

History of Modern Sport: the Indian Context

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I

And across the globe, sport is now too important to be left in the hands of sportsmen and women. More and more, it is the property of the 'People' in their various manifestations as politicians, entrepreneurs, educationists, commercialists, publicists, and, not least, academics.¹

As such the history of sport gives a unique insight into the way a society changes and impacts on other societies it comes into contact with and, conversely, the way those societies react back upon it.²

Sport was one of the most important new social practices of the Europe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and as such played a central role in the creation of politically and socially cohesive 'invented traditions'.³

The above remarks, at the least, not only illustrate a simple truth but make it illuminating: sport in the modern world is a fit and proper subject of study for historians. Yet, historians have taken an inordinately long time to appreciate its relevance for the lives of both the influential and the insignificant of past communities.⁴ As Richard Holt has pointed out, historical matters of far less importance have their serious recorders and commentators, their academic conferences and literature.⁵ Failure to get sport into sharp academic focus is, of course, what J. A. Mangan considers to be 'a form of intellectual myopia born of long-established prejudice'.⁶

While sport at present undoubtedly occupies an integral part of our lives, in comparison, however, the study of sport as a serious intellectual discipline continues to remain underdeveloped in India.⁷ While the Western scholarly guild in the past two decades has prioritized the relevance of sport in the history and culture of past and present communities,⁸ India remains far backward in times of a mature appreciation of the role of sport in the modern world. It is quite astonishing to note that modern Indian historian has more or less ignored sport as worthy of serious research. Perhaps, the academic historian regards sport as falling in the arena of popular history to be left in the hands of literateurs, journalists, sports-specialists and sportsmen themselves, who, however, have done their job in this regard quite commendably. Hence, production of scholarly literature on the history of sport has been few and far between.⁹ This essay will make an attempt to understand and clarify the problems of studying sports history in India at both research and teaching levels as well as to envisage and comment on its prospects as a recognized discipline.

II

One may feel surprised to know that the first serious academic research by an Indian on sports history was pursued as early as 1988 when Soumen Mitra, a graduate of the Presidency

College, Kolkata, and an M.A. in History from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, submitted an M.Phil dissertation on the theme of sport in colonial India.¹⁰ Mitra, however, could not sustain his academic pursuit for long and preferred a job in administrative service in the late 1980s. It was also around the late 1980s that cricket began to get scholarly nod thanks to the earnest endeavours of Indian scholar-enthusiasts like Ramachandra Guha¹¹, Mihir Bose¹², Arjun Appadurai¹³ and Ashis Nandy¹⁴, most recent addition to this trend being Mario Rodrigues¹⁵. Very little attention, however, was paid either to historical studies of other sports in India or to sport in general as a viable theme in the social history of modern India.

Non-Indian specialists on sports in India, on the other hand, have mostly focused on the games introduced by the British during their period of colonial rule. Much of this work, as usual, has dealt with cricket since it came to assume the dimension to become the popular most game in India in the past couple of decades. The renowned works of Edward Docker¹⁶ and Richard Cashman¹⁷ bear ample testimony to this trend. More importantly, some of the studies on colonial Indian sport elaborate on the colonial introduction of modern sports and try to explore deeper imperial motives behind that project.¹⁸ There have been few essays on football too, such as that of Tony Mason¹⁹, and most recently Paul Dimeo and James Mills edited *Soccer in South Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora* (London: Frank Cass, 2001)²⁰ marks a major breakthrough in this regard. A recent edited work on the presumed subalternity of sport in India has added strength to the list.²¹ A few of these European scholars have also studied indigenous sports and games of India. Chief among these are J. Alter's works on wrestling and kabaddi.²²

The most recent major Indian interventions in and contributions to the study of social history of sport have come in the form of social histories of cricket and football in India. The major initiative in this regard came from one young Bengali researcher—Boria Majumdar²³. And there are others who promise a better future²⁴.

