

# Rural Sports & Games of India





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An ITRHD Publication



Indian Trust for Rural Heritage  
and Development

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### **Explore Rural India**

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कर्नल राज्यवर्धन राठौड़ (रिटा.) एवीएसएम  
Col Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd.), AVSM



D.O. No. ....25.... MOS (Hc)YA&S/18

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)  
युवा कार्यक्रम एवं खेल और  
सूचना एवं प्रसारण राज्य मंत्री  
भारत सरकार

MINISTER OF STATE (I / C)  
YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS AND  
MINISTER OF STATE  
INFORMATION & BROADCASTING  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

10 JAN 2018

### **MESSAGE**

I am happy to know that India Trust for Rural Heritage and Development is coming out with a Coffee Table Publication on the theme "Rural Sports in India" as per the MoU signed with the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

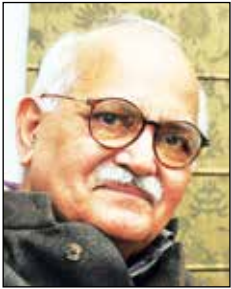
Richness of Indian ethos is most predominantly alive in its rural milieu. Traditions, rituals and collective events like melas, festivals and above all sports in rural India are the most vivid manifestations of the spirit of India.

I am sure that the trust will be able to do justice with the most important theme that it has picked up for the Coffee Table Book and I wish them the best in their endeavours.

**(Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore)**







## Editorial

The drive to play is in a way woven into man's nature. It can be argued that sports emerged out of the basic human necessity for survival. Skills required to hunt and to fight formed the essential features of sports, which have been evident right through the history of sports. Archery, javelin – throw, running, boxing, horse – riding etc. are all exemplifications of this argument. Even an ocular study of the characteristics of the first primitive sports in society would demonstrate their usefulness to hone survival skills. Sigmund Freud, the famous Austrian neurologist propounded the concept of sublimation, which is the transformation of unwanted impulses into something less harmful and often positively beneficial. It can be said therefore, that sports are essentially the sublimation of the instinct for survival and supremacy.

Though rural sports have not had the advantage of intense media coverage or an efficient marketing machinery backed by corporate houses with deep pockets to aid the growth of the sport or its popularity, the sports have subsisted and sustained and in some cases thrived. The approval of rural society and its unabashed expression of marvel and pride at feats of strength and athleticism are largely responsible for the sustenance of rural sports through the ages. A recent example of a sport played in rural India whose fortunes have changed with a large media house putting their lot behind it is that of Kabaddi. All it took was one season of world class production and broadcast for the interest in the game to spike. Prior to that the game largely subsisted on account of its popularity in rural India on the back of the physical prowess necessary to excel in the sport.

Presently, our society as a whole is going through a metamorphosis and the penetration of social media and the internet via smartphones in the heart of rural India is driving the change. This has brought the unfettered potential of information technology to the privacy of almost every young mind in the rural areas of a large number of states. The thought processes of our rural youth are changing with exposure to such unfettered information and they find themselves right in the middle of a full-scale information highway without even having walked on the streets and bylanes of the highway first. The impact of this rapidly changing situation on the social and moral fabric of our rural society remains unmonitored. Though the access to information technology is making the rural youth aware of the boundless opportunities that exist in the world, the recognition of their own circumstances and lack of proper facilities and guidance creates a gulf between the opportunities and their prevailing situation. This is bound to leave them with a sense of frustration and with a longing to bridge the gulf and in the absence of professional guidance, the drive to succeed may blur the lines of morality for them. Sports and specifically rural sports, which is an area of their strength could become the bridge that they could look for to conquer the gulf without compromising morality. A planned and policy oriented fillip to rural sports could possibly go a long way in channelizing the energy and hope in a positive way for sports to become that bridge. In fact, this has become an urgent need of the hour as far as the social fabric of our country is concerned.

Not all sports are financially viable to broadcast but they are a part of our intangible heritage and ought to be preserved and promoted. This requires a nudge from those in charge of policy who can drive sports policy in this direction. A recent initiative, “Khelo India” was a success and is a program that promises to exponentially increase the talent pool out of which, future champions would emerge to bring glory to the country. The organizational structure that would emerge from this program could also prove to be a potent tool to galvanise the resurgence of rural sports that may or may not be Olympic sports.

ITRHD, right from its inception, has attempted to work with different aspects of rural heritage through its projects in different states, and the focus has always been the intangible heritage that needs our attention. The Youth Program conceived by the Trust has executed several sports activities in the areas where the Trust works on its heritage projects and these have been extremely popular with the youth. This publication is a step towards bringing the requisite attention to rural sports, with a view to sustain what we believe to be an integral part of our intangible cultural heritage.

Publications are a very integral part of the ITRHD, complimenting both the vision and the programs that execute the vision. Therefore, we proudly present the third publication in our series of special editions published by the ITRHD, ‘Rural Sports and Games of India’, which follows ‘Traditional Cuisines of India’ and ‘Oral Traditions, Myths and Legends of India’. In this publication we have tried to cover a wide range of articles from different states of India, which will help our readers to explore and know more about rural sports and even some of the popular games that have been played by children through the ages. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every contributor for their efforts and their contribution to this publication. We sincerely thank Vikram Kalra for his continuous support for all our publication.

We would like to put on record our appreciation for the Union Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sports who have kindly supported this publication. We would also like to thank the Hon’ble Minister, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore, for writing the foreword for this publication and for his support. Being an accomplished sportsperson who has brought laurels to the country, there is no one better than him to accentuate the importance of rural sports.

