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Tribute to Traditional Children Games of Tamil Nadu

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Tribute to Traditional Children Games of Tamil Nadu

Dr. A. Muthu Meena Losini

Abstract- **In modern days there is a striking difference between the children of the previous generation who have abundant treasure of natural source of various games and this generation who lacks nature games. During the latter half of the 1900s kids used to play both indoor and outdoor games that are the games of the soil. In later years, these games were neglected by the arrival of Cricket, Tennis and Football. None play games such as Goli, Ghilli, Dhaya kattam, Paramapadham, Pallanguzhi, Paandi, Aadupuli aatam, Sotangul and Thatangal and many more such games.**

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I. Introduction

These games reflect rich culture and tradition and render ancestral knowledge and impart values and virtues. Besides, it improves our observational skills and math skills and other soft skills. These traditional games have a unique design so as to develop a lot of skills like logical reasoning, thinking, building relationships, sharing, perseverance, concentration, basic mathematics, aiming physical fitness, balancing attitude and acceptance. In such a way these games act as learning aids. Though people did not go to school they know the way of life, they manage households with an extended family, manage business and they are the decision-makers. They infuse children with virtues to protect the family's name and fame and taught them the reputation, dignity of their culture and tradition and to adopt the situation. Each one is aware of their role within the family and also in the society. Elders are revered and youngsters are paid attention and children are taken care of. These games facilitate children in socialization which is a proponent in getting along with the society as well as creating a friendly ambiance. They impart tolerance and patience to overcome troubles and harvest their accomplishment. They teach us to win and also to lose, improve the sensory skill, count and add motor skills, identify colour, develop hand-eye and leg co-ordination and finally it arrives at fun.

While playing the game, one got a chance to learn about our culture and history and environment-friendly. These games are suitable for all ages. Hence, it unites all despite age, class and other differences. Though modern games are played around the world in a stadium and auditorium, most of the unaffordable parents and kids sit and watch in their living room, without part take in such games as it seems expensive and required a lot of funds and so only few can be benefitted. But, these games are the pride of our culture and tradition. These traditional games could be classified as indoor games, outdoor games, board games and property games.

Indoor games:

They are still played in villages. It develops unity and strength among the kids in supporting their team. It improves their team spirit and adjustment, managing the group and achieving the task in playing. It nurtures patience, perseverance, acceptance of mistakes, generosity, dedication, recognize and respect the values of others and the opponent team. These children's games are almost team games that develop team spirit and leadership qualities. Let me list out such games children used to play in villages even now.

- Thirudan police: A police has to find out who is the thief in the game with some clues.
- Raja Rani: Group game played by both boys and girls.
- Oru kodam Thanni: A team game, which promotes children in keeping the environ green by watering the plant and planting the saplings.
- Poo parikka varugirom: Team game, tells about the flowers and months of our culture and give and take policy.
- Pappu kanji: This game teaches them sharing what they have with others.
- Aaku paaku vethala paaku: Team game, children learn that unity is strength.
- Kulai kulaiyai mundirikkai: It is a type of hide and seek game.
- Kokku para para: Team game, requires concentration and avoids boredom.
- Nandu pudichu vilaiyadu: It is a fun game.
- Vidukathai: Team game, It is a puzzle game and one who knows the answer is rewarded.
- Mooka pudi: A person holds the breath as he drowned in water to be found by his opponent.
- Colour colour what colour: Children are familiarized with colours in this game.

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- Uyir Koduthal: In this game, children help the other children by providing extra chance for them to continue the game for a longer time.
- A team game where one child gives another child a chance to initiate him.
- Kichi kichi thambalam: It is an indoor game. A child has to find out the object which was hidden by opponent.
- Thayam: It is a group game played by two or four members with spinning the dice.

Indoor game

- Paramapatham/The snake and the ladder:
- Pambaram: It is a top game.

There are other games such as: *Pallanguzhi, Mangatha, Name place animal thing, Soodu Kottai, Killiyanthattu, kollankottai, Yaanai, yaanai, Alagar yaanai, Kola, Kolaiya Munthrikka.* All are team/group games.