III

'A study of sport history is crucial not only for an understanding of the evolution of the sporting heritage of the Indian nation, but for a deeper appreciation of the seemingly unrelated political processes such as nationalism, colonial culture and so on'.²⁵ The prime interest in such an academic exercise is not study of a particular sport as a game in its own right, but in what it tells us about society of a particular period. Here in lies the essential difference between *sports studies* in general and a *history of sport* or more particularly a social history of sport. There have been, for quite some time, as Ramachandra Guha has suggested, two approaches to the history of sport.²⁶ The first is to focus sharply (or, narrowly) on its practice, the background of its patrons and players, the evolution of its associations and tournaments, and on how it pays or does not pay for itself. The second approach, which Guha himself prefers, and also relevant to our concern here, takes sport as an illustrative example to point out themes of wider interest and relevance. 'It views sport as a *relational idiom*, a sphere of activity which expresses, in concentrated form, the values, prejudices, divisions and unifying symbols of a society'.²⁷ As he goes on to suggest, the game of cricket can provide valuable insights into the history of modern India, in particular to the three overarching themes of Indian history: those of race, caste and religion.²⁸ But Guha's assertion that the sociology and politics of cricket 'presumes no technical knowledge of the game itself' is not at all tenable because the changes in its rules, rituals and vocabulary from time to time are intimately related to, and highly influenced by the politics,

culture and economy of the game.

The approach to study sport in the wider perspective of history and culture would help us understand the importance of sport beyond entertainment pursuit or leisure space and locate sport within the broader socio-economic processes that have shaped colonial and post-colonial south Asian societies. It is also important to note in this context that the study of sport as a viable historical force challenges and offers some major correctives to, our prevalent understanding of the social and economic history of late nineteenth and twentieth century India. For instance, the existing historiography of nationalism, communalism, social conflict, colonial culture or developing economy in India fails to recognize the importance of football as an arena for spontaneous articulation of nationalism, communalism and popular culture or the role cricket has played as a major nationalist, communal and commercial force in the twentieth century.

Arguably, however, Sports historians need not devote much space either to the game concerned as it was/is actually played or to old results and tables for the sake of providing impressive statistical data. Social historians should not feel obliged to describe events or matches that they never saw or to engage in second hand discussions of the tactics and the like. It is important for our purposes to understand that Sachin Tendulkar²⁹ and Diego Maradona³⁰ are geniuses in their own ways but not to attempt to explain what their genius consists of in terms of what happened on the field. For a social historian of sport, the point is not to describe sporting events, but to study what sport means and why it matters. However, in the present context, it is useful and compelling too, to have a workable knowledge of the evolution of a game's technicalities, which sometimes exerts important sway on its social history.

Socio-historical researches on aspects of popular culture in India commonly tend to generalize the regional thrust of particular cultural elements into national pattern. Sports history to date in India, too, suffers from such sweeping generalizations. For instance, a history of Indian football is often identified with that of Bengal football and the latter with Calcutta football³¹. Cricket in colonial India, in the same vein, is understood to be primarily a Bombay based phenomenon³². But both these formulations are grossly mistaken. Scholars must understand that without prior consideration of a sport's regional/local origins, developments and specificities, construction of its wider national history would be a flawed exercise.

Finally, this approach to study sport in the wider perspective of social history intends to put strong emphasis on diffusing historical knowledge in the vernacular at a more popular level with total conviction. In offering such an unconventional idea, I work on the assumption that 'historians are made for history and the reverse can not be true'³³ and that a social historian has had a social responsibility as well. As S.N. Mukherjee aptly remarked, 'We should not only concern ourselves with the problems which the man in the street faced in the past, but make them entertaining and instructive for the man in the street today. ... the questions we ask about our past must be related to our present day problems.'³⁴ This view has an effective relevance for sports history. As a citizen of an underdeveloped state in sport like India, I strongly feel, we, social alia sports historians, have a duty to make people aware of the problems, potentials and realities of sport in our country, and impress and inform the authorities concerned to keep them on the right track toward progress and excellence in the global standard. E.H.Carr once made a splendid comment in a somewhat different context: 'Good historians ... have future in their bones'.³⁵ But my futuristic assertion stems from the urgency of our underdeveloped situation, of

course with minor exceptions. Sports history research in India, especially on Indian sports, should not only concern itself with analytical understanding of specific historical problematic, but must offer valuable and viable insights, in the light of past historical experience, into a better future of sports in India, if not devise means, ways and strategies for the betterment of standard and attainment of excellence in world sport.

