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UNIQUE ROLE OF TAMIL FOLK GAMES IN CHILD REARING

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ABSTRACT

In a current scenario, sports is cultivated as a money-cumulating business by the investors and the promoters. However Tamil community engaged their available times for playing games between their studies and works. These are much innovative, knowledgeable, and accessible by involving mentally and physically in growth of children. The elders of each family committed with their grandchildren to teach such folk games; here they share their love through the game vice versa. Nowadays play schools are occupying to educate customised games to the children with thus way; but the children are treated as learner by lending the money to the teacher and the love is absent in it. Hence, this study will be useful to find out the peculiarities in child rearing through Tamil folk games.

KEYWORDS

Child rearing, Tamil folk games, Tamil culture, Unity

INTRODUCTION

Sports is an activity when someone spend his free time with pleasure and fun; in other words it is a common perception that sports are entertainment involved with fun and participation.¹ When simple and enjoyable sports activities are brought under rules and regulations with measurements, they are called customised games.² Sports offer a platform to build one's life. By comparing the games found in literature and folk tales, we understand the ancient traditions and customs of the Tamils.³ A regional sports may change according to their climatic and geographical conditions.⁴ Sports play a very important role in child rearing. Tamil community rendered potential number of games to bring up children with good character, intelligence, physical and brain strength with innovative logistics. Among the games played by the children in streets; it can be practiced as unisexual or bisexual depending with their age and circumstances. Usually the girls after puberty are practising the unisexual games; it carries the bundles of psychological awareness to understand themselves.⁵⁻⁷

Either much of games are not in practice or they are slowly killed by the technological growth.⁸ Due to the importance of knowledge they gain and build from folk games, rural and few of urban parents are still motivating their children to practice such folk games. Learning, teaching, challenging, decision-

making, endurance and valor are the entertainment aspects of sports/activities of Tamil community. A competitive game arises from a specific type of game in which one's success is determined. Decisions can be made based on one's physical ability (selection) or knowledge or opportunity. If the winner gets rewards after the commitment of the match then the game is called a bet (in Tamil panthayam (பந்தயம்)). Racing becomes a sport when emphasized on physical skill and physical training as well as mental training⁹. Generally folk games can be classified into indoor and outdoor games.

Majority of indoor games are practiced/performed by women and female children while outdoor games are mostly claimed by either matured male or budded.¹⁰ Each of Tamil community who lives as group either in rural or urban sides celebrate Pongal (பொங்கல்) festival as Tamilians' day (தமிழர் திருநாள்) or Harvest festival with joy and happiness.¹¹ During these festive days, government usually announces a long term holiday; because of their religious beliefs, people enthusiastically participate in various types events as sports. The games chosen by children may also change with the season; for an example, during windy period, between July and August i.e., in Tamil month Aadi (ஆடி மாதம்), they fly kites.¹²

Children participate in games at any season of a day and night; based on the participants and associates, games can be classified as between individual or pair or team games. Children are usually motivated to engage in team sports rather individual¹³. The present study concentrates to emerge the different types of folk games established by Tamil community and their involvement on enhancement of knowledge of individuals.

METHODOLOGY

Analytical views of author towards book reading, their experience involved during their childhood with mentioned activities, the statistical queries through psychological views done with the parents of different eras are helped to mark out this article.

DISCUSSION

3.1. FUNDAMENTALS OF TAMIL FOLK GAMES

The history of Tamils is ancient and it couldn't be validated in years or era; Tamil culture begins with the birth of earth. Tamil sports are mostly based on people's livelihood and circumstances which include chivalry, hunting, racial unity, tolerance, and other fundamental concepts of life. In concerning with traditional games of Tamils, they have inculcated the activities that happen in their lives as games for children. When children are taught sports, they are teaching and nurturing the basic concepts of life along with sports and the

virtues. It helps to overcome the dangers in racial united life and to realize the corresponding methods.

In order to teach them how to hunt at a young age; going into the forest can be a scary experience for young children. However, they learn to hunt through sport, to protect themselves, to develop knowledge and to deal with sudden threats. The gradual changes that took place later, sport helps to develop not only physical strength but also mental strength, endurance, intelligence and personal skills. Young children benefit from play to develop their senses, improve vision in the dark, speak, hear, feel and develop their intelligence.

3.2. TYPES OF TRADITIONAL SPORTS OF TAMILS

As far as the traditional games of Tamils are concerned, they can be divided into three categories based on the methods of playing and the benefits that result. Sports which help to improve physical fitness and increase physical strength can be classified as physical games. Developing one's personal skills and learning new information through games are called mind games. Natural games are about games that teach lifestyle and morals.