This has been a very interesting publication to work on and we hope that all our readers would enjoy reading it and that the publication, in some small way, propagates the importance of rural sports and the necessity to be more appreciative, aware and responsible towards our heritage, culture and traditions as they have been the cornerstones of the cradle of our glorious civilization.

**S.K.Misra**  
Chairman  
Indian Trust for Rural Heritage  
and Development

**Sangya Chaudhary**  
Director & Editor  
Indian Trust for Rural Heritage  
and Development



## Rural Sports – Archery in Sikkim

*Ashi PemPem Wangmo*

In Sikkim archery is not just a sport of shooting a target but it is intimately connected with tradition, culture and to some extent religion. Sikkim, the sacred land mounted in the Himalayas, is intertwined with five major deities that the people have been worshipping for eons. The people and monks pray to appease these deities on a ceremony called “*Losi-kuring*” which also marks the end of the year.

On this occasion, a puja is held for a span of 12 to 13 days that includes prayers performed to thank the deities and to bless the people with a good year ahead. The villagers gather for picnics and entertain themselves dancing, singing and playing archery. In the past this festivity used to be celebrated in the monasteries, with enthusiasm. The monks indulged in muscle-oriented sports like tug-of-

war where two teams were seen trying to pull the other towards their boundary line. A rural form of shot-put was also played using huge-stones instead of the usual shot-put. A sport resembling pillow-fight was played between two players sitting on a thin bamboo pole suspended at a height, where each player had a grain-filled or a sand-filled sack used for hitting the opponent with an effort to make him fall. This occasion was also important because the monks assembled and settled the accounts of the monastery on this particular day.

Archery as rural sports has magnificently sustained itself over the years, from the times of the aboriginals to the times of the 'Chogyal', and continues even today. Initially archery was seen as a weapon for warfare and hunting by the indigenous people, the *Lepchas*<sup>2</sup> and was used as a mere tool for survival. It was during the time of monarchy that archery was officiated as a structured sport by the Royal families of Sikkim and Bhutan, as both Kings were fond of the game. The first official game was played in the Royal Grounds. It is the only sport that has indisputably stood immemorial even today.

### Art of Bow and Arrow Making

The bamboo used for the bow is called *ju-shing* and cut only during the summers. Selective bamboo found on the ridge of the hills where the wind blows the strongest is preferred and chosen for its tensile strength. The curved portion of the bamboo is meticulously cut, after which it is placed on the "*thaap*" (traditional stove made of mud) for seasoning or for the treating of the wood. This piece of wood is taken out of the '*thaap*' and polished during the winters.

1 Monarch of the former Kingdom of Sikkim

2 The indigenous people of Sikkim



Late Chogyal of Sikkim Palden Thondup Namgyal and the 4th King of Bhutan

The traditional bows are of two kinds. One is the "*Chaa-jhu*", where the bow is made out of the whole curved portion of the bamboo. The other is called the "*Taab-jhu*" where two pieces of bamboo are connected with a bamboo wedge bounded by a wire. "*Ju-tha*" or in simple words the string, was earlier made by woven nettle fibres but later replaced by jute fibres. The leaves of local shrubs called *titepati* and *banmara* were rubbed on the string for strength.

Arrows are referred to as "*deomingalo*" and the fletching constitutes of feathers procured in high altitudes. Apart from the normal arrows, special ones called "*Pedo*", ("*do*" means feather) where the feather needs not be trimmed due to its naturally suitable shape. These perfectly shaped feathers are attained from the wings of falcons, eagles, hawks, etc.

“*Thengo*” is the pointed part of arrow or an arrow-head made of iron “*cha*” by blacksmiths. “*Lagshu*” is a leather-made thimble-like glove, used by the shooters.

### Transition of Bows used in Archery

During 1993-1994, bows made of carbon fibre from the US called single leaf re-curve bows were used. The arrows were made of steel aluminum alloy. In Sikkim, the Bear Company make is used. The traditional bamboo bows and re-curve bows require the same skill, but re-curve bows have the advantage of being durable and the throw is constant, irrespective of the weather; while the throw of bamboo bows change according to the weather. In 1997-1998 re-curve bows used by the Americans were adopted by traditional archery. And finally in 2005, compound bow/pulley bow took over the traditional bows. The advantage is that the range is fixed, and the shot is lot more precise. Bows are imported by the players of Sikkim. The most famous company manufacturing these bows are “*Hoyt*”, but arrows made by others, like Mathews Reflex are also used. The best arrows are made by Easton. The latest compound bow, used popularly, is “*hyperedge*”.

### The Game

The format of the game played in Sikkim comprises of 7 players in a team, where the first shooter is referred to as “*Phuda*”; the best player is saved for the last, called “*Madha*”. Each player gets 2 arrows and shoots alternatively. The field “*Bha-deo*” has two targets made of wood fixed on opposite ends of the field. The targets have shields behind it called the “*baa-rip*”. Some terms used in archery in Sikkim are:

*Kari* – hit the target 2 points

*Dagha* – hit near the target 1 point

35 is the total points

*Pheri* – one person hits a target as the opponent

*Charo* – when the same team hits the target

*Cha-do* – Cheered by the referee



Local Tenzing Bhutia playing the game

The Winning team performs a ceremony *bha-cheshi* the thanking ceremony. Whilst the game is on, it is customary for the shooter to be teased and taunted by the opponents with the intention to distract him.