IV

Within the constraints of an already under researched field, the problems faced by a sports historian in India are both frustrating and challenging. Frustrating because the essentially 'non-academic' character of sports authorities, personalities and spectators in India makes the task of collecting primary materials hopelessly difficult. And challenging not only because the concerned researcher has to establish the credibility of this new domain of research by overcoming all the odds that commonly accompany an under researched field, but more so because he/she has to confront a conscious, sophisticated exploitation of this under developed state of research by some not-too-learned academic or non-academic writers. The publication of *Soccer in South Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora*³⁶ in 2001 is a suitable case in hand in this regard. This book may be viewed as a part of the growing concern on the part of the sports historians in the West to give soccer its deserved status as a subject of historical scholarship so long overdue in South Asia. It contains a few excellent essays, especially those by J.A.Mangan and James Mills. But the work which did have the potential of becoming a path breaking contribution towards the study of sport in South Asia, sadly belies much of it owing to gross factual errors³⁷, omission of the most important primary sources³⁸, utter neglect of the vernacular sources³⁹ and miserable editorial lapses.⁴⁰ Moreover, the editors fail to understand that sports journalists, TV commentators and experienced coaches, save very few exceptions, can hardly make up for academic writers.⁴¹

There is, however, a brighter side of the story. Prof. J.A.Mangan, the Series Editor of the *Sport in Global Society* volumes, in his foreword, describes the same work as 'a stepping stone' that has been put in place. But his avowed assurance that 'more "stones" will soon be set down'⁴² sounds great as it will ensure, as he hopes, the voices of Asians to be heard more fully, not only as contributors to collections but as editors and authors. Fulfillment of this promise has recently come through the publication of *Sport in Asian Society*⁴³. If such a trend continues to flourish, the study of sports history in South Asia will not be far away from its take off stage.⁴⁴

More importantly, despite the apparent dearth of expertise and enthusiasm to work on sports history, India also became the first non-European country to have an Annex⁴⁵ of the International Research Centre for Sport, Socialization and Society (IRCSSS), De Montfort University, England. This Annex, established at the Department of History, University of Calcutta, was expected to offer an institutional space including a quality research infrastructure to all those interested in sports history. It also has a plan to act as an interdisciplinary forum to promote future research in sports studies in general.⁴⁶ To make such an ambitious project viable, the Calcutta Centre has already started drawing sponsors and funds from private sector.⁴⁷ This novel development might perhaps prove a blessing for the Indian social science academia in the near future.

A consideration of these realistic problems and brighter prospects of studying sports history in India therefore suggests that it is high time for Indian historians to take up sport as an integral part of social history research. It is a historical need that teaching of sports history within the broader discipline of *History* at the University level must go hand in hand with serious research on the same. It will help dispel the age-old cliché about the relative unimportance of sport in the shaping of Indian society and culture and make the students aware of how commonly perceived entertainment pursuits or leisure activities may have a deciding or compelling sway on our lives. Most importantly, this will certainly encourage them to pursue research on sports history in future.

The realities of teaching sports history in an Indian university, however, are not too conducive or encouraging either. There are some hurdles not very easy to overcome in introducing sports history in the curriculum with weightage equal to that of other areas of history intensely researched and studied. The lack of academic books and literature is the dominant constraint, hence is the lack of appreciation among the academics.

