



Television, Evolution and Sportainment

What will impact the game of cricket in India? The answer seems obvious. The one thing that has till date impacted cricket the most is Television.

Television has hyped up the game to a to a totally different level. Today if cricket is very much commercially viable, and there is a lot more money in the game than before, a lot of the credit must go to Television. If you look at it, it's actually a win-win situation for everybody.

Cricket, through Television, reaches the masses and the masses get their entertainment free. The channels, the boards and the players are well paid. The advertisers reach out to a vast mass of people through cricket. And there is some development that is constantly happening in the way Cricket as a game has been presented on Television. And those changes will keep happening – it is in the best interest of the viewer. Cricket is not just a game, it's 'sport-ainment' today and that is another huge but continuous shift brought about by Television.

The impact of Television on cricket stretches beyond the commercial aspects. If you look at the training methods and preparations that happen today, not just in India but all across, sportsmen use the Television to great measure to understand their own techniques better and improve; it is as much a tool in assessing and preparing for the competition as practice sessions are.

Just as the players absorb the intricacies of their techniques thanks to Television, the idiot box has also helped educate viewers on the finer points of the game. It's not just about a commentator saying that the ball has reached the boundary. Today you have experts doling out pitch reports

and their assessment of what's going on out there. On the other hand, it enables the viewer to interact with the experts in the studio, enriching the sport-ainment experience. The engagement value is higher with such production improvements and the way the content is packaged is getting better by the day.

As a medium, Television has had an impact on almost every aspect of society – be it politics or business or anything else – and Cricket is no exception.

The game itself is evolving. Tests and One Dayers have their own place in the Cricket Universe. Both have been around for long and both will be around and as popular. On the road ahead, 20-20 will probably have some more interest. Being a shorter version, it will be different in its own way but the charm of One Dayers and Tests will remain.

Cricket, as I said earlier, has evolved to be a Sportainment. From the way it is presented to the audience that follows the game, a lot has changed and is changing as we speak. We have seen that even among the ladies, the interest levels in the game have gone up a great deal. Again, this has a lot to do with the Television revolution and the way the game has changed.

Today it's no longer enough if you give the results of the game. The viewer and cricket fan wants analysis, wants it to be presented entertainingly and insightfully. That will continue to be the trend on the road ahead.

Cricket has evolved from being a Sport to become 'Sportainment'. From the way it is presented to the audience that follows the game, a lot has changed - and is changing as we speak.



KRIS SRIKKANTH
FORMER INDIAN CRICKETER
CRICKET COMMENTATOR