



## TRADITIONAL & RECREATIONAL GAMES IN INDIA

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### Abstract:

#### Introduction:

The Traditional Games are a part of intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies. Traditional games were not just games they were designed in such a way that can develop lot of skills like logical thinking, building strategy, concentration, basic mathematics, among and lot more. They teach us many things while playing like to learn to win and lose, develop sensory skill, count, add, improve motor skills, identify colour, hand-eye coordination and finally to have fun All naturally one play or watch a game to have fun. Indian State has its own unique local sports that are popular among the residents. Traditional games and sports reflect of different cultural expressions and create a bridge between cultures for a better mutual comprehension. Such sports festivals are held usually during the harvest season, like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, wrestling Marathon race, Bullock-Car race will provide an opportunity to rural area Sports. Concepts such as fitness, health, personal and social development and mental health are closely related to sport. A historical review demonstrates that civilized nations of the world always have paid attention to the importance and role of sport and used it for development of youth and preparing them to deal with personal and social problems. The people in this region have a low monthly income. Therefore, poor financial status significantly influences on lifestyles of residents of the region. So local and indigenous games and sports can be used with minimum facilities and costs to fill their leisure time. According to the above

studies and research, it can be concluded that sport activities is one of healthy and vigorous tools to fill leisure time. Sports has a Unique power to attract, mobilize and inspire by its very nature, sports is about participation and stands for human values such as respect for the opponent acceptance at binding rules, teamwork and fairness, it's also keys to healthy living rubbing off its positive effect on mental Health, stress level and moods.

#### 1. Kho-Kho:

Kho-Kho ranks as one of the most popular traditional sports in India. The origin of Kho-Kho is difficult to trace, but many historians believe, that it is a modified form of 'Run Chase', which in its simplest form involves chasing and touching a person. With its origins in Maharashtra, Kho-Kho in ancient times, was played on 'raths' or chariots, and was known as RATHERA. Like all Indian games, it is simple, inexpensive and enjoyable. It does, however, demand physical fitness, strength, speed and stamina, and a certain amount of ability. Dodging, feinting and bursts of controlled speed make this game quite thrilling. To catch by pursuit - to chase, rather than just run - is the capstone of Kho-Kho. The game develops qualities such as obedience, discipline, sportsmanship, and loyalty between team members. The rules of the game were framed in the beginning of the 20th century. At Gymkhana Poona, a Committee was formed in 1914, to frame its rules. The first ever rules on Kho-Kho were published from Gymkhana Baroda, in 1924. In 1959-60, the first national Kho-Kho championship was organised in Vijayawada

(Andhra Pradesh).The Government has initiated the following awards for the game: Arjuna Award, Eklavya Award for men, Rani Laxmi Bai award for women, Veer Abhimanyu award for boys under 18, and Janaki award for girls under 16.

## **2. Mallakhamb:**

Mallakhamb is an ancient traditional Indian sport. 'Malla' means gymnast, and 'khamb' means pole. Thus, the name 'Mallakhamb' stands for 'a gymnast's pole'. The origin of Mallakhamb can be traced to the 12th century, where it is mentioned in Manas-Olhas - a classic by Chalukya in 1135 A.D. For seven centuries, the art lay dormant, 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. The apparently simple 'khamb' does not reveal the complexities of the exercises, which require the performer to turn, twist, stretch and balance on the pole. It is this consummate grace, this agility, dexterity and suppleness of body, combined with quick reflexes, muscle coordination and sense of timing, that single out this game as special. Of the states in India, more than 14 participate in Mallakhamb competitions at the national level.

## **Revolving Bottle Mallakhamb**

This is a recent innovation, and consists of 32 glass bottles placed on a wooden platform, with the Mallakhamb balanced on top. The other forms of this sport include the Baseless Mallakhamb and Fixed Bottle Mallakhamb. Recently, a few more variations have been introduced, *viz.* Inclined and Suspended Mallakhamb. Mallakhamb exercises make the body light and strong. These exercises are most beneficial for the stomach, back, arms and thighs, and have been found useful to achieve efficiency in a number of other games and sports like gymnastics and wrestling. The Mallakhamb sport affects the spinal cord most, which develops energy and increases longevity, and is the only exercise in which all big and small organs of the body are active.

## **3. Kabaddi:**

Though kabaddi is primarily an Indian game, not much is known about the origin of this game. There is, however, concrete evidence, that the game is 4,000 year old. It is a team sport, which requires both skill and power, and combines the characteristics of wrestling and rugby. It was originally meant to develop self defense, in addition to responses to attack, and reflexes of counter attack by individuals, and by groups or teams. It is a rather simple and inexpensive game, and neither requires a massive playing area, nor any expensive equipment. This explains the popularity of the game in rural India. Kabaddi is played all over Asia with minor variations. Kabaddi is known by various names *viz.* Chedugudu or Hu-Tu-Tu in southern parts of India, Hadudu (Men) and Chu - Kit-Kit (women) in eastern India, and Kabaddi in northern India. The sport is also popular in Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Japan and Pakistan.