It is of relevance here to mention that the initial hurdles of teaching sports history have been overcome in the Department of History, North Bengal University. Postgraduate students have found immense interest and excitement in the theme in the wider context of social history of modern India. Students' seminars and projects in the last five years amply illustrate this point. The fight to establish the credibility of sports history reached a culmination in 2003 when a proposal was mooted to introduce 'sports history' at the M.Phil level. The D.C. ultimately unanimously agreed to 'the introduction of sports history in the M.Phil course with potentiality for external funding' and resolved to 'elevate it to a full-fledged self-financed Diploma Course' on the basis of experience gained.⁴⁸ The M.Phil Committee also approved the introduction of sports history as an optional paper in Modern Indian History Group from the session 2004-2005.⁴⁹

Thus, with hard and sustained effort, I believe, teaching of sports history can be materialized in India. West Bengal, as in many other arenas, has already taken the lead in this regard. At least two leading universities in the state have included sport in their PG curriculum in History.⁵⁰ If university teachers around show a similar urge and devote their attention to this important issue, then sport would soon be integrated within the teaching of History at the postgraduate and M. Phil level in India.

VI

The present essay has tried to identify a range of problems, realities and prospects in the study of sports history in contemporary India and float certain ideas regarding the theoretical approaches and practical ways to be adopted while looking at the history of sport. I have certainly raised a few questions and hinted at some others especially with regard to the viability of research and teaching of a social history of sport in India. But, to resolve these questions in order to draw any definitive conclusions is not feasible at the present state of research. What can only be emphasized a little too strongly is that if Indian historians are really willing to reconstruct the *Peoples History* of India especially of contemporary times, they seriously need to reconsider one of the most integral elements of our popular culture – sport.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to J.A. Mangan, Arun Bandopadhyay and Boria Majumdar for their useful comments and criticisms on an earlier version of this paper.

Notes:

1. J.A. Mangan, 'Series Editor's Forward' in Mike Cronin and David Myall (eds.), *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration and Assimilation* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp.xi-xii.
2. Harold Perkin, 'Teaching the Nations How to Play: Sport and Society in the British Empire and Commonwealth' in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p.212.
3. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, 1983, p.283, quoted in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad: 1700-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), p.1.
4. J.A. Mangan, 'Introduction' in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism*, p.1.
5. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
7. Boria Majumdar, 'The Vernacular in Sports History' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.37, No.29 (2002), p.3069.
8. Academic pursuit of sports history in the West began in the 1970s and got concretized in the next decade with the publication of a series of works by a galaxy of social scientists that included such names as J.A. Mangan, Wray Vamplew, Tony Mason, Allen Guttman, Richard Holt and Peter McIntosh. Institutional organism to support their efforts began in 1982 when the British Society of Sports History was founded. Distinguished publishers such as Frank Cass offered instant active support and launched *The British Journal of Sports History* that was later transformed into *The International Journal of the History of Sport*. These institutional efforts met with welcome parallels in other Western countries like Scotland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Brazil and the USA. Scholars from Asian countries like China, Japan and South Korea as well as Australia too were quick to recognize the importance of sports history and joined the venture in right earnest since early 1990s. Finally, the Cass launched three more journals, viz. *Culture, Sport, Society*, *Soccer and Society* and *European Sports History Review* and most importantly *the Sport in the Global Society Series* in the late 1990s under the auspices of the International Research Centre for Sport, Socialization and Society instituted at the Strathclyde University, Scotland with J.A. Mangan as the executive academic editor. The huge success of all these ventures further point to the current healthy state of sports history in the West.
9. However, this does not imply in any way that there is dearth of popular sports histories written in India. Rather, the number of such amateur writings has been increasing by leaps and bounds in the past two or three decades. These histories mostly produced by journalists,

literateurs and sportsmen themselves deal with general history of particular games, records and exploits of certain clubs, organizations and players and autobiography. But these works, although important in their own way, more or less remain in the nature of narratives and are unable to become interpretative that may lead to the formulation of any hypothesis at a more conceptual level. For a recent example, see Jaydeep Basu, *Stories from Indian Football* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 2003).