Archery has been gaining popularity in Sikkim as there are a lot of participants from Bhutan. An association called the Sikkim Archery Association organizes the annual Archery Tournament in Sikkim, named the Chief Minister’s Gold Cup Tournament. Participants from the neighbouring country Bhutan and neighbouring towns of Pedong and Kalimpong attend this tournament. Pedong and Kalimpong players were actively involved when the recurve and bamboo bows were used, but after the

introduction of the compound bow the players from Pedong and Kalimpong have stopped participating. The shooters from Sikkim get invited by Bhutanese archers especially to Gomtu, Samtse, Phuentsoling, Thimpu and Paro. They make regular visits six or seven times in a year. The differences between Bhutan and Sikkim archery are that while Bhutan has a format of 11 players, the latter has 7 players. Bhutan chooses the best of three that consists of 25 points. Sikkim follows the race to 51, where the first team to reach the winning scores, wins.

Archery involves culture and traditions, where the archers go to monasteries to pray for their safety and victory. At times the prayers also invoke incantation/ enchantment where the names of the opponent players are written on pieces of paper and taken to monks praying that those players do not shoot the targets. It is believed by the people that many a time the enchantments work. Age-old traditions are practiced by some players even today; it is believed that archers have to be pure before going to a tournament, hence married men leave their wives the previous night and sleep in monasteries to maintain purity. Superstitions of women not being allowed to touch the bows are also strictly followed, fearing the consequence of losing the game.

Archery can be considered not only as a sport but also as an inspiration and derivation in the development of local architecture of Sikkim. It may be seen on the top of pillars of monasteries even today where the pillars continue to the ceiling in big and small curves shaped like bows. The first curve known as <sup>3</sup>*Ju-thong* and the five small curves combined together to form a long scallop known as <sup>4</sup>*Ju-ring*. The *Ju-thong* depicts the King and Queen and the *ju-ring* signifies royal elephants, royal horse, royal scepter, royal sword and the Prime Minister. This form of design

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3 *Ju-thong* – small bow

4 *Ju-ring* – big bow

was exclusively built for the royal family and monasteries.

Archery has fortunately been passed down graciously from generation to generation imbibing in the youngster's nostalgia of Sikkim as a Kingdom. In recent times, attempts have been made to revive other rural sports that existed in the past. In Rabongla, a town located in South Sikkim, during the festival of <sup>5</sup>*Pang Lhabsol*, the monastery encourages games like climbing the greasy pole, races which involves carrying heavy boulders, tug of war and pillow fight. With the changing times, people have been more eager to cling on to past cultures and way of living stringed together what they consider a mark of identity and belonging.

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5 *Pang Lhabsol* – an annual festival to commemorate the consecration of Mount Kangchendzonga as the guardian deity of Sikkim



## Rural Sports – A Way of Life in Haryana

*Harbans Singh*

There have been periods of history when the stream of throbbing cultural life in Haryana has appeared to have vanished. But scratch the surface and one finds its uninterrupted subterranean flow in every nook and corner of the State. When some of the archeological excavations are analyzed, we realize that the likes of Thanesar, dating the Harshavardhan period, are comparatively young

while Rakhigarhi in Hisar takes us back to the Indus valley civilization, which is, of course one of the oldest in human history.

In between the two archeological sites lies the so-called 'Jarasandh ka Teela' in Assandh in Karnal district of the State. The locals claim with the conviction of an uncluttered mind



that it was actually an *akhara* that was used by Jarasandh for wrestling. He, of course, was a prominent character from Mahabharata who formed a triumvirate along with Kansa and Shishupal against Lord Krishna. He was also renowned for his skills as a master practitioner of *malla-yuddh*, as wrestling was known in India then. This belief in that mound being the *akhara* of Jarasandh is so strong that no one believes that it is actually a Buddhist *stupa*, which is bigger than the more celebrated Sarnath *stupa*. It also matters little that one of the wives of Ashoka the Great was from Assandh and was known as Assandhmitra, a follower of Buddhism, which also explains the presence of the *stupa* there. But, importantly, this belief reiterates the centrality of wrestling in the life of Haryana.

Even as Haryana reinvents itself in every age and era, it is the love of wrestling that is the common thread that strings the various eras together even when the popular perception about the State and its people is of a society that is deeply rooted in conservatism. Of course, it is a citadel of traditions and conventions but it does change, and rather rapidly when a new idea is not in contradiction of its basic beliefs. Wrestling falls in that category. With large part of Haryana boasting of its Mahabharata connection, it is safe to presume that *malla-yuddh* was a



favourite pastime of the residents here. The discipline, as known to the ancients, was not governed by many rules, with breaking of the joints being acceptable and the risk of death not being unknown. It was also not bound by time limit as the purpose was to either pummel the opponent into capitulation or incapacitate him. The *malla-yoddhas* were more like the Roman gladiators though they did not fight for sports and entertainment. It was a deadly serious art of combat.

This form of combat, that was not only an integral part of the battles between rulers and armies but also a sport, remained in vogue till the medieval ages and is epitomized in the 13<sup>th</sup> century treatise on the subject, *malla-purana*. It transformed itself when the glitter of Mughals began to influence almost all aspects of Indian life. The Mughals, as is only too well documented by the history books, were enamored of the Persian culture and encouraged the synthesis of Persian *varzesh-e pahlavāni* with the native *malla-yuddh*. Thus emerged wrestling or *pahalwani* that we knew before the international exposure and the need to be part of the Olympic movement made us change once again to adopt the modern form of wrestling. It is a combination of both styles where the rule became to combat till one of the contenders submitted in a free-style wrestling but



breaking of joints was not to be the legitimate goal. With the violent aspect of the contest gone, it gained popularity very soon since earlier only those took part in it, who had the perspective of a gladiator or a soldier and knew that death is part of the occupational hazard. Thus, in rural India it became a sport that drew young kids to it.