Outdoor Games:

- Hide and Seek: Group game.
- Kho-Kho: A team game.
- Nondi- Hop and Catch, group game.
- Pacha kudura: It is a kind of series of high jump
- Kabadi: It is a team game for youngsters.
- Oadi Pudithal (Run and Catch).
- Maram Yeruthal/Tree Climbing- Catching children who are claiming the tree.
- Seval Sandai: It is a cockfight.
- Kanna Moochi: Closing the eyes of the finder till all children hide themselves and let the finder to find removing the blinds from the eyes. Group game.
- Kola Kolaya Mundirikaai: It is also one of the kinds of hide and seek game.
- Kiliyandhatu and Kaliyal: Group game played in Southern Tamil Nadu.
- Kayaru Thanduthal: Jumping the rope as two ends of the rope is tied so as to Increase the height for each jump.
- Kayaru Iluthal: It is a rope pulling game to prove the strength of two teams.
- Unjal Aaduthal: Playing in the swing.
- Maintaining Balance: Carrying pot on head and walk without holding the pot in hands. The pot should not fall down.
- Oosi Korthal: Injection thread in the needle-improves concentration.
- Tattankal/Sottngal: Group game: Children use small stones they toss and catch these stones.

These games are played indoor as well as outdoor depending upon the size of the property and size of the house. These traditional games of Tamil Nadu could keep our children away from tablets, smartphones and laptops.

In Tamil Nadu, there are many rituals followed during the wedding. These rituals are finished in the early morning itself. After the rituals, the bride and the bridegroom family get a lot of leisure time to sit and chat with relatives and friends kith and kin. They used to conduct a game to engage the guests from both the bride and groom side.

Board Games:

These games are played both indoor and outdoor usually under the trees in the village using boards or drawn in the ground using colour powder or chalk piece.

- Aadupuli aatam
- Paramapatham
- Langakattai
- Sozhi Urutal

Property Games:

These games are played with some properties like *Pambaram, Goli/Glass Marble, Kayiru Thanduthal, Shells,Tamarind Seeds.*

Outdoor:

- Pambaram
- Jallikattu
- Goligundu
- Gilli thandu
- Nongu vandi
- Cycla tyre
- Thennai Olai Rocket
- Uri adithal
- Kal addithal: It involves a pile of stones that are stacked on top of each other. One member of a team throws a stone to knock the stones over.
- Kolikunndu: It is played with round glass marbles and the motive is to collect as many marbles as possible by shooting and stretching other marbles with the ones you have –two teams.
- Kittipul/ gilli–danda: This is similar to cricket and baseball which is popularly known as gilli, it is played with a small piece of wood reduced on both sides as Gilli and a large piece of wood that is used to hit the Gilli known as danda. The aim of the game is to hit the gilli as far as possible-Two teams.
- Pambaram is a game involves spinning a wooden top 'Pambaram which has grooves in its lower half and a nail at the bottom on which the pambaram spins. A thick string is wrapped around the grooves on the lower half and pulling the string makes the topspin.
- Kattam Thandusal/Hopscotch: It is a popular ground game where players throw a stone or small object into a numbered spaces of patterns of square and rectangle marked on the ground and then hop or jump over the spaces on one or two legs to retrieve the object.

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- Ozhindhu Vilaiyaduthal/Hide and Seek: It is a popular kids game where kids hide themselves in an area to be found by one or more seekers. The seeker closes his/her eyes and started counting numbers till other kids hide themselves, after hat he/she tries to find the hidden players –Group.
- Thirudan Police/Thief and Police game: Two Teams -There are two teams in the game, one the team of thieves and the other Police, the Police tries to catch the thief, after catching, the turn changes to the others (the thief becomes police) and the police becomes thief if they get caught.
- Oyir Koduthal/ Lock and Key: The aim of the seeker is to touch the other players, giving them wish, as soon as wish is given the person stays there until teammates come to give him/her asit. The game ends when all players have been caught and there is no one left to grant a rit.
- Nondi (Two Teams): The team that wins the toss defends first. The opposing team sends a player to tag as many defenders as he can while hopping on one foot. The team that tags the most defenders are considered winners.

Gummi, Fire in the mountain, Thayam, Tattankal etc. are the main games of the little girl.

Funnel game

Playing in the water: This includes saving the head of the drowning head of water for some time in the well, pond and in the river.

Ball: In ancient times, men played in coconut fiber, cotton, and small amounts of iron. The girls played with flowers. Traveling on horseback and playing ball. The game of polo now depends on this genre.

Swing : Swing game. From Alam paste to Ambon, they were used as playing instruments.

Kathaadi: Cut the palm leaf into a windmill and run it in the direction of the wind.

Gummi: Women sing around with clapping hands rhythmically

Uppu mootai is a familiar game for many where one has to carry another on his back and walk. In a generation that seems to be immersed in smartphones and tablets, games like that tangal, pallanguzhi and uppu mootai which were once played in almost every household have become a rarity.