3.2.1. PHYSICAL GAMES

It includes each sports whatever practises; because, any game is played according to his physical strength. However, physical sports are included in the category of sports that help strengthen and refine one's physical strength and physical abilities while playing. Tamils traditional games like Kaayah-pazhamah?-காயா பழமா? (Head or Tail), Kho-Kho-கோ-கோ, Kaaka Kunju-காக்கா குஞ்சு-(Crow chick), Oadu-Sikku-ஓடு-சிக்கு(Run-Catch), Mathilotti-மதிலொட்டி (Stick on wall), Kozhi Kaal-கோழி கால்(Chicken leg), Nondi aattam (நொண்டி ஆட்டம்) (Limp game), Pooparikka varukiroam-பூப்பறிக்க வருகிறோம் (Harvesting flowers), and Thottu game-தொட்டு விளையாட்டு(touch game) are helps to improve physical strength and ability. Physical strength increases while playing these games. Children can also learn battlefield and hunting techniques through these games. The basics of playing this game can be found here:

Kaayah-pazhamah

Kaayah-pazhamah is a sport which helps to develop breathing and swimming skills of children. The basic rule of this game is quite simple; group of children must stand in a water system like wells, ponds or a flowing river; one of them should toss a coin and called kaayah and pazhamah. If it makes a sound it is called pazham and if it does not make a sound it is called kaai. The one who doesn't

make a fuss plays the catcher and the one who makes the noise plays the runner. The catcher chases the runners into the water and catches them. By playing in this way the body and breath are trained.

Kho-Kho game

The Kho-Kho game is a quick escape exercise without getting into danger. This game is known as Go game in urban areas. This game can be predominantly classified based on agility, strength, endurance and flexibility training¹⁴. In this game, boys are divided into two teams and sit opposite to each other with easily awake position i.e., without laying their downside in ground. Among the teams, one of them will be the catcher and the other team will be the racer; they odd out one from each team to participate as catcher and racer others of them should wait in their position. A catcher if he couldn't catch him, he would pat one of his teammates on the back and tell him to go. Thus, the person who is patted on the back will leave the spot and start running. Likewise, if a racer is unable to run, he sits down and leaves his teammate to run. This will help to improve the physical health of each child and it also encourage unity between the group like kabaadi.

Kakkakunju (Crow chick)

When child plays this game, he or she is trained to climb trees quickly and jump from one branch to another. This game helps children to develop the idea of saving their mates in danger. The game is also known as Squirrel Child (Anil Pillai-அனில் பிள்ளை) and Tree Monkey (marakkurangu - மரக்குரங்கு). It got its name from its habit of jumping from either from a branch to another branch in a tree or from a tree to another tree.

Oadu Chikku

The game of oadu chikku or thottu pidi (தொட்டி பிடி) is similar to the game of kabaadi. But kabaadi has a demarcation line. There is no boundary line in this game and the catcher can chase until the runner runs through either in streets or on an empty ground. This game is also a great example of breathing exercises.

Nondi aattam (Lame game)

This sport is a practice of walking and limping on one leg. Usually it is a group game; odd man to start the game; he limps on one leg and others on group will surround him. They continuously bet him to pat them; he walks with one leg and pat someone on group using his tricks. Thereafter the one who get patted will do the same job by releasing the first one to the group. This game provides massive confidence to the children that how he is

energetic enough and strong physically. With this game even a person with a leg disability can participate and enjoy the game. This game helps a physically challenged person in the battlefields to gain their livelihood and confidence. When limping, a child should stand on one leg; it allows the whole body to be arrayed in a straight line. It enables every organ in the human body to work with 100% positivity. A perfect inhalation of a natural air passes each cell by allowing the ventricles with proper bumping rate.

3.2.2. Mind games

Such games are used for children's intellectual development by trained them psychologically; they gain mental health with the rigid awareness on them. These types of games teach the basic skills needed to acquire academic knowledge; it communicates the mind in several path to provide multiple solutions for a single problem. Children are able to attract their mates with good soul and love to improve the relationship between them. In the end, these games help to focus the mind, develop memory, alertness and sense of nature.

The number game

A game in which children find hidden numbers is called a number game. Through this game children can be able to gain knowledge about numbers; children can be able to learn addition, subtraction, and multiplication of numbers with a entertaining way by without going school. It allows quick learning to solve a complicated issues/problems either in classroom or in livelihood. It also estimates the quality of children at classroom; he/she can sit on comfort zone during the class learning.

Pookkuthirai (பூக்குதிரை)

Children can learn the names of flowers through this game. Players come up with the names of each flower. Then the person who mentioned the name of the flower which has already been implied will bow down like horse (in Tamil kuthirai (குதிரை)). On him the others would again chant the name of the flower and sit. By playing in this way, children will learn the names of new flowers and knowledge about them.