Apart from the sporting aspect, the fact that *pahalwani* was patronized by the rulers and the ruling class helped it to flourish, and anybody who had a reasonable status in society was obliged to extend his patronage to the local *akhara* and those who could perform under its banner. It also helped in warding off any attempt by a neighbouring *zamindar* to encroach upon the land or the sphere of influence of a neighboring village or *zamindar*. But *malla-yuddh* and *pahalwani* were not just a continuation of the tradition that traces its history to Jarasandh and Bhim, the two great wrestlers from the Mahabharata era. The

relationship goes even further to establish linkages with Lord Hanuman, who himself was a great exponent of the art of *malla-yuddh*. By popular belief, the rural Haryana considers Kaithal as the birth-place of Lord Hanuman and thus he is not only venerated all over the State but everyone is obliged to learn wrestling. This also explains as to why the Indian *Gurus*, unlike their western counterparts, lay so much emphasis on the celibacy of a *pahalwan*!

It is not unusual to find more than one *akhara* in any village of the State. With none willing to accept the supremacy of a *Guru* who might be having a different method of coaching, a retired *pahalwan* of means takes to grooming youngsters in his own image, and hence the plethora of *akharas*. They are, in fact, schools of wrestling. These wrestlers normally fend for themselves and are sustained by their families before they attain some stardom, but a reasonably good *pahalwan* also makes money by participating in





competitions held all over the State. Over a period of time, the dark side of *pahalwani* too emerged with politicians and criminals using the muscle-power of these wrestlers for furthering their own interests. This, however, is on the wane in recent years.

Haryana, as mentioned earlier, is a society that resists change when it knocks their doors but once it realizes the advantages of change, it embraces with all its attendant fallout. The transition from mud wrestling to mat-wrestling and all the Olympic rules governing it is one such change. How strong the resistance has been can be gauged by the fact the first medal by Khashaba Dada Saheb Jadhav in this discipline for India was won during the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki and yet no State felt inspired by the feat. In fact, India remained indifferent to modern wrestling for a long time even though minor stars did shine here and there. It was only at the beginning of the new millennium that the winds of change began to sweep through Haryana. The fact

that so many wrestlers from Haryana vie for glory at the national and international level is a story of transformation and attitudinal change. The sustained successes of Sushil Kumar at the Olympics and also that of Yogeshwar Dutt have inspired a new generation. Wrestling is no longer a tool of forcing the opponent into submission; it is a sport that needs brain along with brawn and brooks no violent tools to establish victory. Thus, today mat-wrestling has become as popular as the *akhara*-wrestling.

A bye-product of success and international recognition has also yielded an unintended result. With awareness regarding gender rights and equality growing, the unheard happened when young female wrestlers, of course with the support of their families, also took to wrestling. Naturally endowed with strength and availability of milk and *ghee*, led by the Geetika Jakhar of Hisar and Phogat sisters from Bhiwani, there has been virtual revolution, influencing not only the sport but also the gender rights. The icing on the



cake was provided by Sakshi Malik of Rohtak, who won a bronze medal at the Rio Olympics in 2016. Today, Haryana presents a picture of a society that is constantly struggling to forge a new identity with a section pulling it back and the other, fueled by national acclamation and rewards following success, bringing more and more families within the fold of pro-changers.

An identical fate has followed another very popular sport in the rural Haryana. *Kabaddi* is another sport that comes naturally to the young in the villages. There would hardly be a boy who has not played *kabaddi* at one time or another. But, *kabaddi* as the country knows it today, is comparatively a late entrant in Haryana. The original *kabaddi* of the State, as also Punjab and many other regions of Pakistan, was very different from what is recognized by many countries as well as the Asian Games organizers. This *kabaddi* was played by a team but true to the character of the region, was also an individual sport more dependent upon

strength. It is played in an arena made of a circle and but for recent standardization of rules governing the number of players, there was no binding limit on their number. A raiding player had to touch one of the defenders, failing which he loses a point; but, if more than one defender touch or hold the raider then the defending team loses two points. Usually it is a battle between two players where the defenders hold the raider and he tries to escape thereby making it a tussle and show of strength, speed and agility between two players.

But giving a lie to the popular perception about Punjab taking to change much more easily, Haryana stole a march over it by adapting to the change of rules. As a result, national *kabaddi* became more popular. It was demonstrated to the world way back at the 1936 Berlin Olympics but could not make much headway. A contact sport played by 7 players in a playing arena of 10 meters x 13 meters, it became popular in many Asian countries

by the persistent efforts of India and is now played and followed by many other countries as well. One reason for its rising popularity is that it has moved away from the clay-playing arena to mat in the indoor stadiums. A few rules have been tweaked to make it faster and more spectator-friendly. With many corporate houses sensing an opportunity, it has found a new life with sponsorships and live telecasts.

Interestingly, in *Kabaddi* too, Haryana has made a swift and easy transition from clay play-fields to the mat. In fact, it has been as natural as the one made by the wrestlers. Probably in both the disciplines the availability of equipment and encouragement in the form of financial incentives and assured jobs was the impetus that it needed to play with freedom and devote to excellence without the nagging complaints of the family to settle down in life. But wrestling, male and female, along with kabaddi also chronicles the sociology of the State. Even a cursory glance at it shows that it has defied the stereotyped image of a Haryanvi who refuses to change, insists upon following the archaic code of life and remains defined by values that are obsolete and obstructive. They have also demonstrated to the urban India that rural India is not averse to change per se. But they need to be convinced about the brighter side of change.

