

Origin and Status of Traditional Games in India

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Abstract: Games are very popular throughout the world and everyone i.e. right from the children to adults prefers to participate in them. Various traditional games are part and parcel of Indian tradition. When we discuss about India, it has always exhibited its rich culture and tradition. Whereas, games have been an important part of Indian culture endlessly right from their origin. India is considered as a place of origin for a number of traditional games which are well-known throughout the world in present time. A number of leading traditional games which had Indian origin are Teerandaji, kabbadi, kho-kho, Polo, shatranj, and Martial Art etc. All these games require technical and tactical skills along-with other physiological components like speed, strength, stamina, agility and coordinative abilities. Apart from this our traditional games require very little equipment and they are less expensive in comparison to the modern games, and as a result traditional games of Indian origin became more popular amongst the masses. Yet much needs to be done at the govt. level so that they can be well promoted and Indians can retain their glorious heritage.

Keywords: Origin, Status, Traditional, Games.

Introduction

The word "GAME" is universal and does not have any cultural or linguistic boundaries. Games appear to be the common property of people who know them either professionally or as an amateur. Many games, which we think, are just pastimes are, in fact, relics of religious rituals, which often date back to the birth of mankind. Games echo the reflections of the traditions and ethos of a particular country or region. The pleasure of voluntary action is the soul of games. Traditional Games act as learning aids. They teach us many things while playing like to learn to win and lose, develop sensory skills, count, add, improve motor skills, identify colour, improve hand-eye co-ordination and finally to have fun. The values that we achieve by playing these games are more when compared to the games that we play nowadays. Some of the values that we gain are that they are environment friendly, we get a chance to learn about our culture and history, and an important thing is, they are suitable for all ages, so they increase the interaction between generations. Many modern games played around the world have their origin in these traditional games. This is the matter of pride to our nation's culture. Some of the prominent traditional games which originated in our country and became popular all over the world are as follows.

Atya-patya

Atya patya is a traditional ancient game of India. It is very common game chiefly in the countryside areas. The game has been played since time immemorial; it was played with different names and improvised with convenient rules according to situation. This game was known by different names such as Sur-pati, Lon-pati, Darya-banth, saragari, saramani, tilli, uppinat, uppupatti, choupal pati, panchwati, chikka etc. The game is also referred as a game of tricks. Nine trenches constitute the playing area of Atya patya which emerges from either side of a central trench. Players of one team progress across the trenches while the other team tries to block it for which points are awarded. In Tamil Nadu this game is mentioned in old Tamil Literature by the name of klithatu etc. Atya patya is a traditional Indian game played nine to a side, between two sides. Children love to play it in almost all parts of India in present time.

Ball Badminton

Ball badminton is an indigenous game of India. It is a racquet game played with a wooden ball upon a court of unchanging size. Ball badminton is a fast-paced game; it demands skill, quick reflexes, good judgment, agility, and the ability to control the ball with one's wrist. Previously, ball badminton was an eye-catching game for countryside boys since it required a minimum gear. The game drew a huge number of students from South India, resulting in

the formation of the Ball Badminton Federation of India in 1954. This game was played as early as 1856 by the royal family in Thanjavur, capital of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu. Now this game is enjoyed by all age groups.

Kabaddi

It is one of the most popular sports in India played by the people in villages as well as in small towns. Kabaddi is an Indian game which requires both power and skill for its play. The origin of Kabaddi can be pin down to pre-historic times when man cultured how to shield in groups against animals or attack feeble animals independently or in groups for survival and food. "Mahabharata". has made an analogy of the game to a tight situation faced by Abhimaneu, the heir of ' the Pandava kings when he is surrounded on all sides by the enemy. History also reveals that princes of yore played Kabaddi to display their strength and win their brides Basically Kabaddi is more popular in various Asian Countries, though some other countries are also taking keen interest.

Kalaripayattu (Martial Arts)

Martial art is a part of India's ancient culture. Kalaripayattu is the one of the oldest form of Indian martial art. This famous art is from Kerala. Indian martial art is a gift to the modern world and mother of all other Asian martial arts. Ancient India claims to have been the origin of Judo and Karate. karate, Kung-fu Judo etc are all modern variations of Kalaripayattu.

Kho-Kho

Kho-Kho is one of the most popular traditional sports in India. Many historians are of the view that the game of Kho-Kho is a modified version of 'Run and Chase'. In ancient era, a version of the Kho-Kho game was played on raths or chariots in Maharashtra and was known as RATHERA. One of the main points of a successful animal life is "Active Chase" which is a fundamental principle of the Indian game called Kho- Kho, one and the same with the phrase "Game of Chase". It will not be a fault to say that Kho- Kho was a well-known sport in the ancient times even at an earlier time to the oldest mythological writings of classic Mahabharata. With its origins in Maharashtra Kho- Kho is played and enjoyed by people of all ages throughout India.