- 10 The dissertation entitled 'Nationalism, Communalism and Sub-regionalism: A Study of Football in Bengal, 1880-1950' was submitted at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Subsequently, he went on to publish an article 'Babu at Play: Sporting Nationalism in Bengal: A Study of Football in Bengal, 1880-1911' in Nisith Roy and Ranjit Roy (eds.), *Bengal: Yesterday and Today* (Calcutta: Papyrus) in 1991. He has recently published his thesis in the form of a book: *In Search of Identity: History of Football in Colonial Calcutta* (Kolkata: Dasgupta & Co., 2006).
- 11 Ramachandra Guha, , 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India' in *Past and Present*, Nov.1998; *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport* (Delhi: Picador, 2002).
- 12 Mihir Bose, *A History of Indian Cricket* (London: Andre Deutsch,1990).
- 13 A. Appadurai, 'Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket' in C.A. Breckenridge (ed.), *Cosuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
- 14 Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games* (New Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks, 2000).
- 15 Mario Rodrigues, *Batting for the Empire: A Political Biography of Ranjitsinhji* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003).
- 16 Edward Docker, *History of Indian Cricket* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1976).
- 17 Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1979).
- 18 Most standard text on this interpretation is: J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London & Portland: Frank Cass, 1998), especially chapter 5 & 7, pp.122-141, 168-192. Also see Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.203-218; Allen Guttman, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
- 19 Tony Mason, 'Football on the Maidan: Cultural Imperialism in Calcutta', in *The Cultural Bond*, pp.142-153.
- 20 Worthy scholarly interventions made in the collection include J.A. Mangan, 'Soccer as Moral Training: Missionary Intention and Imperial Legacies', pp.41-56; Paul Dimeo, 'Football and Politics in Bengal: Colonialism, Nationalism and Communalism', pp.57-74; and James Mills, 'Football in Goa: Sport, Politics and the Portuguese in India', pp.75-88.

- 21 James Mills (ed.), *Subaltern Sports: Politics and Sport in South Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2005).
- 22 J. Alter, *The Wrestler's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); 'Kabaddi, a National Sport of India: The Internationalism of Nationalism and the Foreignness of Indianness' (in N.Dyck, ed., *Games, Sports and Cultures*, Oxford: Berg, 2000).
- 23 Boria Majumdar has done his PhD on the social history of Indian cricket at St. John's College, University of Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. His most influential writings include *Twenty-Two Yards to Freedom: A Social History of Indian Cricket* (New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2004); *Once Upon a Furore: Lost Pages of Indian Cricket* (New Delhi: Yoda press, 2004); 'The Vernacular'; 'Politics of Leisure in Colonial India—*Lagaan*: Invocaion of Lost History', *Culture, Sport, Society*, 5.2 (2002); 'Cricket in Colonial India: The Bombay Pentangular, 1892-1946' in J.A.Mangan and Fan Hong (eds.), *Sport in Asian Society: Past and Present* (London: Frank Cass, 2002); 'The Politics of Soccer in Colonial India, 1930-37: Years of Turmoil', *Soccer and Society*, 3.1 (2002); 'Kolkata Colonized: Soccer in a Subcontinental "Brazilian Colony"', *Soccer and Society*, 3.2 (2002); 'Forwards and Backwards: Women's Soccer in Twentieth Century India', in Fan Hong and J.A.Mangan (eds.), *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking of a New Era* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).
- 24 The author is completing his doctorate on the social history of Bengal football at the Department of History, University of Calcutta. As for important publications, see Kausik Bandyopadhyay and Boria Majumdar, *Goalless: The story of a Unique Footballing Nation* (New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2006); 'Race, Nation and Sport: Footballing Nationalism in Colonial Bengal', *Soccer and Society*, 4.1 (2003); '1911 in Retrospect: Reconstructing a Sporting Victory in Historical Perspective', in J.A. Mangan and Boria Majumdar (eds.), *Sport in South Asian Society* (London: Routledge, 2004); 'Where the Twain Shall Ever Meet: Sport and Education as Cultural Bond in Colonial and Post-Colonial India', *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.2 (2005); 'In Search of a Football Ground in Twentieth Century Urban Bengal', *Soccer and Society*, Vol.6, No.1 (2005); 'Sports History in India: Prospects and Problems', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol.22, No.3-4 (2005); 'Pakistani Cricket at Crossroads: An Outsiders Perspective', *Sport in Society*, Vol.10, No.1 (January 2007). Mention may also be made of Dr. Soma Basu, a research fellow in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, who obtained her Ph.D. on 'Physical Performance and Iron Status of Female Athletes' in the discipline of Physiology from the Calcutta University, and Suparna Bhattacharya, Loreto College who is doing her Ph.D. on 'Women of Bengal in Sports' in the first half of the twentieth century at the Department of History, Jadavpur University.
- 25 Majumdar, 'The Vernacular', p.3069.
- 26 Guha, 'Cricket and Politics', p.157.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Guha deals with these themes in his later publication, viz. *A Corner of a Foreign Field*.
- 29 Sachin Tendulkar, the batting maestro of present Indian cricket team, is considered to be one

