



A Survey on Indigenous Sports of Tribal Communities in Tripura

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to identify the indigenous sports of tribal communities in Tripura state. For this study six (6) indigenous games & sports of six most populous sub community tribes of Tripura (according to 2011 census) one (1) each from Tripuri (Debbarma), Reang (Bru), Jamatia, Chakma, Halam and Mogwere purposively selected. The data were investigated by a survey from the local experts, leaders and other renowned or experienced persons of all the six sub tribes inhabitant in Tripura through interview (personal and telephonic) considering all the instructions and guidelines were quite reliable. The secondary data sources had been collected from the books, e-books, journals, e-journals, articles, scholars, educationist etc. that describing different tribal communities and ethnic groups. Descriptive statistical technique was used to justify the indigenous sports & games of different tribal communities of Tripura.

Key words: Indigenous, games & sports, tribes, Tripura etc.

Introduction

Nowadays sport has become a part and essential of life. Millions of fans follow different sports events all over the world with an enthusiasm bordering on devotion. Many people participate in sports and games for fun, happiness, pleasure for health and fitness. Sports play a vital role in social and cultural functions and the importance of it can hardly be exaggerated. In Tripura, there are 19th Clung in different sub-caste living since the Yayati dynasty, near about 5000 years before. The tribes are namely Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Khasia, Chakma, Uchai, Lushai, Kuki, Munda, Bhil, Noatia, Orang, Halam, Garos, Santal, Mog, Chaimal, Bhutia and Lepcha. Basically, the Indigenous people of Tripura they survive their life by Jhum cultivation, that why for the survivable they face so many struggle with wild life in the cave and jungle, from the beginning they hunting in jungle by bow and arrow, stone, kolonga, etc. It was the tradition of their lives they had trained themselves and also trained up to youth. It is known as games. Like many other ethnic groups of the world, the Tripuri children and youths have their traditional

games and sports. However, it deserves mention here that the traditional sports of the Tripuris games and sports are almost in common with other Tripuri speaking tribes of Tripura i.e., Debbarma, Tripura, Reang, Jamatia, Kalai, Rupini, Murasing, Noatia and Uchai, Molsom, Kaipeng. Now-a-days, though the Tripuri children have adopted the other castes' games and sports, they till in this last part of the twentieth century, played their traditional sports and games at least once in a blue moon. Out of many traditional sports and games of the Tripuri community, some are detailed here. The Tripuris call the games as 'Thwngma'.

The contribution of sports towards the overall welfare of the human society may be capsuled sports provides ample and healthy means for recreation and relaxation of human mind and body. It also provides opportunities for social interaction thereby fostering peace and understanding among different peoples, nation, race and religions. Apart from this, it provides healthy and socially acceptable opportunities for the peoples and nations to compete against each other. Participation in sports activities creates physical fitness among the peoples and this physical fitness is the sum total of five motor abilities namely strength, endurance, speed, flexibility and coordination. Tripura is a north-eastern state of India. The state comprises of only 0.3% of India's total population. The peoples of this state are very fond of traditional games and sports. The state government also contributes to enhance the indigenous games & sports of Tripura. The Tripuri community has its own traditional sports, which are called Thwngmung in the Kokborok, the Tripuri language. In recent years, these traditional sports are being gradually abandoned as more people become attracted to modern games and sports, but some of the sports are still played today and preferred in rural Tripura. Some of these sports are listed below. For many years it was believed that performance in games and sports depends on skill perfection, technique, psychological and physiological components. Now it is believed that besides all there, proper play-field is required for every game for higher level of achievement. It has been fully recognized by the scientists too.

Objectives

- ❖ Identification of indigenous communities of Tripura.
- ❖ Identification and collection of indigenous games and sports for tribal communities of Tripura.
- ❖ Evaluation of selected indigenous games and sports of Tripura.
- ❖ Generalization of indigenous games and sports of Tripura.

Methodology

1. **Selection of Indigenous Sports:** For this study six (6) indigenous games & sports from six most populous sub tribes (as per 2011 Census) of Tripura were purposively selected, one (1) each from Tripuri (Debbarma), Reang (Bru), Jamatiya, Chakma, Halam and Mog respectively and games & sports

are very popular among these selected tribes.

- 2. Sources and Collection of Data:** The data has been collected from the experts, leaders and others known or experienced persons of all the six sub tribes out of nineteen (19) sub tribes' inhabitant in Tripura through interview (personal and telephonic) by considering all the instructions/guidelines properly. The secondary data has been collected from the books, e-books, journals, e-journals, articles, internet, researchers and educationist etc. about the different tribal communities and groups inhabiting in different peripheral part of Tripura.

