

Folk Games of Bengal: An Appraisal

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ABSTRACT

Much of Sports Sociology centers on two themes; Sports is an expression of the societal and cultural system in which it occurs, and Sports the mirror of the rituals and values of societies in which they are developed. Today we consider the organizational games as the sports only. We cannot deny that before this type of organizational game, had many traditional games in each society. Where those traditional games were, consider as the reflection of the society. Organizational Sports has been presented to us instead of our traditional games. Gradually the traditional games are going to limited within the history or literature pages. In this globalization era, the indigenous Bengali people are moving away from their own culture and tradition to follow the world civilization. To follow universalism we should not make our tradition as history. Because traditions are leads us from the front of the society. Folk games are the major part of our tradition. In pre-colonial and colonial area in Bengal there were many traditional games like as Lathi Chora (Throw Stick), Danguli (play of long picces of wood), Kit-Kit (girls famous game), Goli (Marbels or Glass ball), Lattu (Top), Luko-Churi (Hide and seek), Rumal Churi(hanky Thief), Ghuri (Kite Flying) and so many. Those traditional games were the *pathological game* of Bengal society. Within few decades the indigenous Bengali people followed the games which were borrowed from England. The modern game became as the cultural weapon against British instead of traditional games. Because indigenous people wanted to give the proper answer the british's own sports. And the effect of which started to have negative impact on the traditional games of Bengal, because they started forgetting their traditional games. Those traditional games we can not never return to the life of the Bengali people as before.

Sports are an integral part of our social and cultural life. But the history of culture never consider as glorious part of our society. Although there are some recent research have been done, but traditional games are not totally cover which are under the black screen still now. Even though folk games are the deep roots of the modern game and sports but this games are negotiating in our society. Folk sports is a comprehensive term for a diverse group of sports and games whose common element is their status as being "popular" or related to folk culture. Folk sports include especially traditional, ethnic, or indigenous sports and games, but also new activities that are based on traditional practices. Sports that's may folk game which are the integral part of our life. However, in the field of the cultural studies, sports could not occupy a very important place. The significance of folk sports in the present world from the angle of culture, economic, religious and political reflection of the society. Folk games have a deep impact on the mind of the early life of the maximum girls and boys. In the present world, very few boys and girls have not played their cultural games in their own customs. Though in our busy lifestyles make us feel satisfied when we entertain our kids with electronic gadgets like television, computer, tablets or smart phone. But we cannot realize that the children should have play outdoors or indoor games for their physical wellbeing and emotional happiness. Now days we do not give importance to our folk game or culture. Folk game is pre level of an organizational outdoor game. If we can attract to the children to their traditional game through this they can enter slowly enter into the modern game. But unfortunately, in this busy world, folk game becoming as history by us today. The next generation may have to read as history of our folk game. We

should remember game is the not only the fit form physically mentally or for entertainment, but also a social issues to stand on cultural base. Kausik Bandhopadhay discusses the sports as the 'cultural weapon' of a nation to fight against another cultureⁱ. Here we should memorize that sport is not mean only the modern game or organizational game. Traditional game is also one of the most important parts of the modern game. Through the game, the youth can build their confidence level on the concrete base. Regular exercise and friendship relationship can be developing through the game. Within the game, rules and regulation that teach the players and spectators many things, which are possible through sports and games activity, games teach us respect to another. J.A Mangan judged the game based on the fundamental but complementary relationship of imperialism and games on the question of social development in Indiaⁱⁱ. In modern society, there are available many outdoors game in the replace of our traditional games. Traditional games are not just a game but it can develop the children a lot of skills, logical thinking, building strategy, aiming, but this game act as the learning aids . Because while playing children can understood the eternal truth win and failure. From the results they can stand up again and again. Games can develop sensory skills, count, add, improve motor skill, identification of color, improve hand eye coordination and finally to have fun. Naturally one play or watch a game to have fun.

Before the second half of nineteenth century india followed their traditional game like Lathi Chora(Throw Stick), danguli(play of long picces of wood), Kit-Kit (girls famous game), Goli (Marbels or Glass ball), Lattu (Top), Luko-Churi