A change is accepted without reservation only if it is seen to be a part of the evolutionary process. Wrestling falls in that category. From *malla-yuddh* to *pahalwani* and now to the mat-wrestling it has been a process that has not compromised the basics of the sport. Establishing superiority over the opponent is still the ultimate goal though it is no longer a tool of waging war. Similar script has been followed by *kabaddi*. With mankind becoming sensitive to the violent aspect of life, sport as mode of recreation as well as of catering to national and regional pride, has succeeded in satisfying the primordial instincts without losing out on the pleasure aspect of it.

But the acceptance of female wrestlers into the arena where they also wrestle with male partners in practice sessions is a case study for the sociologists. It is also a lesson to the leaders of the society where the pro-changers and the anti-changers are always at loggerheads. Stretching the limits of the boundaries is an inherent tendency and once the women were made to realize that they were in no way inferior to men, sooner or later all the male bastions were bound to fall. Female wrestlers and kabaddi players are proof of this. In the process if the success that follows brings rewards and prestige for the family then it is further hastened and fueled by it.





# Kalaripayattu

## The Martial Art of Kerala

*G. Venu*

*Kalaripayattu* is Kerala's indigenous martial art form. All forms of performing arts in Kerala, that make use of the human body as a medium of expression reveals the influence of *Kalaripayattu*. Even though battle tactics using different weapons form an important part of the *Kalaripayattu*, like all other martial art forms, the discipline of the art form draws its attention more towards avoiding

conflict. The physical and mental maturity and self-restraint are the paramount achievements towards which a *Kalari* artiste should strive for. There is a popular anecdote about the *Kalari* practitioners per se.

A man approached a master to learn *Kalaripayattu*. The training was started at an auspicious hour, following all the traditions. At the end of a year, the guru asked the disciple,



‘from how many enemies would you be able to defend yourself? ‘The disciple replied,’ I can easily stop about ten thousand people.’ The guru said, ‘that is not enough, you need to train more’ and the training continued. After one more year, the guru repeated the question and the disciple said, ‘I can defend against five thousand men.’ The Guru replied, ‘that is not enough and you need more training.’ Each year, the guru would repeat his question, but as the training progressed, the disciple’s number of enemies he could fight against decreased. ‘I can fight against two thousand, one thousand, five hundred...’ and so it went on. After the training of 12 years was completed, the disciple replied that he could defend himself against a single enemy. The guru was not satisfied, and directed that the training to be continued.

The true champion is the one who can fight and win against one’s own self and not how many external enemies he could fight against. The real ability lies in avoiding one fight, instead of fighting one hundred battles. The *Kalari* practitioner should not only have the frontal vision, but he/she should also have the peripheral vision as well as the ability to see even one’s own backside for any slight movement that happens around. This is a state when mind and body fuses together. For this, the body should become



the eyes, or in other words, the practitioner should be able to see with his/her body.

According to the legendary work, ‘*Keralolpathi*,’ the land of Kerala had been reclaimed from the sea by sage Parasurama, who threw his axe towards the sea. Parasurama was a Brahmin who had received training in martial arts. There is a myth that Parasurama had acquired the skill in martial arts through propitiating Siva with the aim of slashing down the ego and pride of the *Kshathriya*’s (rules). He had also become the owner of a rare collection of extraordinarily powerful weapons and according to another legend, it is said that Parasurama had popularised *Kalaripayattu*. *Kalaripayattu* has two schools, the southern and the northern disciplines. It is believed that the northern style was said to have originated from Parasurama, while the southern style is believed to have originated from Sage Agasthya. Sage Agasthya, who had been an authority on the *Vedas* as well as in martial arts and ayurveda, is worshipped in Kerala.

Another aspect of *Kalaripayattu* is the different *vazhi*’s (styles). These styles are known as the Hanuman *vazhi*, Bali *vazhi* and Bheeman *vazhi*. The Hanuman style incorporates rapid movements and also contains many rare secrets for

winning over the enemy. The Bali *vazhi* aims at rendering the enemy inactive by diverting his techniques and the Bheeman Style gives prominence to physical strength. References to numerous legendary practitioners of *Kalaripayattu* could be found in the folk songs of Kerala, especially the *Vadakkan Pattu's*. Thus, many of these illustrious masters like Unniyarcha, Aromal Chekavar, Thacholi Othena Kurup, Kathiroom Gurukkal, Chanthu, Aringodar and others have become immortal through these songs. Pazhassi Raja (prince from the royal dynasty Pazhassi, Kottayam) and Veluthambi Dalawa (prime minister of the Indian kingdom of Travancore) who had fought against the British colonial forces during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were also well-trained practitioners of *Kalaripayattu*. The styles of *Kalaripayattu* practised in the southern and northern parts of Kerala contain slight differences.

*Kalaripayattu* was learned not only as a means of self-defense, but as a martial art form also. Training in *Kalaripayattu* was part of the elementary education throughout Kerala, cutting across the boundaries of caste and creed. The *Vadakkan Pattu's* narrates the legends of warriors who had gained mastery of *Kalaripayattu* and were hailed as protectors of the region through their battle skills. The *Vadakkan Pattu's* could be broadly divided into two – *Puthooram Pattu's* and *Thacholi Pattu's*. The protagonist of the *Puthooram Pattu's* is a brave woman called *Puthooram Unniyarcha* the daughter of Kannappa Chekavar and the younger sister of Aromal Chekavar –another legendary warrior. Unniyarcha is believed to have lived between A.D. 1549 – 1620, her life had become the subject of many folk songs and there are many stories about her adventures.





