

Indigenous Indian Games: Some Became International and Some Are Local

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Abstract

Indigenous games of an area are the representation of ancestral legacy of that region. Games have been a vital component of culture since ancient times. Indigenous games of a place are carried over from generations to generations. But due to the impact of globalisation, modernization and technological interventions, tech-games and foreign games have been paving their way in contemporary households. Consequently, the indigenous games are being forgotten. The aim of this paper is to present the characteristics of local indigenous Indian games.

Key words: Indigenous games, Tech-games, India

Introduction

Sports and games have remained inseparable parts of human culture (Deshpande, 2014). India being a great land and has been cradle to so many games. Some games are not just limited to the grounds of India but have occupied their space in international grounds. Though, few games are hard to find even in the fields of India as well. They can hardly be spotted in the very interior of villages. This contemporary era of gadgets and technology has played a significant role in changing the dynamics of games as children don't need to go out of their homes to play all the games. They can play a number of games by just lying in beds and couches like Chess, Snooker, Ludo, Free Fire, Pubg and many other games on their PCs, smartphones and play stations. Many of the tech-games to some extent follow the

principles of the indigenous games somewhere. Still, they are nowhere close to the indigenous games and are a root cause of replacing their charm and aura.

Indian Indigenous Games

Indigenous games and health development are correlated, and they help children in becoming active and healthy. They are refreshing and give relaxation from day-to-day activities. They help in developing cooperation, team spirit, tolerance, and virtues like patience. If the games native to a place are passed on from one generation alike the traditional and cultural values that would have kept our sports culture more lively which might not be possible if this generation continue to be hooked on to their gadgets. A lot of games that have gone international owe their origin to India. For example, the brain game,

'Chess,' the royal game, 'Polo,' Roll Ball, Kabaddi, Badminton, and many other games have India as their cradle land. Everything goes under changes as the time passes by so has these games also undergone some changes since their origin.

Roll Ball

Roll Ball is a game that originated around a few years ago in Pune city of Maharashtra. It was developed by Raju Dabhade in 2005. It is a unique game that is played on skates with a basketball or just say it is a basketball on skates. It is played between two teams on roller skates with a ball like basketball, handball or throw ball. Each team consists of twelve players, six on the field and six in reserve. The main objective of the game is to score maximum goals within a stipulated time. This game has spread so rapidly breaking the boundaries of the state Maharashtra and even the country. It has spread to various parts of the world. In this short time span of 16 years, many world cups of the game have been organized.

Thang Ta

Thang Ta is a popular form of martial arts in Manipur. It is an ancient Manipuri Martial Art which is known as Huyen Lallong (Arambam & Nongmaithem, n.d.). This art form originated very long ago due to the war environment of Manipur. The constant struggles of life and death between different tribes and states resulted in devising ways and means of safeguarding the lives of the people. Thang Ta is an art of sword and spear (Arambam & Nongmaithem, n.d.). Thang means sword and Ta means spear. This art form retains the traditional guru-shishya parampara. Though it was banned during the colonial period but was revived

after independence with a few new changes and techniques.

Sqay

Sqay is another form of martial arts of sword-fighting. This originated in the region of Kashmir during ancient times. It is governed by the Sqay Federation of India. Armed sqay makes use of a curved single edged sword paired with a shield, or one sword in each hand. Unarmed techniques incorporate kicks, punches, locks, and chops. Sqay have different techniques: single sword, double sword, free hand techniques and lessons of both free hand and sword. The origin and history of this game is confined to mythology.

The tournaments of Sqay are held all over the country now but are known to a few people. Sqay has established its roots outside India as well but only in a few countries where international tournaments are also observed.

Mallakhamb

Mallakhamb is another traditional game that also originated in Indian subcontinent. It is a game where yogic postures and wrestling grips are performed on a pole by the player. The pole is made up of Sheesham wood and is polished by castor oil. The earliest mention of Mallakhamb is found in the 1135 AD Sanskrit classical text Manasollasa that is written by Someshwar III. Since then, the documented sources about Mallakhamb are found from various time periods in history which shows its practice was common at that time. But it was developed as a competitive sport in the year 1981 when the first national championship took place. This game has three variants: Pole Mallakhamb, Hanging Mallakhamb and Rope

Mallakhamb. Now, it is played as a national sport.