## **4. Boat Race:**

The grand festival of Onam, is celebrated with great zest, in the picturesque state of Kerala, in the Malayalam month of Chingam. The most exciting part of this festival is the snake boat race, held at various places in the state, on the palm - fringed waters. The boats used in this thrilling contest of *Vallamkali* (boat race), are kite - tailed, and rather swan - shaped. The most spectacular of the boat races, are those held at Aranmula, Champakulam and Kottayam. About a hundred oarsmen row the huge, yet graceful boats. Oars dig, and flash to the rousing rhythm of drums, and the crash of cymbals in each boat, while the songs sung by the participants are generally typical in character. Each boat hoists green and scarlet silk-umbrellas, and their number denotes the affluence of the family, to which the boat belongs. Gold coins and tassels are hung on the umbrellas to as adornments. These races are keenly contested, and reflect a high degree of sporting prowess and excellence.

## **5. Inbuan:**

A traditional game of the Indian state of Mizoram, Inbuan resembles combat-wrestling. The sport is played in a circle, 15

to 16 feet in diameter, on a carpet or grass. The winner is the one who succeeds in lifting his opponent off the ground, using strength, skill and rapid movement of the arms and legs. By using the legs, the aim is to loosen the grip of an opponent's legs or feet, but kicking is prohibited. The contest is conducted over three rounds, each of 30 to 60 second duration, or till one of the players is lifted off the ground. Stepping outside the ring and bending of knees is not permitted. The belt or catch-hold rope, around the waist, has to remain tight all through the game. Inbuan as a sport became known only, after the Mizos migrated from Burma to the Lushai hills. It is said, that it was invented in the village of Dungleland in 1750 A.D. It is a game of strength, which every newcomer to the village had to demonstrate, when matched against the strongest man in the village.

#### **6. Insuknawr ( Rod - pushing ):**

Insuknawr or rod - pushing is an indigenous game of the state of Mizoram, played only by men. Insuknawr has been declared a ' Mizo National Game ' by the Mizoram State Sports Council. It is a test of sheer strength and stamina. The game is played within a circle with a diameter of 16 to 18 ft, and the only instrument used is a rounded wooden rod or pole, 8 ft long and 3 to 4 inches in diameter. The aim of the game is to push the opponent out of the circle within three to five rounds.

#### **7. Asol Aap ( Canoe Race )**

Canoeing is a familiar activity with the Nicobarese tribal's as this was the only means of transport for their journeys from one island to another. In Asol Aap, the canoe's length is approximately 100' and the number of participants in each team is fixed according to the size of the canoe. As the race takes place on the sea , and depth of water and current vary from shore side to deep sea, only two teams participate at a time. At Car Nicobar, this competition is organised by the Nicobar Athletic Association. The number of participants is generally 40 to 90, as per the size of the canoe. The race is about 5 to 6 km, and is conducted in the dry season.

#### **Asol - Tale Aap ( Canoe Race on sand)**

In this rather peculiar canoe race, the craft is built from the stem of a coconut tree, and can be of any size for its one or two participants. But in a race, the number of participants must be similar for each canoe. 15 to 20 participants take part at a time, the land of Nicobar being sandy and even. All the participants sit in their canoes keeping one leg in the canoe, and the other on the ground. They drive their canoe on the sand with the force of their limbs. The one who completes the distance in the shortest span of time is the winner. This activity involves great strength of body, especially in the hands.

#### **8. Khong Kangjei ( Hockey on Foot ):**

This version of hockey is distinctively Manipuri in character, and as wrestling too forms part of the game, the name sometimes changes to Mukna - Kangjei or wrestling hockey. The origin of the game is traced back to the prehistoric Hayichak era, before Christ. According to the tale attached to the game's genesis, a young boy of the royal household was spotted playing with a curved club and a round object. He was immediately named ' Kangba ' and eventually, when he ascended the throne of Manipur, he became a staunch supporter of the game, not unlike hockey, which the local people termed ' Kangjei Shanaba '. Another version has it that King Kangba of a prehistoric era, began the games - Kangjei ( hockey on foot ) and Sagol Kangjei ( polo ).

