
The Dynamics of Sports Leadership in Indian Cricket: Comparitive study of Sachin Tendulkar's *Playing It My Way* and Sourav Ganguly's *A Century Is Not Enough*

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Abstract

Cricket in India is more than just a sport; it's the heart of the country that brings together more than a billion people in excitement, joy, and sadness. In this emotionally charged theater, the roles of captain and leader go beyond the cricket field to represent hope, strength, and national pride. Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly are two of India's most well-known cricket players. People's ideas about what it means to lead a team in front of a cricket-crazy country changed when they were captains. This paper goes into a lot of detail about these two giants, explaining how their very different ways of leading changed the culture of their teams, their performance, and the larger conversation about sports leadership in India.

This study asks four important research questions, one of which is how well did their leadership styles work compared to each other? What mental problems did they have to deal with? How did they change how teams work together and the next generation? How did the media and public attention affect their legacies? The study uses a qualitative, thematic approach to find subtle insights by looking at a lot of primary testimonies, critical literature, and detailed match data. The results are surprising: Tendulkar's leadership came from his own mastery and quiet guidance, while Ganguly's reign was a revolution marked by bold aggression, giving young talent more power, and a cultural shift that changed how the world saw Indian cricket. This study shows how difficult and important sports leadership is in India, and it will have an effect on future research and practice.

Keywords: Cricket Leadership in India, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Sports Psychology, Team Dynamics

Introduction

Cricket is more than just a game in India; it is a part of the country's culture and way of life. Being the captain of the Indian cricket team is probably one of the most watched and emotionally charged jobs in the world. People look at every choice, blow every failure out of proportion, and celebrate every victory like it's a national holiday. A billion fans put their hopes, dreams, and feelings into their favorite team's success, turning the cricket field into a stage for national theater and psychological warfare.

In this pressure cooker of expectations, Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly became two of the most important and game-changing leaders in the history of Indian cricket. People called Tendulkar the "God of Cricket," and he made being captain seem impossible. His bat broke records that no one else seemed able to break. Tendulkar was a great player, but as captain he had a hard time getting the team to work together for a common goal. This was a strange mix of being a great person and not being able to get the team to work together. He was humble, led by example, and had a strong sense of duty, but he often failed because he had to deal with a lot of expectations and the difficulties of managing a team.

Sourav Ganguly, on the other hand, was in charge during one of Indian cricket's worst times, when there was a scandal, self-doubt, and a crisis of identity. Ganguly led a revival with a fearless swagger and unbreakable faith in his team. He proved that Indians aren't weak when they go abroad, gave players a fighting spirit, and gave a new generation of players the confidence to take on the best in the world on their own turf. His leadership was more than just a plan; it changed how people thought about and believed in Indian cricket, both on and off the field.

This study compares the very different legacies of Tendulkar and Ganguly. It goes deep into their time as captains to teach us how to lead when things are really hard, how team dynamics change over time, and how to build sports legacies in a country where cricket is both a religion and a show. This study looks at their journeys to get a better idea of sports leadership in India as a whole, with lessons that go far beyond the boundary ropes.

Research Questions

What were the differences between Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly's styles of leadership, and how did these differences affect the team's culture and performance?

What kinds of mental and organizational problems did each leader have to deal with, and how did these problems affect how well they led their teams?

How did Tendulkar and Ganguly change the way that future Indian cricket leaders were trained and the overall mood of the team?

How did the public's expectations and the media's attention affect their time as leaders and the legacies they left behind?

Literature Review

In India, cricket leadership is more than just an academic interest; it's a huge theater where the captain's role is made into a myth, connected to the very heart of national pride and identity. Bose says that the Indian captaincy is "elevated above the game itself," which makes the leader a living symbol of hope and aspiration for millions (Bose 2006). Majumdar (2018) carefully records that the crucible of Indian cricket is made even more intense by a volatile mix of constant media attention, political maneuvering, and a fan base whose passion is almost religious. In this kind of situation, the captain is more than just a planner; he or she is also a cultural icon who is expected to stand up to storms of expectation and come out as a symbol of strength. Sen's psychological study shows that Indian captains need to have mental strength and advanced communication skills to deal with a world full of emotional turmoil and high expectations (Sen 2020). The literature agrees that Indian cricket captains should be great at tactics, set a good example, and represent their culture. They have to deal with a huge number of problems on and off the field that would scare even the bravest leaders.

