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Subhani, Muhammad Imtiaz and Hasan, Syed Akif and  
Osman, Ms. Amber

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# Will T20 clean sweep other formats of Cricket in future?

## **Muhammad Imtiaz Subhani**

*Iqra University Research Centre-IURC , Iqra University- IU,*  
Defence View, Shaheed-e-Millat Road (Ext.) Karachi-75500, Pakistan  
E-mail: drsubhani@yahoo.co.uk  
Tel: (92-21) 111-264-264 (Ext. 2010); Fax: (92-21) 35894806

## **Amber Osman**

*Iqra University Research Centre-IURC , Iqra University- IU,*  
Defence View, Shaheed-e-Millat Road (Ext.) Karachi-75500, Pakistan  
E-mail: amber.osman@yahoo.com  
Tel: (92-21) 111-264-264 (Ext. 2010); Fax: (92-21) 35894806

## **Syed Akif Hasan**

*Iqra University- IU,*  
Defence View, Shaheed-e-Millat Road (Ext.)  
*Karachi-75500, Pakistan*  
E-mail: drakifhasan@gmail.com  
Tel: (92-21) 111-264-264 (Ext. 1513); Fax: (92-21) 35894806

## **Bilal Hussain**

*Iqra University Research Centre-IURC , Iqra University- IU,*  
Defence View, Shaheed-e-Millat Road (Ext.) Karachi-75500, Pakistan  
Tel: (92-21) 111-264-264 (Ext. 2010); Fax: (92-21) 35894806

## **Abstract**

Enthralling experience of the newest format of cricket coupled with the possibility of making it to the prestigious Olympic spectacle, T20 cricket will be the most important cricket format in times to come. The findings of this paper confirmed that comparatively test cricket is boring to tag along as it is spread over five days and one-days could be followed but on weekends, however, T20 cricket matches, which are normally played after working hours and school time in floodlights is more attractive for a larger audience. In addition it was known that the interest of the sponsors is directly proportional to the interest of the masses, which will also bring more shine to the T20 format in times to come.

**Keywords:** T20 Cricket, Cricket in Olympic games, Future of Cricket

## **1. Introduction**

The most important and celebrated game in South Asia is cricket with a massive fan following. However, cricket's birth place country England, Australia, South Africa, West Indies and New Zealand also excel in the game. Poised against one-day cricket and Test cricket, the shortest format of T20 cricket

has the features to be enjoyed by school children, working men and collectively families.

The game of cricket has evolved from a comprehensive five-day (Test) competition to a one-day (50 overs) contest. More recently, Twenty-20 (20 overs) format has made its place in the world of cricket but cricket, second only to football in the sports throughout the world, is contested in all the three formats with importance given to each format.

One-day cricket stole the substance from Test cricket as the World Cup, which had never been the spectacle of preceding format – Test cricket, became the most important event in cricket since it started in 1975. West Indies was the powerhouse in the beginning of the World Cup as they won the first two editions in 1975 and 1979. India took the third edition title in 1983 followed by Australia in 1987. Pakistan clinched the trophy in 1992 under skipper Imran Khan. Sri Lanka grabbed title in 1996. Australia won its second World Cup title in 1999, also winning the next two editions in 2003 and 2007 to hold the record of winning most World Cup titles. India won their second title in 2011.

Surprisingly, the result oriented one-day format was seen to have a healthy impact on Test cricket. Test matches also started to irk frequently and it became more competitive after the players' exposure to comparatively fast one-day matches.

But, with the inception T20 cricket and ICC World T20 Championship in 2007, the importance has spread over the three different formats. With T20 cricket being more brief and exciting because of fast moving and action filled game play, there seems danger at large for preceding formats. The analysts are of different views about which format would survive longer than others. It is thought that the T20 has its charm but it is only a bubble and it would eventually fade away. ODIs and Tests are more sporty formats where only true cricketers could deliver.

However, the contemporary cricket and the fan following of T20 is massive. This paper is aimed to find out whether the status quo of ODI leading Test would be changed by T20 format in future. The study would shed light on what course of direction the game of cricket would take in near future. Also, this research highlighted what preference the fans would have in near future and a healthy money-spending measure for sponsors of such sport events.

