

Connecting Children With Indian Culture Through Traditional Games Of India

Dr. Archana Shete

Director of Physical Education & Sports KES' Shroff College of Arts & Commerce,
Kandivali (West), Mumbai - 400067

ABSTRACT

In today's generation children are deeply involved in video games as house is full of electronic devices such as smartphone, computer, laptop and television. Lack of physical activity has given an opportunity in the rising health issues in children. Play is finest way for children to keep themselves physically active. Traditional games carry immense benefits for healthy development of children such as sharpened fine motor skills, improved control and balance; enhance hand-eye coordination, increased spatial awareness and greater social skills. Traditional games act as a learning aid for children for overall development. It stimulates their growth physically as well as intellectually. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the significance of traditional games. Through traditional games, they will able to connect with our heritage which will create a long lasting positive impact on them.

Keywords : Traditional game, culture, physical activity

Introduction:

Sports have been an intrinsic part of India's rich culture and tradition. Indian culture has never been complete without games since forever. Children have found it to be an exciting part for growing up. But lives of today's generation children are heavily influenced by virtual world and they are deeply involved in digital technologies as house is full of electronic devices like smartphones, television, computer, laptops and tablets which are easily accessible by children for entertainment options. It's great that children have fun with new digital world but they should also experience some enjoyment with their parents and friends by playing classical games that have entertained so many previous generations. Learning about our culture and tradition is

equally important for children. Traditional games expose children to lot of invaluable life lessons and also develop childhood memories which are essential for healthy and holistic development. Through traditional games, children will be able to connect with our heritage which will create a long lasting positive impact on them.

Traditional Games:

India has a very rich heritage of playing traditional games and passed on through generations. Traditional games were used as a learning aid and designed in a way to develop many skills among children. Playing traditional games benefits children to learn motor development skills, learn to find solutions to problems, build confidence and finally learn to win and lose and have fun. Most of traditional games are group games which allow children to engage in interaction with each other by talking, laughing and sharing experiences. It carries significant positive outcome of a child such as sharpened motor skills, improve control and balance, enhance hand-eye coordination, increase spatial awareness and greater social skills which are necessary for their mental and physical growth.

The main attraction of these games is that it requires very less equipments which are less expensive in comparison to the modern games nor it requires any specific uniform or shoes. Traditional Indian games were simple and made of natural materials.

Unfortunately, children of today's generation is so immersed in digital world that they have been completely forgotten playing the traditional games like gilli danda, lagori, pallanguzhi have been completely disappeared. There are many Indian traditional games, indoor and outdoor games that today's internet generation don't know.

Following are some traditional games along with their benefits to children:-

Indoor Traditional Games:

1. **Gutte:** This is a fun game which is played by both adults and kids. Five pieces of small stones are required for this simple game. The player spins a stone up in the air and gathers the remaining stones from the floor with one hand. After that, the player must throw two stones in the air and gather the remaining ones and so on. The player completing eight steps in the minimum attempts wins the game. There are no restrictions for number of players to play this game at a given time.

Benefits: It helps in improving hand eye coordination of children.

2. **Pallanguzhi:** It is traditional ancient game played in south India which was a famous indoor board game. This is a rectangular board game made of wood features 2 rows and 7 columns. There are 14 cups and 146 counters present on the board. Common counters include tamarind seeds, cowry shells or small stones. This game is played by two people at a time. It focuses on numerical ability, strategy and alertness.

Benefits: It helps to count and boost memory, observation skills and also improves hand eye coordination of children.

3. **Pachisi:** This game has been described as the “National game of India”. This game is also known by various names like ludo, chaupad and chausar. A symmetrical cross shaped board is used to play this game. Pachisi is a game of two or four players in opposing partnership of two attempt to move pieces around a cross shaped track. A player’s pieces of cowrie shells move around the board. The partnership which moves all its pieces to the finish first declared as a winner.

Benefits: This game teaches children to make meaningful choices, strategy building and boosts team spirit.

4. **Snake and Ladder (Mokshpat):** This game was called as Mokshpat which was a very popular game played in ancient India. This game was not only for entertainment purpose but also to teach morality. There are 1 to 100 numbers of squares which contains ladders and snakes in some squares which have ends to reach next square. Game begins with the first square with a aim to reach the last one, avoids the snakes and for shortcuts takes ladders. The player who first reaches to the last square is the winner.

Benefits: Children learns the concept of higher level of spiritual enlightenment from the lower level of consciousness through this game.

Outdoor Traditional Games:

1. **Gilli Danda:** It is one of the most popular outdoor game of India. It’s very similar to bat and ball games such as baseball and cricket. This game is played with a Gilli which is a small oval shaped wooden piece and and a Danda which is a long wooden stick. The gilli is used as a ball and danda is used as a bat to hit it. The game is played by two teams or more players of even numbers. The gilli is hit by a player of one team at the maximum distance and the fielding

team must catch it before it drops on the ground.

Benefits: It helps to improve hand-eye coordination, judgement skills, concentration and physical skills.

2. **Lagori:** Lagori is one of the oldest traditional game which have been played for centuries in rural areas. The game is played between two teams with any number of participants. It needs seven small flat stones, each stone should be smaller than the other stone. The players make two teams- hitters and seekers. The stones are placed on top of each other in decreasing order of size in the middle of the ground and seekers strike the pile with cotton or soft ball from a fixed difference. The seekers attempt to gather the dispersed stones and pile them once again while the hitters hit the seekers by ball. If the seekers gather all the stones before all being out, they become the winner of the game. The hitters will win the game if they hit all the seekers prior to collecting all the stones.

Benefits: This game improves the motor ability of children through quick running and improves precision ability and enhance concentration.

3. **Kancha:** It is one of the exciting childhood game enjoyed in India that originated during the Harappan period. The game is of round glass marbles known as kanchas. Kancha was a hit amongst youngsters considering that the marbles were inexpensive and the game could be played on any surface and weather. Several people can take part to play this game. The marble is held between the right hand and the forefinger of the left hand. The finger is pulled backward and is released with pressure almost in a spring action. The winning player takes away all kanchas from the losing players.

Benefits: It helps children to improve aim and focus, concentration and hand-eye coordination.

4. **Kho Kho:** It is another popular sport invented and developed in ancient India. Traditionally, it was known as RATHERA. There are two teams of 12 players each. The players of chasing team sit on their knees alternately in opposite directions. The chasers must catch the members of opposing team before the allotted time is up. The team that completes tapping all the opposing players on the field in the least amount of time is the winner of the game.

Benefits: This game helps children to develop team spirit and leadership skills. It helps children for better coordination and flexibility.

5. **Kabaddi:** It is again the most famous team sport of India that doesn't need any equipment. In Hindi Kabaddi means breath-holding. This game involves two teams each consisting of 12 players each. Players of one team enter into the area of opposing team. During this, they should aim to make contact with as many players from the opposing team as they can. The touched players are declared out. the team with least number of players wins the game at the end.

Benefits: This game helps children to increase endurance level and breathing strength. It also helps to develop team spirit and leadership skills.

Traditional games influence on the development on children. It stimulate their growth physically and intellectually .These games will not only engage children and promote physical activity but also helps them to stay away from electronic gadgets and understand the value of our culture through traditional games. It will help them to connect with our Indian culture through games and has a deep lifelong positive impact on them. Traditional games should be inherited and passed to the next generation so that future generation of children in the future will continue to know about our games.

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