#### **9. Mukna:**

Mukna is a sport, which is a combination of wrestling and judo, originating from, and popular in the state of Manipur. Historical records prove, that Mukna has been played since, the first half of the 15th century, but no exact record is available of the earlier meets. In Manipur, there is a belief that this type of wrestling goes as far back as the Hayachak era (Satya Yug), when Pakhangba, the son of the Atiya Guru Shidaba, caught his irate brother, Sanamahi who was the incarnation of a horse, causing chaos and confusion in the kingdom. Sanamahi was furious with his father, for naming Pakhangba as his successor. Pakhangba trapped his brother at the end of a long and bitter encounter,

when he used a deadly grip that rendered Sanamahi powerless. This paved way for the birth of Mukna. This sport really flourished during the reign of King Khagemba (1597-1672). The game is generally played on the last day of the festival of *Lai Haraoba* (worship of the sylvan diety), and is an intrinsic part of the ceremonial functions.

#### **10. Yubee - Lakpee (Snatching the coconut) :**

Yubee Lakpee is a popular outdoor game in Manipur, played only by men. It is akin to rugby, and requires a great deal of vigorous body play and stamina. *Yubee* in Manipuri means coconut, and *lakpee* means snatching. This is a seven - a - side game and is played on a field that is 45.72 by 18.29m in area. The game starts when a coconut, duly anointed, is thrown into play, from one end of the field. The coconut is greased, and each player tries to catch it. Each player exhibits his strength and agility, in both gathering the coconut and holding onto it. The game demands wrestling ability, speed, great reflexes and a sharp mind. Some scholars choose to view the game in a religious light, since it was played on the grounds of the Bijoy Govinda Temple on *pichakariday*, at the home of King Ananta Shayee, by persons acting as gods and demons. The game was celebrated annually on this day, re - enacting the scene from Hindu mythology involving the snatching of the pot of nectar, after the churning of the sea.

#### **11. Sagol Kangjei ( Polo ):**

Sagol Kangjei is the name of the game of polo played in Manipur. *Sago l* means pony / horse, kang means a ball or round object, and *jei* is a stick used for hitting. Polo has, for time immemorial, been a game patronized by the royalty and the upper crust of society, not only in India but abroad. However in the state of Manipur, it has always been a game for the common man. It is a seven - a - side game, the players mounted on ponies. According to a renowned Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Sharma, Manipuri polo goes back to the year 3100 B.C. Other Manipuri scholars trace the game chronologically to many centuries before Christ ( 2000 - 1500 B.C. ), while

some place it around 34 A.D. According to *Kangjeiron Purana*, which is really the history of hockey in the state, polo was first played in Manipur, and therefore, it got the name Sagol Kangjei - *sagol* ( horse ) and *kangjei* ( hockey). Manipuri polo symbolises the immense cultural heritage of the state, and great efforts have been put made to raise the standard of this popular game. The prominent patrons of the game were King Kyamba and King Khagemba ( 1597-1672 A.D.), and King Chandra Kirti ( 1850 - 1886 A.D.). The latter, especially, is to be credited with popularising the sport in other parts of the world.

#### **12. Gilli Danda:**

Gilli Danda is a popular village game played with two wooden sticks a Gilli and a Danda. The gilli is about two or three inches long and tapered at the ends. The danda, about 2feet long is used to strike the gilli. The gilli is placed across a small oval-shaped hole in the centre of a small circle about four feet in diameter, is drawn on the ground. Two teams or two individuals as opponents against each other, play this game. However, Gilli Danda can be played individually too, without teams. Gilli danda is a popular village game of Indian soil which requires remarkable hand and eye coordination.

#### **13. Kite Flying:**

Kite Flying is most popular Games in city & rural areas. Kite is also known as 'Patang' in India and the thread that is used is known as 'Manjha' a glass coated line and each flid remains in a perpetual attempt to cut out every other kite out of the sky. The kite flying festival is celebrated on the eve of 'Makar Sankrant' in Jaipur as well as Gujrat state of India. Bengal kite flying is popular during Viswakarma Pujas.

#### **14. Marble Games (Kancha):**

Kancha is played lby lusing marbles, Marble are glass balls which are very popular among children it popular in small Indian cities and villages among small boys only as a gully sport. It is rarely played by girls. The participant has to hit the marble kept in a circle. If he hits the target properly, he wins. The winner gets the Kancha of other participant boys.

**15. Kalarippayattu (Martial Arts):**

Martial art is a part of India,s ancient culture, Kalarippayattu is the one of the oldest form of Indian martial art. This famous art is from Kerla. Indian martial art is a gift to the modern world and mother of all other Asian martial arts.

**16. Cockfight:**

Cockfight is a popular recreational activity in rural areas. One circle is marked on the ground, diameter of the circle is depend on the number of players participated in this activity. The circle and take their position by folding one leg behind lhis hip joint with help of lhand and another hand flexed by keeping arm on lhis opposite shoulder. After completing the position they will ask to push each others with help of shoulder. Each player tried to best to drive away the other player from the circle. At last one player who stands correctly in the circle, he will declare as winner. These are the some traditional recreational games played off in different part India.

**Refereneces:**

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