## **2. Literature Review**

Australian pacer Brett Lee has been greatly impressed by the most recent format of T20 cricket (Anuj, 2011). Lee believes that the newest format is thrill filled, packed with action and school children can go to watch along with their working parents to enjoy the game of cricket. Lee added that the spectators will also like T20 matches because there is no need for them to sit under the hot sun and moreover music also adds to the entertainment glued to T20 cricket.

Mohatta (2009) mentioned that the aura attached to the Test and ODI cricket has been losing its charm because cricket fans are moving toward T20 cricket. There is great glamour and adventure involved with the nascent format.

Mohatta (2009) asserted his opinion by highlighting different aspects of T20 cricket, which had never been a part of its predecessors. There are cheerleaders separately for every team who cheer every single achievement of their respective side, which makes the crowd lively coupled with resonating songs. T20 cricket having shorter boundaries displays more aerial shorts, which eventually gives more pleasure to the spectators.

Mohatta (2009) also pointed out that now girls were also watching this format of cricket, which was previously not seen. More young players get a chance to represent well-known teams. In terms of money and public support, T20 has already made its mark.

However, Pakistan cricket prodigy Imran Khan, believes that Test cricket is the real test for players therefore it should be the priority of the players (AFP, 2012). Imran added that player's temperament and technique could only be properly judged in Test cricket. He said that the experts will always rate a cricketer by the records he holds in Test cricket and not what the player did in T20s.

Meanwhile, PPI (2012) reports that the legendary player Javed Miandad, who scored 8832 Test and 7381 ODI runs, said that the ODI World Cup has been losing its gloss for quite some time as the sport has been commercialized. Miandad feels that there are too many international cricket matches happening now and the importance of tournaments like World Cups is diminishing.

There had been great opportunity for the bowlers in the past as the then cricket laws and pitches of that era didn't restrict them. But now the pitches have been deprived of demons and the new laws have been erected to help the batsmen such as allowing only a single bouncer per over. This is done to attract spectators who want to see boundaries being hit, which is not real cricket. The former star further said that nowadays a team scores around 200 runs in a single inning comprising of a miniature of 20 overs, but on the other hand the same side could also be sent to pavilion after a meager 150 runs on board in comprehensive Test matches.

Miandad feels that T20 is detrimental for Test cricket since cricketers are now having more inclination towards T20 format as they are able to be remunerated more with minimum effort. However, true cricket is a unpredictable sport and players must be trained to outshine in both Test format and ODIs too.

Miandad adds on that the people at the helm of cricket should consider these facts and make the game as interesting as it had been in the past. Otherwise in times to come cricket would lose its gloss.

IANS (2009) reports Mohammad Yousuf, Pakistan's former skipper and star batsman, as saying that the colorful T20 bubble will soon explode away. The former cricketer firmly believes that the shortest format will fade out as cricketers as well as fans would both give more priority to ODIs a few years from now. Yousuf said that T20 is completely based on luck and people will get bored and return to the one-day cricket although Pakistan skipper Misbah-ul-Haq believes T20 cricket was very important for a bright future of cricket. Cricketer understood T20 cricket as great entertainment to the spectators present in the stadium and also those glued to television sets and the bottom-line of sports is to entertain the people.

Misbah said that the players only have to adapt to different pace, associated with different formats, which any good player could easily do and the three formats could easily co-exist without any problems.

However, Farooq (2012) pointed out that Indian cricket team conceded defeats against weak and inexperienced Bangladesh team in Asia Cup is a proof that increasing trend of T20 cricket due to Indian Premier League (IPL), the graph of test cricket is falling in India.

Farooq (2012) asserted that the reality of the decline in the performance of Indian cricket team was because of increasing IPL and T20 cricket. The reason is that the new players, who get a chance to place top cricket is through IPL, and eventually they tone-up only to play brisk innings and fail to deliver in other formats.