A variety of these traditional games were held in the form of school competitions at the Hindu Spiritual and Service Fair at schools and colleges. Although video games may be the go-to for many kids, the students themselves admitted that these native games were a better alternative. “Our eyes aren’t strained, we get some vitamin D and we also maintain a healthy weight,” observed children.

In contrast to most mobile or computer games that isolate children with technology, these games are also a social exercise where students are forced to play together or work in teams. Sitting in front of a tablet or computer for hours due to its addictive quality is only going to increase obesity which is increasingly becoming a problem. Not just this. People also pointed out that each of the native games have different benefits. A game like *pallanghuzhi* involves fast addition and multiplication while *tattanghal* and other board games involve fine motor skills, counting and quick hand-eye coordination.

Children really know when they play that these games actually gave more exercise to the brain and also not strain their eyes. Given such limited awareness about these games in the current generation, experts even suggest that these games be introduced in schools and homes as they are the best social exercises. Some schools are already practicing this. A game like Pandi (hop-scotch) forces a child to play with others, and all it requires is some chalk and stones.

There are also easy ways to discharge the stress and need not be materialistic. Games do not have to be necessarily only football, cricket, throw ball or volleyball. These kind of native games also should be given importance and is something that crosses the age barrier unlike many physical sports.

II. Method of Playing the Traditional Games

Pallanguzhi - Passuppandi: It is an indoor game, played by two people. It is a strategic game with skillful moves and memory about the position and number of coins kept in the opponent’s pit. The game board has 14 pits.

Benefits: Enhances coordination, memory, observation skills, maths and motor skills.

Sonalu Kattam: The goal of the game is to make all the game pieces reach the center (turn fruit) and the first person to do so wins. It is an indoor/outdoor game, played by 4-8 persons as individuals or groups of two usually.

Benefits: Enhances concentration, strategic skills and quick thinking.

Thattangal-Ezhamkal: It is an indoor game played by two or more people. The player has to keep seven stones in the hand. The game starts with one stone being thrown in the air while other stones below are grabbed by the time the other lands. The player can’t drop any stones while picking and catching and if he does, it passes to the next player. It involves several rounds and the goal is to complete all steps without failing and the first person to complete it wins.

Benefits: Enhances coordination and concentration skills of children and develops sensory skills and hand-eye coordination.

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Thanjavur Kattam (also referred to as Pagadai): It is an indoor game, played by 2-4 persons. The goal of the game is to bring all the six coins home before the opponent does. Cowries (used as dice) are used to move the six coins along the board by the players and players can cut each other in the process to race ahead of others.

Benefits: Enhances quick thinking and decision making Traditional Tamil games like – Kho-Kho, Kabadi, Nondi (one-leg hopping), Skipping, Sagar-gote (five stones) and many more don't require expensive equipment to play, nor does it require any uniform or specific shoes and accessories, all that is required is people to play with and space to play in.

a) Builds life skills

Playing conventional games have always brought kids together, encouraging teamwork and social interaction. Most old school games require agility and movements such as swinging of arms and jumping. It boosts exercise and improves eye-hand and leg coordination. Team games like Kabaddi and Kho – Kho require kids to come up with tactics to defeat their opponent, in turn, helping them to strategize and resolve their differences.

b) Pass our heritage

It is equally important to teach our kids about our culture and tradition as it is to teach them new age concepts. It is vital that they know their roots and have a sense of pride about it. By playing traditional games, children can connect with their heritage through sports and this has a deep lifelong positive impact on them.

c) Bridge generations

Sports is a great connector – across countries, ages, religions and even across socioeconomic statuses too. Sports bridge all gaps pulling people and connecting them emotionally. Playing traditional games as a family brings the family closer and the bond stronger. Children need unstructured playtime and introducing conventional games to the family routine can be a great bonding activity for all. Children who have strong family relationships grow well at all other aspects of life as well.

Traditional games are an extension of Yoga in a practical form as it focuses on physical well-being, refining the senses, strengthening the body and balancing your breathing. All traditional games generally encourage one or more of these three.

Unstructured play has a vital role in developing various aspects of children's growth, behavior, and interpersonal skills. Therefore, there is urgency in re-establish traditional play in children's lives. These *games* can also be of great benefit to them as kids require physical activity, social skills, creativity, imagination, competition, camaraderie and many more benefits that could fill an entire article. In a nutshell, *traditional* children's *games* stimulate the children's growth, physically as well as intellectually.

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