According to one such story, Unniyarcha had a dream during her mid-day nap that the festival of *Allimalarkkavu* was going on at the temple, (also known as *Lokanarkavu*) and on waking up; she decided to visit the temple. The journey was through a thick forest area and the songs give a detailed description of Unniyarcha getting ready and dressing up for the journey. On seeing Unniyarcha ready to go to the temple, all bejewelled, her husband Kunhiraman, her mother-in-law and other relatives tried their level best to dissuade her. To reach *Allimalarkkavu*, she had to cross the thickly wooded areas, frequented with bandits and the gorgeous Unniyarcha would naturally attract many dangers. But, Unniyarcha did not change her mind at any cost and neither did she prefer the protection of armed escorts. So, she left alone, but not before wrapping around her beloved *urumi* (the long, flexible sword) around her waist. As expected, soon after she entered the deep forest some bandits appeared and attempted to molest her. Unniyarcha at first requested them politely not to harm her, as she was the sister of the great warrior Aromal Chekavar. But that did not deter them and they further tried to abuse her when Unniyarcha swiftly untied the *urumi* and in lightning speed, slashed off the heads of the offenders. Only after many of them lost their lives within the span of seconds they realized the might of their adversary. Immediately, they fell on their knees, prostrated before her and begged for mercy. There are also stories about how Unniyarcha had fought to protect the other women in her village and for more than three and a half centuries, Unniyarcha had been celebrated in Kerala as the epitome of bravery and the freedom of women.

In the legends about the origin of Kerala, it is said that 36,000 Brahmin's were ordained as armed warriors in Kerala and 1008 *Nalpatheeradi Sthanam Kalari's* (training centres) were set up for their training. The *Kalari's* are divided into many, according to the size and structure, like *Pathinetteeradi Kalari*, *Muppatheeradi Kalari*, *Nalpatheeradi*

*Kalari*, *Ambatheeradi Kalari*, etc. The utilisation patterns of the *Kalari's* differ according to the size. The size of *Ambatheeradi Kalari*, is 52 x 26 feet and these *Kalari's* are used to conduct competitions. The *Nalpatheeradi Kalari*, with a size of 42 x 21 feet is used for the daily practice. The *Muppatheeradi Kalari*, measuring 32 x 16 feet is used for personal practice and the *Pathinetteeradi Kalari*, with a size of 18 x 9 feet is used for practice of the retired and senior masters.

*Kalari* is usually made by digging a pit, which is covered all around by an earthen wall of 2 feet in height and the pillars are used to hold the roof. The *Kalari* is made below the ground level so as to reduce the heat radiation. All *Kalari's* should have sacred spaces marked out as *Poothara*, *Ganapathi Thara* and *Guru Thara*. The *Poothara* is a sacred space of worship with seven steps. This space is believed to hold the presence of *Bhagavathy* (Goddess). *Ganapathi Thara* is used for worships to ward off obstacles and *Guru Thara* propitiates the spirits of the ancestors. There are many rituals that both the masters and teachers should follow rigorously in the *Kalari*. Every morning and evening lamps should be lit at the *Poothara*, *Ganapathi Thara* and *Guru Thara*, which also needs to be decorated with *tulsi* leaves and other flowers. Numerous *Kalari's* had functioned throughout the length and breadth of Kerala in the ancient days. There were *Kalari's* for all castes and communities, ranging from the upper castes like Brahmin's and Nair's to the lower communities in the caste hierarchy. It is said that as part of the higher levels of training in *Kalari*, skills such as disguising oneself as someone else and magic were also present and it is also believed that experts from *Thulunad* used to give the training in such skills.

The *Kalaripayattu* practitioners needed to spend their lives with utmost discipline. The students of *Kalaripayattu* were not allowed to indulge in practices like drinking or smoking that would adversely affect the health. It was also specified that the practitioners should not sleep during



daytime or stay awake at night. The disciple was to rever the *Kalari* just like a temple. While entering the *Kalari*, any kind of slippers or sandals should be left outside and the practitioner should enter with his right foot first. Then he should prostrate before the *Poothara*, *Ganapathi Thara* and *Guru Thara* with utmost devotion and before the training starts, the disciple should also pay respect before the master. The guru would give instructions necessary for each item through *Vaithari*'s. Usually, the training takes place from 6 to 9 in the morning and from 5 to 8 in the evening. Training should be imparted at least five days every week and during training medicinal oil should be applied on the body. The disciples usually tie a tight waistband made out of a piece of cloth with one span width. According to tradition, the length of this cloth or '*kacha*' should be equal to 24 forearm measurements. This is tied around the waist tightly as protection of the genital organ and the navel region. The tying of this cloth will control and provide the energy flow for body movements. The leg exercises followed in *Kalaripayattu* are divided into 12 for e.g.- *Nerkkal*, *Thirichikkal*, *Konkaal* etc. and it is followed by *Chuvadu*'s (position of legs), like *Ankachuvadu*, *Vattachuvadu* and *Konachuvadu*. The most important body postures in *Kalaripayattu* are known as *Vadivu*'s (refers to a particular animal posture). The famous eight *Vadivu*'s that are usually followed in *Kalaripayattu* were composed after closely observing the movements of birds and animals.