Cricket was made a part of the 1900 Summer Olympics held in Paris. But ever since, cricket has not appeared in any edition of Olympics. The International Cricket Council (ICC) is looking forward to have cricket back into the Olympics after over a century. ICC Chief Executive Haroon Lorgat said that Twenty20 format in international cricket is suitable for the Olympics, PTI (2012) reported. He said that cricket never used to have a format that would lend itself to playing in the Olympics until Twenty20 came. So ICC is pondering over to make a bid. Meanwhile, ICC board, in its strategic plan approved in 2011, will evaluate properly what the benefits are for Olympic participation. ICC, cricket's world governing body, was officially recognized as a federation by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 2010. This means that cricket can bid for its return in the 2020 Games. Olympics gold medal is considered to be the pinnacle throughout the sports world. So if ICC manages to have the game of cricket in T20 format included in Olympics, then it would certainly make T20 format very important for every country.

Moreover, Moonda (2012) quoted Daryll Cullinan, the former South Africa batsman as saying that Cullinan wants ICC World Twenty20 expand and accommodate more Associate teams. Moonda (2012) feels that the shortest format of the game provides the best opportunity for Associates to play top-level cricket. If ICC brings in more team in its T20 – which is much easier than ODI or Test, fold then it could help ICC easily bid for Olympics berth with more countries in its fold. Cullinan (2012) says that T20 cricket is unpredictable and is a very good platform for Associate countries.

Burande (2009) feels that the oldest format – Test cricket is in danger of fading out as the T20 cricket has made its mark in recent years and more and more nations are interested in the newest format. Test cricket is only competitive among few nations.

Sharma (2009) pointed out that the ODI format is still at the leader and the rise in viewer-base for ODIs – considering the fact that Champions Trophy had more viewers than the Champions League T20, displays that cricket fans are still more inclined to watch a well planned and prudently executed game plan rather than a higgledy-piggledy three to four hours T20 match, where most nonsensical of the shots could change the course of the game continually.

Sharma (2009) said that if the argument that T20 format will in times to come take-over other forms of cricket, because of its appeal and glamour was accepted, then it would be as idiotic as saying the masterpieces like Dora Maar au Chat, Mona Lisa or The Last Supper would lose their importance when compared against computerized cameras that could give identical pictures in few seconds. Such comparisons would be irrelevant because it shows our lack of understanding of assortments and different genre.

Tamara (2011) said that the new T20 format has surfaced as a mainstream version and is offering stiff competition to its two predecessors - Test cricket and the 50-over one-day internationals (ODIs). The article stressed that two important factors decide whether one format is better than another. First is whether the game is structured in a way which would allow the players and teams to demonstrate their true quality of the game so that the best player or team eventually come out of the field as victors. Second important factor is that whether the format of the game makes it more economic for the fans in terms of how much time they could spend while watching the game. And T20 format may be in such a sense is a logical extension of the one-day format as fans only need to spend an evening, perhaps the time he or she would be spending while watching television.

Subhani, Hasan, Osman, , Hussain, Ali, Farid, Faheem (2011), analyzing fifty years data of ODIs and Tests, found that teams have slightly more chance of winning when they play in their backyard as compared when they play at their opponents' home-ground or at a neutral ground.

Pobjie (2012) says most cricket commentators are of the view is that ODIs is on its way out of the contest because of a boring format marred by lengthy mid-innings. Meanwhile, the shortest format – the T20 is the future of the game as it brings with it quick fun for the fans and big bucks for players. However, 50-over cricket has some features which exalts it above T20. Having extra time in the 50-over format, a batsman could rescue his team facing a collapse by getting his eye in and playing the ball around for sometime accustom and acquaint himself with the conditions before eventually saving the day for his team. But in T20 all a batsman could do during a collapse is to keep the bat swinging.

Varma (2012) said that the middle overs of ODI matches are completely redundant and spectators are not interested to watch it. No one would be interested to see batsmen accumulating runs or the bowling side striving to restrict the batting side during the middle overs of an ODI match. Especially when unpredictable and more thrilling option – the T20 cricket format exists.

Moreover, a limited over match could not show the skills, which have much more importance in Test cricket. This has always been the setback of 50-over cricket but since it has always been set against test cricket, it ran away with this blemish. But now with the emergence of T20 format, the ODI cricket has little chance to maintain its relevance.

### **3. Hypotheses**

H1: T20 format will leave behind ODIs in future.

H2: T20 format will leave behind Tests in future.