Discussion

Tribal Indigenous Games and Sports of Tribal Communities:

The children and youths of tribal communities of Tripura have their own traditional games and sports like many other ethnic groups of the world. However, it deserves mention here that the traditional games and sports of Tripuri community are almost common with other Tripuri speaking tribes of Tripura. They play or organizing their traditional sports and games at least once in a blue moon and also organize time to time in their cultural and traditional occasions and festivals out of many traditional sports and games and about the selected sub-tribes of the tribal communities, are detailed here.

Table: 1.

Collections of games & sports of selected communities.

Name of the Tribes	Games and Sports
Tripuri	1. AchugwiPhanSohlaimung 2. Bumanikotor 3. DwkhwiSotonmung 4. PhanSohlaimung 5. Kaldong or Kadong 6. LongoiChokmung 7. MuphukSagwnang 8. MustaSeklaio 9. Sohlaimung 10. Bopang 11. Daksha-Sai 12. BukangBailaiHuhnai 13. RihuiNai 14. Makal Kana 15. IchingBiching 16. Kit kit 17. Takla 18. Makhra 19. Terijuri 20. HuiJakNai 21. Tukka 22. Eka-Guti 23. Dasguti 24. Matham/swimming 25. Khor 26. Pia 27. BongbraiBirma 28. Chur (Top) 29. Ri-kothe 30. Teng Dang 31. Cooking game 32. Hi Do-Do.
Reang (Bru)	1. Khulpali Tisa Mo 2. Taokhuo Ba Sa Mo 3. NailyaWasa 4. YanglaBahar Mo 5. Singhai-Ma-Ma 6. Tawla-Ba Mo 7. Thaili-Chara-Kari-Mo 8. Pepra-Sakhou-Mo 9. Wa Susa Mo 10. Kerang-Ma-Mo 11. Manda-E-Ma-Mo 12. Wakhram-Ka-Mo 13. Tawla-Tamo Lai Mo 14. Wabai Fan Solai Mo 15. YakfaMokhlai-Ma 16. DinkiKa-Mo 17. Badul-Thwnglai-Mo 18. Chu 19. Chokha Ma Khosama 20. YakhromKamo
Jamatiya	1. Mailao-May-Sekmani 2. RomorNormani 3. Hari 4. Matha 5. Bagakana 6. Kakwraymwng 7. MaymwySwngmwng 8. DekheDere 9. Mankha De Bamak(Bama) 10. Achiyng Jang 11. Sikram 12. SukuyChwla 13. BwrwyragSukuy 14. AytwkMwylakTwylak
Chakma	1. GhilaKhara 2. NadengKhara 3. Kani-Dola-Mela-MeliKhara
Halam	1. BasectAnkei 2. RotuonAnsun 3. Puontethor 4. ReisonAnher 5. Masuianbuon 6. Ngo Le Seram 7. KekAndai 8. SampakAnqam.
Mog	1. Da 2. Gadu 3. Dou 4. Yeang,

- 1. Trpuiri (Debbarma):** Tripuris are the largest tribal community in Tripura.

They have first migrated in this territory and could be introduced as aboriginal tribe of Tripura. Tripuris are numerically highest in number(as per 2011 Census they are 592,255people) among all the tribal groups. Tripura was under rule of Tripuri Kings till it is merged with Indian Dominion in the year 1949. Ethnically Tripuris belong to Indo-Mongoloid origin and linguistically within the Tibeto-Burman family. They speak in Kok-Borok as like as other 7(seven) tribal groups of Tripura. Tripuris are mainly Hindus. They have colorful folk dances like, Garia, Lebang, MusakSurmani, Tangbiti and Mamita.

- 2. Games & Sports :** The Tripuris Call the Games as Thwngma.
- 3. Kaldong or Kadong :** The Kaldong or Kadong is one of very popular game among Tripuri community and this is also very interesting and pleasure game among the children's & youths of Tripuri community specially youth boys. A small foot step is tied on two pieces of bamboo (moli) about two (2) feet above the ground level and the height of two pieces bamboo is 6 to 7 ft. Then the children's or youths climb on the knots holding the bamboo with their hands and walk or run faster on field or remain on the kaldong longer without falling from it. They also play with this kaldong run, pickup needle from the ground and fight with another fellow by one leg lift up position and also show their skill each other like surjyanamaskar by standing in a place 10 to 15 minute without moving.
- 4. Reang :** Reangs are the second largest tribal community of Tripura. They are recognized as one of the 75 primitive tribes in India. Reangs are firstly come from Shan State of upper Burma (now Myanmar) in different weaves to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and then Southern part of Tripura. Similarly another group entered Tripura via Assam and Mizoram during 18th Century. Reangs belong to Indo-Mongoloid racial stock. Their language has affinity of Austro-Asiatic groups under Tibeto-Burman family. Ethnically Reangs are divided into 2(two) major clans (i) Meska and (ii) Molsoi. Their language is known as "Kaubru" which have a tonal effect of Kuki language though broadly it is Kok-Borok (language of men). Reangs are still a nomadic tribe and a large numbers among them maintain their livelihood involving Top Hill Jhum Cultivation and other food gathering activities like collection of jungle fruits, leaf, plants, fishing in stagnant water in hill slopes, hunting of wild animals and birds etc.