Sachin Tendulkar: The Genius

Many people say that Sachin Tendulkar's time as captain was like a Shakespearean tragedy because he was a genius who had to deal with the impossible weight of expectations. Menon and other critics say that "technical brilliance does not necessarily translate into effective leadership," which shows how hard Tendulkar had to work to turn his personal success into team success (Menon 2017). Ganguly and Majumdar back this up by saying that Tendulkar's habit of thinking too much about himself and always looking for ways to improve hurt the team's ability to work together and come up with new ideas (Ganguly & Majumdar 2020). The literature paints a clear picture of a leader who was so full of himself that he couldn't get his teammates to feel the same way. He was a lone genius in a team sport, and even

though he had the hopes of a whole country on his shoulders, he couldn't make the whole team win.

Sourav Ganguly: The Man Who Made Things Happen

Sourav Ganguly's time as captain was a huge change in the way people thought about sports in India. It was a turning point in Indian cricket. Gupta and Sharma say that Ganguly is the one who made a new, aggressive Indian identity. They say he gave the team a sense of confidence, swagger, and a fighting spirit that had been missing for a long time (Gupta & Sharma 2019). Sundaresan says that Ganguly's time was a "turning point," a rebirth that set the stage for India's future dominance on the world stage (Sundaresan 2021). Mitra's comparison shows how much better Ganguly's aggressive, team-first style was than Tendulkar's more self-centered, individualistic style (Mitra 2019). According to the literature, Ganguly was a transformational leader and a disruptor who broke down old ways of thinking and gave a new generation the power to dream and win on their own terms.

Stress, leadership, and team dynamics are all parts of theoretical frameworks.

Kumar and Iyer look at the mental side of cricket leadership with the same level of detail as a surgeon. They say that to be a good sports leader, you need more than just tactical skill. You also need to have a good personality, be able to make decisions under pressure, and be able to build a team (Kumar & Iyer 2020). Madan Lal's comments help us understand more about the different paths that Tendulkar and Ganguly have taken. Tendulkar was a great reader of the game, but he was also very self-centered. Ganguly, on the other hand, led with authority and tactical clarity, bringing the team together as a single unit. We still don't know a lot about how Indian cricket captains grow mentally, how they handle problems, and the long-term effects of being a captain. The goal of this study is to shed light on these dark areas by making a bold and focused comparison that promises to help us better understand leadership in the most intense spotlight in world sport.

A few important works that make up the intellectual framework for this research help us understand the academic landscape around Indian cricket leadership. Bose's *A Maidan View* is a groundbreaking book that puts Indian cricket leadership at the center of national consciousness by giving a broad cultural analysis. The captain's role becomes almost like a myth, and he or she becomes a vessel for the hopes and fears of a billion people. Majumdar's *Elephant in the Stadium* goes even deeper, showing how complicated the social and political web is around Indian cricket. It

shows how the constant pressure of being in the public eye, political interference, and the passion of fans who can turn praise into criticism in a second can affect the players.

There is also a lot of variety in the biographical genre. Menon's biography of Sachin Tendulkar looks closely at the paradox of a genius whose technical skills didn't always lead to success for the whole team. On the other hand, Gupta and Sharma's work on Sourav Ganguly shows a leader whose courage and vision changed the way Indian cricket was played. These texts are more than just records; they are in-depth studies that show how these famous captains thought and felt. Primary sources, like Tendulkar's own autobiography *Playing It My Way*, give us a rare and valuable look into the mind of a cricket god. They show us the mental stress, times of doubt, and bursts of inspiration that made him a great leader. Madan Lal's sharp commentary and interviews also give us an outside view. He breaks down Tendulkar and Ganguly's strengths and weaknesses with the honesty of someone who knows them well and the objectivity of someone who has seen it all before. These works together make up a strong intellectual toolkit that lets you look at leadership in Indian cricket from many angles, themes, and comparisons.

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative, comparative case study method to show all the different levels of complexity and nuance that come with being a leader in Indian cricket. The study goes deeper than just looking at the surface by using a lot of primary and secondary sources to look at the psychological, cultural, and tactical sides of Tendulkar and Ganguly's captaincies. Thematic analysis is the main tool for analysis. It finds and codes patterns, differences, and synergies in leadership style, psychological problems, and building a legacy in a systematic way. This method works best in Indian cricket, where the stakes are high and emotions are high. In this sport, being a leader means more than just coming up with a plan for the field. It also means managing stories and expectations.