Mellavanthumella po (மெல்லை வந்து மெல்லை போ)

Children play in two teams. A team member closes his eyes. The other team should touch him and leave. They are called fruit or flower without real name. Thus the closed eye person has to find out who touched him. This game helps you to be aware of what is happening around you and learn the names of fresh flowers and fruits.

Komparai Komparai (கொம்பரை கொம்பரை)

It is a game that can be played with vigilance and agility. In this game the boys sit in a circle. A boy sings a song and goes in a circle. While singing like this, he refers to the horned animals. At the mention of horned beasts, the seated should tap their thighs. No one should be slapped in the thigh at the sudden mention of a hornless beast. Through this game, children learn about horned and hornless animals.

Kulaikulaiyai Mundirik ka (குலைகுலையாய் முந்திரிக் கா)

This game is a game that can be played sitting in a circle like komparai komparai. One goes around them singing. At that time, he throws a small piece of cloth over one of the sitters and throws it around. On whom the cloth falls, he gets up and runs. The one who ran will sit there. A game with such a pattern is also found in foreign children's games. The game is presented with the name "Drop the Hand Kerchief". This game helps to develop the habit of being aware of what is going on behind one's back, practice conversation and develop memory.

Natural games

Natural games represent mental happiness and ethics of life. Such games reflect the lifestyle of a human being. Games like Siruveedu-சிறுவீடு (small house), solakkathir-சோளக்கதிர் (corn cob) teach children about the standard of living and lifestyle of ordinary people. Such games are also conducted to understand the difficulties of parents. Early educational training takes place through play. These kinds of games which involve the natural system and co-existence with nature are called natural games.

Eliyum punaiyum (mouse and cat)

It is a great game based on paradox to feel the natural paradox. A rat's life is in a loop, where the rat enters and exits rapidly. Based on this, the one who is a cat should repel the one who is a rat. But for the rat, others will stand around and form a protective ring. If the cat touches the mouse it's game over. More to the point, the aim of this game is to teach children from an early age that there is a cat-mouse conflict in nature by comparing it to a conflict in nature between a toucher and a run-away.

Siru Veedu (Small House)

This game is used to learn about the blood relations and their significance of the relations that travel with us in natural life. In siru veedu, children can characterise themselves as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, daughter, son and neighbour and playing their respective roles. Father means earning money and doing outside

work, mother means housekeeping and cooking, brother and sister and all other relationships, he brings out and acts out what they do.

The game is also called as appa amma game-அப்பா அம்மா விளையாட்டு (father and mother game) because of the importance of the character of mother and father. Actions such as girl refusal and consent are built into the game. This game is named as ponnu mappillai-பொண்ணு மாப்பிள்ளை game in some districts of Tamil Nādu.

In this way, games are based on such events of life in a house; this game teaches children the importance of relationships around their minds and values and respect. This game is a training game to live a better life. This game is very helpful in understanding, learning and undertaking the nature of shared work and activity at an early age.

Solakkathir (Corn Cob)

Agriculture was the primary occupation in ancient times. It is a game played with the intention of taking this profession to the next generation. They work during the day and play happily at night. The game solakkathir is where you can see the activities from planting corn to harvesting in this game. In this game, the seedling season, watering, seedling uprooting, sapling uprooting, growth season and harvest will be played sequentially. Through this, the children will play the actions of a farmer in a season from planting corn to harvesting. Children will play in games suitable for every level. During the seedling season, children who sit irregularly are made to sit in a row as if they are planting seedlings and then they play like pumping water. As the seedlings begin to grow, the children sit and crouch and play upright. The game ends after harvesting. Through this game knowledge and experience is developed about the importance of agriculture and what activities should be done at what time. Through this game the knowledge of agriculture is developed.

Catch the Eisal

The tribal's of Tamil Nadu eat winged termites commonly known as "Eisal". Eisal is a pest that comes in the rainy season. It is high in protein. Eisals come out of the pits one by one, so adults don't like to catch them. Children catch it and eat it. Catching it is played as a game. Through these types of games we can gain knowledge about the types of food that are suitable for us to eat.

Climbing Urimaram

"Urimaram" is wood from which the bark of the Goombine tree has been removed. In ancient times, mountaineers used to climb steep cliffs and go over slippery rocks. This training, which was necessary for the mountain people, is practiced in

the sport of Urimaram. Castor oil is applied to the barked tree. The organisers of the game may lift some gift at the top of this tree. Climbing and taking prizes is the nature of the game.

Conclusion

Tamils are not only looking at sports for entertainment but also use it for health improvement, mental development, develop unity, feel nature and make children feel the way of life. Teaching primarily through play Games have been used to teach good manners, respect for older adults, and early education. We can feel the culture, tradition and civilization of Tamils through traditional sports. In respective to the results of 90% of Tamil folk games, every player can participate and every player will be rewarded between the games. It never creates partition between the children after completion of the games.

Conflict of Interests

None

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