of the greatest batsmen world cricket has ever produced.

- 30 Diego Maradona was the captain of the 1986 World Cup Football champions Argentina. Maradona, for his sheer footballing talent, can be compared only to the legendary Brazilian footballer Pele.
- 31 Both Soumen Mitra and Paul Dimeo considered Calcutta football to be synonymous with Bengal football and, hence, missed its regional/local character completely.
- 32 Even Ramachandra Guha, a most celebrated cricket writer of India, suffers from this flawed understanding in his latest work. For clarification, see Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*. This cliché, however, is expected to go astray with the publication of Boria Majumdar's book on the Social History of Indian Cricket, *22 Yards to Freedom* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004).
- 33 S.N Mukherjee, *Citizen Historian: Explorations in Historiography* (Delhi: Manohar, 1996), p.8.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Pelican, 1961), p.108.
- 36 Paul Dimeo and James Mills (eds.), *Soccer in South Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora* (London: Frank Cass, 2001) [hereafter *SS Asia*].
- 37 Such errors are abundant throughout the volume. To give a few examples, Mohun Bagan Club, the National Club of India, is said to mean 'sweet' (Mohun) 'group' (Bagan). In reality, it actually means 'beautiful' (Mohun) 'garden' (Bagan). It derives its name from from the Mohun Bagan Villa of north Calcutta where the club was actually founded in 1889. Again East Bengal Club which is supposed to be founded in 1924 by poor East Bengali refugees was actually formed in 1920 by respectable East Bengali intelligentsia as a part of their reaction against the ill treatment and discrimination meted out to them by their West Bengali counterparts in wider social life including sports. Furthermore, it is wrongly mentioned that the Sovabazar club was formed in 1885 and the soccer team of the Presidency College in 1884. The first, in fact, was formed in 1887 while the earliest mention of soccer in at the college goes back to 1879. Then, sweeping generalizations such as 'domestic matches in India in those days (1950s and '60s) were still limited to seventy minutes and the players were not used to playing full ninety minutes' (p.24) or 'the professionalization of football had begun in the early 1980s' (p.109) make matter worse. While Calcutta League matches were limited to seventy minutes at that time, most of the other tournaments across the country were in tune with international stipulation of ninety minutes. The professionalization of Indian football, on the other hand, has been a feature from only 1990s, still awaiting its much-desired maturity.
- 38 The book suffers from a miserable omission of important primary sources. Except J.A. Mangan's brilliant piece, in most cases, the contributors depend heavily on secondary works and sometimes on not-too reliable popular writings available in the newspapers and internet websites.
- 39 Unfortunately, most of the writers either ignore or fail to consult tons of vernacular primary

