diplomacy. Hence, in the near future both the states will enjoy friendly relations with each other and cricket would be a concrete reason behind it.

On South Asian Region

India and Pakistan are the most important states of South Asian region. Rift between both, affects the regional situation to a great extent. If cricket is restored between the two, regional cooperation can be bettered. More ventures and avenues for cooperation and trade can be opened up. This impact would further lead towards economic prosperity and peace in the region. Revival of SAARC is much needed, this is a joint platform of South Asian countries for regional cooperation. This platform came up with great amount of hopes and expectations but seems to have lost steam from quite some time. India-Pakistan are the key players in this arena while the other South Asian countries share a lot of legacy, commonality of problems and their cooperation is in the interest of all of them. In this direction the peace loving individuals of South Asia have been contributing by keeping the links alive through various forums sowing the seeds of hope. (Ram Punyani, 2012)

Conclusion

An inescapable conclusion from this research paper is that Indians and Pakistanis are not born with negativity; the negative attitude is not natural though. There are internal and external reasons lingered this conflict and now, social events are suffering from such reasons. The paper was aimed at analyzing Indo-Pak Cricket conflict followed by a proposed peace plan to resume cricket between both the states. A primary as well as secondary study was conducted to evaluate the most possible solutions to this conflict. After all the research, it was concluded that it is

not the sports sections of both the countries that are in conflict but the political situation that has spread a sporadic view all over. However, a very optimistic analysis is generated on the point that restoration of Indo-Pak Cricket is much needed not only for the healthy ties between the two but for the prosperity of the entire region. The need of the hour is to adopt policy of flexibility and pragmatism, incorporation of peace builders and mediators would assure the restoration of Cricket diplomacy to strengthen diplomatic ties between the two. If India Pakistan dialogue resumes, the external or host reasons would find it difficult to disturb the relations of both the countries. Hence, talk over war is the only persistent approach to survive in today's world order.

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