### ***Vadivukal* (Postures)**

The *Vadivu*'s (postures) used in *Kalaripayattu* have been designed by closely analysing the body movements of birds and animals. According to the great masters, a perfect practitioner of *Kalaripayattu* should possess the lightness and flexibility of a cat, the roar of a lion and the courage and adventurousness of the dog.

### ***Gaja Vadivu* (Elephant Posture)**

Relentless training of this posture will help the practitioner achieve the immense strength needed to combat even a large group of adversaries.

### ***Simha Vadivu* (Lion Posture)**

While taking this posture, the practitioner should fix his/her eyes steadily, keep the left leg in front and right leg behind, stretch out the left arm in front, take a low posture, then leap forward and again keep a low posture like the lion getting ready to strike.

### ***Varaha Vadivu* (Boar Posture)**

Through this posture, the practitioner aims at possessing the fatal style of attack by the boar, which moves in an undulating pattern like the waves in the ocean. The style of attack through this undulating movement, at first keeping a low posture, then rising up, is generally considered as more dangerous than the other postures.

### ***Aswa Vadivu* (Horse Posture)**

This posture reflects the strength and stance of the horse that is getting ready to sprint ahead.

### ***Marjara Vadivu* (Cat Posture)**

This posture incorporates the physical lightness of the cat. It adopts the style of the cat, which shrinks its own body before striking at the adversary.

### ***Matsya Vadivu (Fish Posture)***

This posture aims at achieving the ability to jump high like the fish.

### ***Sarppa Vadivu (Snake Posture)***

*Sarppa Vadivu* aims at achieving the ability to maintain the physical flexibility like that of a snake. One hand needs to be kept in a rising position resembling the hood of a snake, while doing this posture.

### ***Kukkuda Vadivu (Cockerel Posture)***

The style of the cockerel that makes use of its beak and wings for attacks is applied in this posture.

### ***Mayoora Vadivu (Peacock Posture)***

*Mayoora Vadivu* incorporates the training of attacking the adversaries making use of both the feet and wings, like the peacock dancing in full majesty. After that follows the *Adavu's* (stance and movements) or techniques for attack and defense. The 16 *Adavu's* in *Kalaripayattu* are quite well known. The techniques of *Kalaripayattu* has four divisions, including *Meithari* or *Meyyadakkam*, *Kolthari*, *Ankathari* and *Verum Kai*.

### ***Meithari***

Is the preliminary step for creating physical flexibility and aims at physical discipline. The disciple should strive through *Meithari* to attain control of the body, sense of direction and to develop balance and speed. The movements are differentiated through the *vaithari's* (rhythmic syllables). These *vaithari's* have different versions in each *Kalari's*. *Meithari* forms the foundation of the training of *Kalaripayattu* and the famous 18 *adavu's* of *Kalaripayattu* belong to this category

### ***Kolthari***

Is training with wooden sticks. It trains the disciple to block the attack of the adversary using wooden sticks and then

conduct attack. There are stipulations regarding the length of the sticks and rotation of the sticks is an important part of this training. When the practitioner rotates the stick all around him/her while remaining stationery or while moving backward or forward, the whole body could be protected from attacks coming from all directions. '*Kettukkari Payattu*,' is an important item in *Kolthari*. This technique needs to be practised while remaining in '*Vattakkal*' (a low stance with feet kept parallel to each other.) There are different techniques of *Kettukkari Payattu* like jump and attack or jump and block or rotate and block. An important type of stick used in *Kolthari* is known as *Muchan* or *Kuruwadi*, which measures three spans in length. The sticks for *Kolthari* are usually made with very strong wood.

### ***Ankathari***

Is the technique that makes use of sharp weapons, like sword, shield, spear, *urumi* (flexible sword), dagger etc. The most important weapons used in *Ankathari* are usually the sword and shield. Making the adversary lose his dagger in the midst of the battle is an important technique in this. The long, flexible sword called *urumi* is very dangerous to use and the shield is used to block the strokes of *urumi*. Spear is a long stick with a sharp knife fixed on its tip. Shields are used for blocking the strikes with the spear.

### ***Verum Kai (Empty Hand)***

This is the most important technique in *Kalaripayattu*. *Verum Kai* or the empty hand incorporates techniques to escape from the enemy without using any weapons. For those who have specialised in this technique, it becomes possible to defend against the enemy wielding weapons with empty hand. This technique could be learned and applied only if the practitioner is able to maintain the correct steps as well as a great degree of courage. There are many types of *Verum Kai* techniques and there are special trainings for each of these techniques like beating with the leg or kicking

with the leg. The most important among the techniques of *Verum Kai* is the *Marma Kai*, or the usage of hand on the vital points. The *Marma Vidya* is the technique that renders the adversary helpless by the mere touching or hitting at the vital points in the human body. It is also mandatory that the practitioner of *Marma Vidya* should also learn the technique to save the adversaries who are overpowered with its help. Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamikal, one of the greatest spiritual leaders of 20<sup>th</sup> century Kerala, himself was a perfectly trained practitioner of martial art forms. He also had a great skill in *Marma Vidya* and there are many anecdotes detailing his expertise in this form. Once, during a journey, he was attacked by a group of bandits. At first he calmly requested them to let him go, as he had to reach somewhere urgently. But the bandits did not heed his words and continued to attack him. Then, Swamikal applied the *Marma Vidya* and rendered the attackers immobile by merely touching them softly on the vital points of the body and continued on his journey. When he returned the same way the next morning, the bandits were still there; in the same posture that he had left them the previous day. Then, Swamikal freed them before continuing his journey. Many such stories are heard about the expertise of Chattambi Swamikal in *Kalaripayattu*.