(Hide and seek), Rumal Churi(hanky Thief), Ghuri (Kite Flying) and so many traditional gamesⁱⁱⁱ. But after the second half of the nineteenth century indigenous people of india bending towards the foreign outdoor game. Among the foreign outdoor game football and cricket were associate with mind of indigenous people. Football is call as the 'blood game' of Bengali people. In colonial India Football and Cricket were discussed from different aspects. However, the role of hockey was also most important^{iv}. Histories of Sports gain its prosperity in the late twentieth century. Nevertheless, in India, writing of Sports History was started within the limited area. History of Sports in india dealt mainly about history of Football and Cricket^v. In 1988, Soumen Mitra through his M.Phil dissertation discussed firstly History of Football in Colonial Calcutta. He published his thesis as book on the name of "in search of an identity: History of football in Colonial Calcutta" and discussed Sports as the aspect of nationalism^{vi}. Ramchnadra Ghuha through his book A Corner of a Foreign field: the Indian History of British Sports discussed the sport politics from different angles another edited book is 'Cricket' deals about the cricket from different point. After that the prominent Journalist and historian Boria Majumdar traced on the cricket. His one of the famous book is 'Twenty two Yard to Freedom' and 'Eleven Gods and a Billion Indian: The on and off the field story of cricket in India and beyond'. In bengal another sports Historian is Kausik Bondyopadhaya through his Bengali book 'Khela jokhon Itihas'(When Sports is History) discussed purely how a game became a History? After, he wrote many books and published article about Indian football and culture. All above the writers explain the importance about the modern game. Although Kausik bodhoypahy discussed some of the traditional games and evolution system to modern games. But in modern literature folk game are totally untouched. As a result there is not any particular documentation about the traditional game of west Bengal. Lack of documents, I have to depend totally oral interview. Therefore, in west Bengal history of folk game is a major lacuna in the field of sports culture. I will try to explain some of the most traditional folk games of west Bengal. The traditional games are..*Ha-Du-Du*, *lathichora* (throw stick), *kanamachi*, *Rumal churi*(Hanky Thief), *Ghuri orano*(Kite Flying), Kit-Kit.

Ha-Du-Du:

As the age increases, there are many changes in the human body and life style system that are not widely available to involve within any sports. However, even if the person joins within the games as their maturity, he will be able to make sure that he will get benefit from both physical and psychological well-being. In the same way in rural area of Bengal children are involve within their folk game as the age level. Ha-du-du is like a folk game which most famous in rural area of Bengal. Specially this game is game favorable within girls under ten to twelve ages. However, *ha-du-du* and *kabadi* are well known as the same game. While, *kabadi* is the national game of bengladesh^{vii}. Although this game is unknown to new generation who are born and brought up to town. Although some are known to this game but not in their eyes, benefited through the television. In this game boys or girls divided into two groups. Within a limited area, a fix boundary is selected. Within two groups, a middle boundary is drawn between them. It is not possible to play at least two players in each group.

After being alert to the two sides, one enters within the others area in a single breath. Within this breath if the person who entered to the other parts and touch the opponents group, after that touch the middle or common boundary means one person will be out from the game who was touched first by the entry person. On the other side if the entry person came back without touching any opponent person the next chance will be given to the opponents. In addition, the player who entered touched to the opponent group but cannot return to his area or touch the middle or common line then he will be out from the game. Here out from the game means actually that is time he has send to prison. If their supporting players can out to others then the out players will be eligible to play again.



Source: <http://swapnoghuri.com>

Kanamachi

kanamachi is a folk game of rural Bengal. This game is more popular among the children in school life. Among the folk game of Bengal 'kanamachi' is a wonderful game in the rural area. In this game a person will be thief and his or her eyes will be tied with the cloths(Blind Person). After that rest of the children will stay around the blind person. At that time, the players have to sound 'kanamachi vho vho' (sound of flying of fly) 'jake pabi take choo' (you touch whom you can). Then he tries to touch the other friend. If the thief can touch any person he will be the next blind person. But the rest of his friend touch the blind person time to time. There is no tool use to play this game., only need a piece of cloth and a open space. Lack of proper place , this game can be play on the roof of the house or into the room also. after tide eyes, of a particular person , he is turned around several times , so that there is a problem in guiding himself. Then the blind person's wrok is to findout the others friend. The person or children running around to safe themselves. the blind person have to continue his wrok till to touch others. To play this game minimum three players are required. But there are no problems in the games if more than three people. When the game is played the will be peaceful with the happy children.



www.google.co.in: Ferdousi Begum, 15th October 2015

Danguli:

This game is most popular among the school boys in rural Bengal. Guli is a three–four inches long piece of wood. Gulli is a three-four inches long piece of wood cylindrical in shape. Its diameter is approximately one inch. It is sharpened from both ends like a lead pencil. Danda is a wooden stick (Danda). The length of the danda is approximately twenty-four inches. A small pit is dug into the ground. The length of this pit is about four inches. Two or many boys can play this game. The first player places the gulli across the pit and puts his danda into the pit under the gulli and holds. He then pushes the gulli off. The other player tries to catch the gulli; if he succeeds in catching it, the first player is out and the second player gets a chance to push the gulli in a similar way. But if the other player fails to catch the gulli, the first player places the danda on the pit and the one of them (others) player throws the gulli on to the danda from the point where the gulli had landed. Even if he succeeds in hitting the danda, the first player is out and it will be the second player's turn to play. If the throw misses the target, the first player places the gulli on the ground but not on the pit and bounces it slightly by hitting one of its ends with his danda; while the gulli is still in the air, he tries to hit it hard with his danda as far as he can, away from the pit. The other player tries to catch it again. Even if the first player misses the chance to hit the gulli while in the air, the first player is out. The distance between the pit and the place where the gulli falls is measured by the length of the gulli and the player gets points correspondingly^{viii}.)