Autobiographies, like Tendulkar's *Playing It My Way*, interviews, first-person accounts, and detailed match data from official cricket archives are all primary sources. These sources let us see directly what the captains went through and how they made choices. Secondary sources: A strong collection of scholarly articles, biographies, and critical essays (Bose; Majumdar; Menon; Gupta & Sharma; Kumar & Iyer) gives analytical depth and theoretical grounding by putting the primary data in the context of larger academic debates. We look at modern news reports and commentary in a systematic way to see how people's and the media's views are

changing. This lets us see the outside pressures the captains are dealing with right now.

Results and Discussion

1. Tendulkar and Ganguly lead in different ways.

Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly have very different ideas about what it means to be a leader. Tendulkar was a great captain because he was humble and always tried to do his best. He was a calm leader who motivated his teammates through strict rules and a strong commitment to the team's goals. When things got tough, his calm leadership stressed sticking together and not giving up. But this calm way of doing things often made him less assertive on the field, which made it hard for him to get the team to work together to be aggressive or come up with new plans (Tendulkar 74). The numbers tell a sad story: Tendulkar only won 16% of the Test matches he played as captain (1996–1997 and 1999–2000). This shows how hard it was for him to turn his individual greatness into wins for the team.

Ganguly, on the other hand, was a storm—a strong, uncompromising force that changed Indian cricket forever. He learned how to lead during a crisis, and after the match-fixing scandal, he gave Indian teams a fighting spirit and a culture of aggression that they had been missing for a long time, especially when they were playing abroad. Ganguly's approach was revolutionary: he empowered younger players, made sure that each player was in the right position to use their strengths, and wasn't afraid to stand up to authority, even Greg Chappell. His legacy lives on in the record books: he won 42.85% of his Tests and was the architect who built the strong core of Indian cricket's golden generation.

2. Issues with the mind and the organization

Both leaders had to deal with a lot of mental stress, but they handled it in very different ways. Tendulkar, who was the personification of national hope, handled the crushing weight of expectation with stoic grace. But he fought anxiety, sleepless nights, and the constant pressure of being watched by the public. These problems got worse during the chaotic time of match-fixing, which hurt the team's morale and trust (Tendulkar 112). He did a great job of getting ready for the storm mentally and accepting it, but that wasn't enough to keep him safe.

Ganguly, on the other hand, was a gladiator in the court of public opinion. He had a "bite the bullet" attitude that helped him not only survive but also do well in the face of public fights, controversy, and being fired without warning. He took back control of his career with defiant strength, leading the team through one of its hardest times and becoming a symbol of unbreakable spirit and clear organization. Both captains had to deal with dangerous political interference and selection issues, but Ganguly stood out as a true agent of change because he faced these problems head-on.

3. Impact on the dynamics of the team and future leaders

Tendulkar's influence went beyond what was expected of a leader. He was the best mentor ever. He taught a whole generation of cricketers who would go on to become legends how to stay focused, be disciplined, and always want to get better. His values of humility and always trying to be the best set a high standard for future leaders like MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli. They changed how Indian cricket leaders think and act.

But Ganguly was the one who made a big difference in how the team worked together. He made sure that India would stay on top in the new millennium by giving young players power, encouraging unity, and promoting a culture of aggression. Ganguly's leadership was a call to a new generation to play hard, take on the best in the world, and do it as a strong, unbreakable group. His legacy is more than just his own success; it's a new way of doing things that still echoes through Indian cricket's biggest wins.

4. What the public wants and what the media looks at

The court of public and media opinion was the harshest of all. People could easily criticize Tendulkar because he was quiet and didn't do a good job as captain. He quit because the media wouldn't leave him alone. On the other hand, Ganguly was a media master tactician. He used attention to show that he was sure of himself, get people to support him, and turn problems into chances. People remember Tendulkar as the tragic genius and Ganguly as the fearless transformer because of the different stories the media told about them.

Conclusion

The big differences between Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly's time as captain show how hard it is to be a sports leader in India. Tendulkar's story is a sad reminder that even the best individual talent can be held back by an organization that doesn't have strong leadership and support. On the other hand, Ganguly's time shows how strong, inclusive, and visionary leadership can be when the country has high hopes

for it. Both men had to deal with big psychological and organizational problems, but the way they did it changed Indian cricket and their own legacies. Their stories show how important it is to be strong, adaptable, and aware of other cultures. These are lessons that sports leaders will remember for a long time.

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Sachin Tendulkar. "Playing It My Way" is the title of my autobiography. It was published by