Gatka

It is a form of martial arts that is associated with Sikhs. It owes its origin to the state of Punjab in the 15th century. It was revived during the late 20th century. The International Gatka Federation that was founded in 1982 and formalized in 1987 played an important role in the revival because it was banned after the Anglo-Sikh wars in India. The game revived with new style and techniques to the wooden training-stick after its primary weapon. Now, it is a popular sport of sword dance. It is performed during the Sikh festivals. It is considered as a spiritual and physical practice. This is just limited to Sikh community only.

Kalaripayattu

Kalaripayattu is also a martial arts form that originated in the modern day of Kerala dating to the 3rd century BCE. It is considered to be the oldest martial art in existence. It was designed for the battlefield. The weapon and combative techniques practiced in this art form are unique. Kalaripayattu is also called 'The Mother of All the Martial Arts'. This is based on Hindu and Ayurveda concepts of medicine. Various kinds of weapons are used while performing it. This is very famous across the world. People from all over the globe come to learn this form of martial art. National Kalaripayattu Championships are held annually across the country.

Lagori

Lagori is one of the oldest and most famous games of India. It is also known as the game of seven stones. The game involves two

teams that have seven flat stones and a ball. In this game one team has to knock down the stones and restore that pile again before getting hit from the ball by the opponent team. This small game that is just confined to the streets of India has its mention in the Bhagavata Purana that was written around 5000 years ago. The text mentions Lord Krishna playing this game with his friends.

Gilli Danda

Gilli Danda is a game that is famous across South Asia. It has its origin in the Indian subcontinent. This game is played with two sticks, danda, a large stick and gilli, a small stick. It is an amateur youth sport. This game was very famous around two decades ago but now it is losing its popularity amongst the youth due to technology and changing lifestyle.

Carrom

Carrom is a tabletop board game of Indian origin. It is very commonly practiced among children, families, and friends and at cafes. It is a very popular game in South Asia and the Middle East. Many cafes organize regular tournaments of Carrom in South Asia. It became popular after WW1. International championships are also held where the players from different countries participate in it.

Badminton

The world famous game of Badminton was originally called 'Poona' because it was developed in the city of Pune in Maharashtra (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica , 2021). It was played there for the first time by British army officers in the 1860s. The game has its roots in ancient Greece, China, and India (Editors of

Encyclopedia Britannica , 2021). This game developed in the late 19th century and has become world famous. It has found its way till the Olympics. Everyone is well known about how the game is played and at what levels.

Kabaddi

It is believed that the world famous game of Kabaddi originated in Vedic era though some say that it originated in Sistan of modern day Iran. Mahabharat also mentions Arjun playing Kabaddi once. Accounts of Gautama Buddha playing this game have also been found. The game got popularized after the competitions of the 1920s. This game is very popular among the youths. It is well known all over the world now and has made its ways in various countries across the world.

Polo

Polo has its roots of origin in the modern-day state of Manipur (Engineer, 2018). It originated from a game called 'Sagol Kangjei (Engineer, 2018).' It became popular in the Mughal Era. It was seen and considered as a royal game during that time. It is played by sitting on a horse and holding a long polo stick with which the ball is to be hit by the player mounting the horses. Polo spread rapidly after a captain in the 10th Hussars stationed in India saw a match early in 1866 and immediately formed a team from among his fellow officers (Latham, 2021). The game has held international recognition for a very long time but is not common among masses due the lack of resources and not everyone can take care of horses.

Chess

When one talks about brain and wits, Chess is certainly discussed and talked about. It is a game of foresightedness, circumspection, and caution (Soltis, 2021). Its origin is traced back to ancient India (Soltis, 2021). Traces of chess have been regularly found in Harappa Valley civilization (Engineer, 2018). The modern day chess originated from Chaturang that has four members of the army that are elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers according to the Amarakosha, Amarakosha is an ancient Indian Dictionary. The mention of chess is also seen in the text Mahabharata.

Conclusion

Indigenous games are part of the symbolic patrimonial heritage of indigenous peoples (Ferreira, 2014). There are a lot of such games that are just limited to small cities or just local ethnic communities. Such games need to be popularized and spread in this generation of science and technology to preserve the beautiful cultural and traditional system of games. Indigenous games can be revived by adopting some changes within them or by providing various incentives to the players of those games. Indigenous games are a way to promote our culture and heritage. The mechanism that the natives are using to keep the indigenous games alive and revitalize them in this high-tech era should be supported at larger levels.

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