BD24Live.com: lost game, 14th June, 2015 02:17:50 P.M

Kit-Kit:

It is played with a *Gutil*: a broken piece of an earthen pot, about an inch-and-a-half in diameter, or a round flat stone. A rectangle about three yards long and two yards wide is drawn. This rectangle is divided into six squares each about a foot wide. The fourth and the sixth squares are each subdivided into two and these are crossed diagonally from side to side. (have many other format) The first player stands before the starting line and tosses her *guti* into the first square. Then she skips the first square, hopping to square number two and continues hopping up to square six. Then she turns around and hops back. She stops in square number two, picks up the *guti*, hops over square one and comes out. She continues playing by tossing the *guti* in square number two, three, four and so on in subsequent steps. All the hopping is done on one foot, except for those squares that are divided into two and drawn side by side. She puts both her feet down into the two squares with

one foot in each of them. The player must hop over or skip the square where the *guti* has been placed. A player is declared OUT if the *guti* fails to land in the appropriate (progressively higher) square, or the player steps on a line, or loses her balance while bending to pick up the *guti*, or puts her other hand or foot down or steps into the square. This game is popular among girls. They play this game during recess at school^x.

Luko- Churi (Hide and Seek) And Rumal Churi:

(Children start playing this game at a very early age. Two-to-three-year-old children play this game with their mothers, grandmothers or elder sisters. A child is asked to close their eyes with the palms of their hands and the mother hides somewhere. Then she calls the child to come and find her. The child runs here and there and everywhere in search of the mother. If the child finds the mother within a limited time, they laugh; if not, they burst into tears. When the mother sees the child crying, she comes out, or sometimes when she senses restlessness in the child she partly reveals herself so that it becomes easy for the child to find her. When a child grows up, they find that this game requires more skills when played with a group of their peers. They can be so clever at hiding themselves that the finder roams about, trying to locate the others, following the sounds they make but does not succeed. It is because by the time the finder reaches the place where the shout appeared to have come from, the one hiding has already moved to another place. The child who covers the eyes of the finder keeps the palms tightly on the finder's eyes, until everyone has gone hiding. Usually the youngest child is chosen to find the older ones^x.)

Rumal churi is an outdoor game but it can also be played inside if one has enough room to run around. This game can be played with as many members as present. Out of whom one is the chor (thief). The members playing the game sit in a circle with their eyes closed. The players sing this song three or four times and within this period the chor leaves his hanky (or a small piece of cloth) behind one of the sitting players. When the singing ends, everybody opens their eyes and looks for the rumal behind them. The one who finds the rumal runs after the chor to catch him. The chor runs around in circle and tries to save himself from being caught and take the vacant seat of the person chasing him or her (with the rumal); if they are caught by the person with the rumal before grabbing the vacant seat, they switch roles. The game turns more interesting when it is played at a fast pace and involves all the participants, so that every time the rumal is dropped behind a new player^{xi}).



<https://youtu.be/ZxXvB484wAA>.

Daribandha:

Daribandha is another popular game in the villages. In this game a field as equally divided with lines keeping equal distance from each other. Players are divided into two equal teams. To play minimum two players of both side needed, maximization has no limitation. One team stands in the starting line outside the field and each of the players of other team stands on each vertical black line facing at least on opponent player. This player can move towards the horizontal line at a limited range. Players standing outside enter into the field one by one and try to pass across the field to the finishing point and have to return to the starting position. Thus, the team wins the game. if any player in the opposite tea touches anybody ten the game reversed. It demands high level of physical fitness, strength and speed also.

All games have certain criteria such as goal, chance, competition, common experience equality, freedom to impact on reality, and depending on the game, people are engaged in some activities; such as thinking , planning , decision making,

concentrating , timing their minds and gaining knowledge. The days when sports as an elements of main stream media attention was marginal are long gone. Sports are only means not the organizational games but also the traditional games. It is needs to be remembering that our traditional games help our generation to understand very closely. we can get a concept of culture of a nation from their traditional games, not from any organizational borrowed sports. Likewise , to realize the Bengali nation, traditional games of Bengal must understand. In addition to the previously mentioned, traditional games, there are more folk or traditional games are present, those are..*Golla Chut, hari vanga, chor police, bouchi, kit-kit, lathi chora, guli* like more than hundred folk game are here. Though the English synonyms of those game are not available till today. Yet at one time in the life of the Bengali children , this games were the main medium to enjoy their fun. Although the maximum games are obsolescent today, but the importance of those game cannot denied.

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