## 4. Research Methods

### 4.1 Description of data, sampling and econometrical tool

The aim of the study is to forecast the future positions of different formats of the game of cricket i.e. Tests, ODIs and T20s, and which format would take the lead. Cricket fans were the respondents of this study and were asked to complete the questionnaire (primary data). This activity of primary data collection was done within the space of Karachi. Un-restricted non-probability sampling was used to collect relevant data. A total of 280 respondents were interviewed to get the required data.

## 5. Findings & Results

The primary focus of this paper was to find out what people feels about the three different formats of cricket – Test, ODI and T20 and which one they prefer. When asked, which format attracts them the most, majority of the respondent favored T20 cricket. Moreover, the respondents feel that companies are also more interested in sponsoring T20 format of cricket.

Findings of this paper further revealed that T20 cricket would leave behind Test cricket in five years from now but the ODIs would still be there giving stiff resistance to it as perceived by the audience (respondents). When investigating which cricket format attracts audience the most? Findings confirmed as shown in table 1, the T20 fans approximated to 65.4% as compared to 18.6% for ODI, 6.4% for Tests and 9.6% of the respondents didn't like any format.

**Table 1:**  
**Which cricket format attracts you the most?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Test	18	6.4	6.4	6.4
ODI	52	18.6	18.6	25.0
T20	183	65.4	65.4	90.4
None	27	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	280	100.0	100.0	

While checking the perceptions of respondents on which format do they think general public are attracted to?, a larger majority i.e. 77.5% felt that general public is attracted towards T20 cricket while 16.4% felt that ODI is more popular among the public and only 1.1% felt that Tests is more popular.

**Table 2:**  
**Which format do you think general public are attracted to?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Test	3	1.1	1.1	1.1
ODI	46	16.4	16.4	17.5
T20	217	77.5	77.5	95.0
None	14	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	280	100.0	100.0	

Moreover, Most of the respondents (78%) feel that companies are more interested in sponsoring T20 cricket as compared to ODIs and Tests as shown in table 3. While, only 6% feels that ODIs are a priority and negligible 1.1% respondents feel that companies favor Tests in sponsoring cricket events.

**Table 3:****Companies nowadays are interested in sponsoring**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Test	3	1.1	1.1	1.1
	ODI	17	6.1	6.1	7.1
	T20	218	77.9	77.9	85.0
	Don't know	42	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

The table 4 reveals that after five years from now the T20 will be clearly aheading of both of formats of game i.e. ODIs and Test matches as confirmed by the findings of this paper.

**Table 4:****Where do you see T20 cricket five years from now?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ahead of both test and ODIs	157	56.1	56.1	56.1
	ahead of test but not ODIs	44	15.7	15.7	71.8
	Ahead of ODIs but not test	37	13.2	13.2	85.0
	Left behind by test and ODIs	42	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

Moreover, majority (68.2%) of the respondents agreed to the fact that T20 will be the most important format of cricket if it is included in Olympics, which is considered to be the most important sporting spectacle on planet as shown in table 5.

**Table 5:****Do you agree T20 format if included in Olympics 2020, which is the most important sporting spectacle on planet, would completely dominate the game of cricket then onwards?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	91	32.5	32.5	32.5
	Agree	100	35.7	35.7	68.2
	Neutral	65	23.2	23.2	91.4
	Disagree	24	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

The findings presented above confirmed that we fail to reject both the hypotheses that are that T20 will leave behind Test cricket and T20 will leave behind ODIs in five years from now.

## 6. Discussions and Conclusion

The paper concludes that in times to come, T20 will be the most important format in the game of cricket because of the thrill and entertainment, which comes due to its comparative brevity. Because of brevity and possible inclination of other nations to forcefully feature their teams in T20 cricket, there is a chance for cricket to secure its berth in Olympics 2020, for the first time in the history of game.

T20 matches are generally played in the night – making it easy for the students and working people to come and watch the match, whenever they are played in their respective city. This feature of the

T20 cricket has made it viable to be played in hot places such as UAE or Sri Lanka. It has recently been seen that Australian players were reluctant to play one-day matches against Pakistan in UAE because of the immense heat during the daytime. So the present scenario of fast moving lives of people, T20 is the fabrication to facilitate such lifestyles.

If cricket becomes a part of Olympics, with its acceptable shorter T20 format, it will get popularity among those parts of the world where it is yet to make its presence felt and subsequently expanding the base of cricket.

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