Mallakhamba

The origin of traditional game of mallakhamba can be pin down to earlier part of the 12th century. A reference of wrestlers exercising on wooden poles is found in the Manasollasa Sanskrit text, written by Someshvara Chalukya in 1135 A.D. The art lay dormant for many centuries, till it was revived by Balambhatta Dada Deodhar, the sports and fitness instructor to Peshwa Bajirao II, who reigned during the first half of the 19th century. Mallakhamba is an ancient traditional Indian game. 'Malla' means gymnast, and 'khamb' means pole. Thus, the name 'Mallakhamba' stands for 'a gymnast's pole'. Mallakhamba was used by wrestlers for practicing their skills in the game of Kushti. But now days the trend has changed and it has got a special identity.

Polo

Manipur is said to be the place of origin of Polo, which was destined to become the favorite sport of the Englishmen in India. The word polo comes from the Tibetan word 'Pulu' which means ball. Some records indicate that it was played by the ancient Indians long ago. Probably the game developed from the Central Asian nomads, who spent their lives on horseback. In India it was developed into a game to promote equestrian military skills and was considered the most important test of princes and warriors. In the 15th century, Babur made the sport popular when he founded the Mughal Empire. It was known as "Chaughan" meaning mallet. First Mughal emperor Zahir ud-din Babur established chaughan at the Mughal court. Mughal Emperor Jalal ud-din Akbar, an outstanding player himself, introduced a set of rules in 1560s & invented an illuminated ball for playing at night as well. He was also known to have gold & silver knobs fixed at the end of his mallet. Indian polo received boost after the Indian army officially adopted polo as a sport granting access to new stables of horses. Lot of tournaments are being hosted in post independence era in polo.

Shatranj (Chess)

The game of Chess originated in India and in the beginning called as Ashtapada (sixty-four squares). Later this game came to be known as chaturang. which is well recognized as the earliest form of Chess. Chess is perhaps India's oldest and most loved board indoor game. Chess has been played in India through centuries. It is revered as an indication of a man's intelligence and strategic capabilities. A chess set can be found in almost every Indian home. Many of India's folktales are beleaguered with stories of kings and emperors and their chess games. Chess has also been mentioned in the great Indian epic, Mahabharat. In some form or the other, the game continued till it evolved into Chess. H. J. R. Murry, in his work titled A History of Chess, has concluded that chess is a descendant of an Indian game played in the 7th century AD. Chess is excellent for overall mental development. Chess has a very positive effect on children as well as adults.

Teerandaji (Teerkamaan)

The excavations at Harappa and Mohanjo - Daro revealed the use of bow and arrow as a classical Indian weapon during the warfare, right from the Vedic period, until the advent of Islam and even it has a mention in some Rig-Veda hymns. Detailed accounts of training methodologies in early India concern archery, considered to be an essential martial skill in early India. Legendary figures like Doran are depicted as masters in the art of archery. Arjuna, Eklavya, Karna, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughan the great warrior are also associated with archery. Dhanurvedya or archery is an indigenous game of Meghalaya. As such, it is an inherent part of the culture of Meghalaya and the festivals of the state are incomplete without Archery. Archery games were immensely popular all over India. Specially among the students in the renowned universities of Nalanda and Taxila in ancient India. Now it is one of the most prominent game in all continents of the world.

Boat Race

The snake boat race, well-known as Vallamkali in Kerala is an out of the ordinary traditional game apprehended on the event of Onam. It is a eminent water sport and one of the major magnetism held in Kerala. Boat Race is truly a delight to the eyes of the tourists, who come from far off places to witness it. The Vallamkali was first invented in Assyria, on a New Year day in BC.300. The history also reveals that, the Vallamkali (Boat Race) also took place in some other places like The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Combodia, Bangkok, Burma, Britain etc. In the 14th century, there was a war crop up between Kayamkulam and Chembakasseri. In the course of that time the king Chembakasseri Devanarayana had strong-willed to build a right and proper war boat and he gave the accountability to the famous "Thachan" (Carpenter) in that period. Now the boat game has proceeded in new version as sail boating, canoe racing etc.

Conclusion

The history of traditional games in India is very ancient and with its origin in early Vedic era (2000-1000 B.C.) it had passed from different periods of political history like epic age (1000-600 B.C.), historical age (600 B.C.) Nalandine period (300 A.D), Rajput period (300-1200 A.D), Muslim period (1200-1750 A.D), British period (upto 1947) and leading the way for the post independence era. It is more likely that many of today's Olympic disciplines are advanced versions of games of strength and speed that flourished in ancient India. Chess, wrestling, polo, archery and hockey (possibly a fall-out from polo) are some of the games believed to have originated in India. But unfortunately, in spite of being the birth place of several leading traditional games, the condition is far from being satisfactory in India and below the desired level as compared to the other modern games. This is mainly due the lack of encouragement and promotion on the part of the government. A mix of good past practices and useful present-day innovations can ensure sustainable development in the actual sense. These age-old traditional games are one of the good things our rich culture has blessed us with and we must nurture them instead of ignoring them.

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