Games & Sports

- 1. Chu :** Chu is most popular game among the reang youth. Individual or group player can play this game.
- 2. Procedure:** Firstly, make a circle at around 3 meters radius (may increase or decrease the size of the circle according to the number of players), the

participants stand outside of the circle with their chu. The first person through the chu inside the circle and other person try to hit the chu in the circle. If he succeeds then he will be declared as a winner, if not then the game will start again and this process will continue until unless a winner is decided.

- 3. Jamatia:** Jamatia is another tribal group of Tripura, having distinct feature of Mongoloid Origin. Their language is also similar with that of Tripuris. Therefore, they speak in Kok-Borok, which is a language of Tibeto-Burman family. As per 2001 Census their population in Tripura is 74,949 and treated as 3rd largest tribal group of Tripura. Jamatia were the major strength of Royal Army of Tripura kingdom for which they were exempted from the house taxes during princely- state. Earlier Jamatias had to live on Jhum Cultivation. However, among the tribal of Tripura they accustomed themselves with plough cultivation after the Tripuris.

Games & Sports

- 1. Sukuy Chwla:** This is very popular game among the Jamatias since time immemorial.
- 2. Procedure:** The rules and regulation of the games are very complex and interesting. The game is played between two team and each team consists of 5 to 6 members. There are different stages in this game and each part has to go through all the stages in order to complete the games and to decide winner or loser. Both chwlarang (boys) and the bwrwyrag (girls) can play this game. Originally it was played with sukuy, it is the seed of a kind of plant (*mimosa nscandens*) but now days the girls play with the natural sukuy and the boys play with sukuy made of wood. These wooden sukuy are little bigger. The boys game consists of eleven (11) steps, namely 1. Dan 2. Yachu 3. Falka 4. Karay 5. Mwkter 6. Fatwk 7. Suku 8. Fangchul 9. Kal 10. Khar 11. Marang. And the girls game consists of thirteen (13) steps namely 1. Khukbuk 2. Chau 3. Yak Rap 4. Jantibara 5. JantiKalak 6. Siryng 7. Yakheyng 8. Sal 9. Suy 10. Chakaybara 11. Chakaykalak 12. Musal 13. Raytwy. The rules & regulations are similar to boys, little difference is only in methods of throwing of the sukuy. The girls cannot throw the sukuy as the boys do rising their legs. The team that completes the last stage first will wins the game.
- 3. Chakma:** They are one of the 4th major tribes of Tripura according to their population strength (according to 2011 census). Chakmas are known to be a tribe of South-East Asia. They have first migrated to Arakan Hills of Bruma and then Chittagong Hill Tracts to Tripura. A major part of them however migrated to Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh in course of time from their original homeland. Among Chakma there are 3(three) major groups like (i)

Anokia, (ii) Tandugia, and (iii) Mangla. Linguistically Chakma language is mixed with loan words of Indu-Aryan language, Tibeto-Chinese and mainly Arakan language. Their language also is described as broken Bengali and Assamese language. Chakma have their own script in Burmese Alpha bets, though not in use rather Bengali script is being used and easy to learn