sources as well as numerous important popular sporting histories written in the vernacular. Even when vernacular sources are consulted, the exercise is a flawed one. For the much-reported event in the history of Indian soccer, Mohun Bagan's victory of 1911, mention is made of R. Saha's *Ekadashe Surya*. The title of the book is *Ekadashe Suryodaya* meaning 'the sun rises in 1911', hardly conveyed by the error in the book. The book fails to take into account some invaluable sources like the Mohun Bagan Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, IFA Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Mohammadan Sporting Club League Champions Souvenir, East Bengal Club Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Nagendraprosad Sarvadhikary's two biographies by P.L. Dutt and Sourindra Kumar Ghosh, Paresh Nandy's *Mohun Bagan 1911* and *East Bengal Club: 1920-1970*, ARBI's *Kolkata Football*, Rupak Saha's *Itihase East Bengal* and so on, not to speak of the massive collections of vernacular newspaper reports and sports magazines.

40 Editorial lapses, unfortunately, are more serious. The Durand Cup, the oldest tournament in the country, gets two foundation dates thanks to Kapadia (1888) and Dimeo (1886), of whom the former is correct. In his notes, Bill Adams refers to one crore as equal to 10,000. Numerous such lapses only mar the academic value of the publication.

41 For instance, the articles by Mario Rodrigues, Bill Adams or John Hammond dealing respectively with issues of the game's commercialisation and professionalization in the 1990s, the problems and possibilities of future and talent identification and development have hardly any constructive analysis or original insight to offer. These three chapters, it won't be too drastic to say, only undermine the academic viability of the book. To furnish one specific example, Mario Rodrigues' statement that the policies of liberalization in the Indian economy were initiated by Rajiv Gandhi (p.110) is grossly mistaken since such policies were introduced by Manmohun Singh, the Finance Minister under the P.V. Narsimha Rao Government after Rajiv's death in 1991.

42 *SS Asia*, p.xiii.

43 J.A. Mangan and Fan Hong (eds.), *Sport in Asian Society: Past and Present* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

44 Indian sports historians are already in the fray for *Sport in the Global Society* series. See Boria Majumdar and J.A. Mangan (eds.), *The Cricket World Cup: Cricketing Cultures in Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2004) and *Sport in South Asian Society* (London: Routledge, 2004) and *Sport in South Asian Society: Past and Present* (London: Routledge, 2005); Kausik Bandyopadhyay and Sabyasachi Mallick (eds.), *Making It Happen: Fringe Nations in World Soccer* (London: Routledge, 2007).

45 The 'Kolkata Chapter', as the Annex is called, of the IRCSSS came off mostly through the initiative of Boria Majumdar, an ex-student of the Department and presently Deputy Director of IRCSSS, on 17 September 2003 at the Department of History, Calcutta University. Prof. J. A. Mangan, Director of IRCSSS, and Prof. John Coyen, Vice Chancellor, De Montfort University came to inaugurate the center. It was followed by an international seminar on 'Sport, Culture and Society in Modern India' on 18 September, in which Prof. Mangan himself was the chief speaker.

46 Interview with Prof. Bhaskar Chakraborty, Director of the Kolkata Chapter of IRCSSS, 8 January 2004.

- 47 It has already attracted two annual research scholarships worth Rs.20000 each for every year from the ESPN. Besides this, the Centre obtained a consolidated fund of Rs.50000 from local media concerns as part of the latter's effort to felicitate and assist two most renowned veteran Bengali sports writers and commentators, Moti Nandy and Ajay Basu.
- 48 D.C. Resolution, Department of History, North Bengal University, dated 25 July 2003.
- 49 Resolution of the M.Phil Committee, Department of History, North Bengal University, dated 12.08.2004. It thus becomes the first Indian university to offer such a paper.
- 50 Calcutta University included 'sport, colonialism and nationalism' as a module in the special paper on 'Social History of Modern India' in its revised curriculum that came into effect from 2003. North Bengal University has also introduced an essay paper from the session 2003-04 in which the same module is incorporated.