Games & Sports

- 1. Ghila Khara:** This is the most popular game among the Chakma youths. It is generally played during the Bizhu festival by the boys and girls. In this regard it is worth mentioning here that there are vivid descriptions of playing this typical game in the folk ballad of the Chakmas, named "Radhamon-Dhanpudi Pala". It is most popular game since beginning. This game is played with large bean-like seed of thick, woody creeper (Botanical name-*Entada scandens*). This bean-like seed is called 'ghila' by the chakmas. But in some items of the same game the boys used the wooden or horn-made ghila in lieu of this indigenous seeds. This game is generally played in an open field or in a large courtyard in group wise. It has different kinds of items of game like- 1. ChondiKhara 2. TagalKhara 3. JhumKhara 4. BiyongKhara 5. NokkkrukKhara etc., so among all these items only 'ChondiKhara & TagalKhara are played by both the boys & girls. The other items are exclusively for the boys only due to its hard technique. Every item of the game is codified with respective rules & regulations and directed with different stages or steps. The players should go through all the stages in order to complete the games and to decide victory or defeat.
- 2. Halam:** Ethnically, Halam belong to the Cocase-Mongoloid origin of Kuki-Chin tribes. Their language is also more or less similar to that of Tibeto-Burman family. Halams are also known as Mila Kuki, though they are not at all Kukis in terms of language, culture and living style. Halams are divided into several sub-clans which is referred as "Barki-Halam". Major sub-clans of Halams are (1) Kaloi, (2) Kor-Bong, (3) Keipeng, (4) Bong, (5) SakaChep, (6) Thangachep, (7) Dab, (8) Bongser (9) Rupini, (10) Hrangkhawl, (11) Chorai, (12) Langai, (13) Kaireng, (14) Ranglong, (15) Naveen and (16) Khulang. Among these tribes, as per 2001 Census their total population is 47,261 and distributed throughout the State. Halams are basically Hindus and followers of Sakti-cult though Vaishnavism is spreading among some of the sub-clans like Murasingh, Rupini and Kaloi. But Christianity is also being embraced by Halams.

Games & Sports

- 1. Masuianbuon:** This is the most popular game among the halam community. This game is played between two players and both of them face each other. This game is played on ground or on a plane surface. Both the players have

to catch their palm and their ankle should be touched on ground and from that position the player who is able to fall down opponents hand on ground is awarded as winner.

2. **Mog:** In Tripura as per 2001 Census the population of Mogs is 37,893. Their major concentrations are at Subroom and Belonia. Mogs are Arakan tribe and migrated to Tripura through Chittagong Hill Tracts. By religion they are Buddhist. Their language is grouped under Tibeto-Chinese family, which has also linked with Assam-Burmese section of language. Mogs are depends on Jhum Cultivation. There is a combination of folk songs and dance during this festival. In fact Mog’s social culture and belief are centralized with Burmese culture.
3. **Khyang Dou:** It can be played individual or team also and both male & female are allowed to participate in the game. This game is very famous among the Mog community.
4. **Procedure:** A marked line is drawn and then placed some target from a certain distance from the marked line (distance depends on the level of the game). Those targets are made by the wood or part of tree. There are many target which depends on the organizer but generally 5 to 10 target is used and each target have their own points. Then a player from a team will throw the target and at a time only one will be allowed. Each player will get three (3) chances at a time and individual or team who scored more points will be the winner.

Table: 2.

Games & sports experts of all the six (6) selected communities

Sl. No.	Tribes/Communities	Name	Address
1	Tripuri	Upendra Debbarma Ranjit Debbarma	Lembuchara, ManikBhander, Kamalpur, Dhalai, Tripura-799287
2	Reang	Mangal Joy Reang Gola Ch. Reang	Garji, Dalham Para, East Garji,
3	Jamatia	Ananda Jamatia and Satish Chandra Jamatia	Killa, Udaipur, Gomati, Tripura
4	Chakma	Amrit Chakma Susanta Chakma	Longtarai Valley, Dhalai, Tripura
5	Halam	Jotham Halam and Shurjocharan Halam	Soitang, Dharmanagar, North Tripura Santibazar, salema, dhalai Tripura.
6	Mog	KramfruMog ChelafuMog	Vill- Kalabaryiya, Sabroom, South Tripura

Table: 3. Distribution of Population(As per the 2011 Census)

Sl. No.	Tribes/Community	2001	2011
1	Tripuri	543848	592,255
2	Reang	165103	188,220
3	Jamatia	74949	83,347
4	Chakma	64293	79,813
5	Halam	47245	57,210
6	Mog	30385	37,893

Conclusion

In modern era, the games & sport played very vital role to maintain good health and fitness that has become most essential part of everyone's life. In Tripura there are nineteen (19) tribal communities are living and they have many indigenous games & sports (around 80 – 90 according to survey till now), which are very interesting, attractive and also play a vital role in social and cultural functional changes and having traditional values of their own self among the tribes. Some indigenous games & sports are common among all the major tribes. Tripuri community have the highest number of traditional games & sports, followed by Reang and Jamatia respectively. The researcher tried to find proper explanations of the games & sports (like origin, aim and objective, equipments, procedure, rules and regulations etc.), but corrected and fixed systematically after proper investigation and interpretation of data collectively. All the indigenous games & sports were linked with their past culture or livelihood. Nevertheless, it has been recommended to all the people of tribal communities to organize the indigenous games and sports in formal competition purposes and attract for mass participations as well as maintain their own sake of culture and tradition.

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