### **Kalari Treatment**

To complete the training in *Kalaripayattu*, it was mandatory to learn the treatment processes developed under the practice. Many different types of massages are applied as part of the *Kalaripayattu* training with the aim of increasing the flexibility of the body. Most important among these massages are the *Kai Thirummu*, (massage using the hand) and *Chavutti Thirummu* (massage using the feet). The *Kalari Uzhichil* (*Kalari* massage) is the massage for the practitioners. In later times, as the classical performing art forms like *Kathakali* started to develop, massage as part of their physical training – especially the influence of the *Kalari* massage, was strongly felt.

Even though the knowledge of *Kalaripayattu* had been maintained and conserved with the aim of protecting and propitiating the values like justice, ethics and honesty, many types of misuse had crept into the practice at various junctures of history. '*Ankam Vettu*,' is one among such practices. It was the practice of hiring trained warriors to fight with each other for settling disputes of various kinds between local rulers. The fight would have to continue till the death of either one party. Usually, *Chekava's*, who were trained professionals of *Kalaripayattu* and who had absolutely no interest in the said matters, were hired for this purpose. The tragedy here is that either one of them would die in a most tragic manner. However, the practice of '*Ankam Vettu*' has vanished for the last couple of centuries but *Kalaripayattu* still plays a very important role in the lives of the people of Kerala.

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Ramesan (Lakshmanan Gurukal) of Hindustan Kalari Sangham, Calicut.



## A Day at the Races

*Maureen Liebl*

Kerala's famous annual Nehru Trophy Boat Race originated in 1952, when an impromptu race was organized for the benefit of the visiting Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Pandit-ji was so entranced by the sight that he leapt into the winning boat, disregarding all security concerns and protocol. Back in Delhi, he had a silver trophy made for the victors, and a tradition was born. The races are held near Alappuzha (formerly Alleppey) and attract many

thousands of viewers, including foreign tourists. The beautiful *chundan* snake boats are themselves works of art, and the extraordinary skill and prowess of the boatmen are of true Olympic level. The following piece was written in 1987, after witnessing the 35<sup>th</sup> annual race. The event is now in its 66<sup>th</sup> year, but the excitement and the beauty remain. And the splendid champions of Kainakary mentioned in the article are still very much in the picture,



having recaptured the trophy six times in the following years. It is an event worth experiencing!

### **August 1987**

The first rays of morning light on the second Saturday in August send shivers of excitement coursing through the normally placid village of Kainakary. For weeks now, the concerns of ordinary life have been forgotten, as villages throughout Kerala's backwaters have devoted all their attention to preparations for the 35<sup>th</sup> Nehru Trophy Boat Race. The magnificent carved wooden racing boats have been smeared with turmeric and coconut for auspiciousness, and with sardine oil for lightning speed. Thousands of oarsmen have undergone rigorous practice, encouraged, fed, and cheered on by their villages. And finally the day has arrived. A day of intense effort and

splendid excitement, at the culmination of which the best of the giant *chundan* snake boats will battle for the coveted silver Nehru trophy. The silver Nehru trophy that Kainakary triumphantly brought home last year. The Nehru trophy that thirteen other villages are fiercely determined to wrest from them. The trophy that Kainakary fully intends to retain today. At 5:12 pm, exactly.

In fourteen backwaters villages, the sleek *chundan* boats are slipped into the water. Fourteen hundred rowers take their places, each with one leg neatly tucked under, one leg over the side of the boat. Four steersmen stand on the high arching sterns of each boat, and the "pacers" thumping blocks at the ready, position themselves. At exactly the same moment, in each boat, one hundred voices sing out the lilting refrains of the classic boat warriors' ballad, and Kerala is off to the races.



At Alleppey, excitement grows steadily throughout the day, until it reaches fever pitch. During the ceremonial procession, preliminary heats and finals for smaller craft, thousands of fans, crammed onto small boats, dance madly and sing at the top of their lungs. Cheering spectators line the shores. But throughout the long afternoon, everyone is waiting for one moment only, and finally the announcement comes. "5:12 p.m., CHUNDAN FINALS, WINNERS FROM HEATS NUMBERS ONE THROUGH FOUR."

Tension crackles through the afternoon, and the crowd becomes suddenly silent. The starter's flag is slowly lifted, and then, quickly, falls. Four huge boats with high proud sterns fly out over the water. Four different rhythms, thumped and whistled, pace the precision rowing. Four hundred oars, moving as fast as two dips per second,

send showers of spray into the air. Commentary of the announcer is totally drowned out by the crowd. The four boats separate briefly, then move closer together again. Now one leading slightly, now another, now two boats exactly, perfectly even, until at the very last moment, with a superhuman burst of energy, Kainakary shoots over the line.

Absolute pandemonium reigns. Entire boatloads of Kainakary supporters hurl themselves into the water in delirious abandon. The conquering heroes themselves glide up to the VIP stand with a noble attempt at dignity, but as the precious trophy is handed back to Kainakary wild ecstasy takes over, and the soaking wet boatmen leap up into the stands to dance with and be hugged by sponsors, dignitaries, officials, fans, and one surprised group of French tourists.



Tonight there will be immense celebrations, lavish feasts, and more than a little drinking of *toddy*. The trophy will be taken in procession through all the wards of the village of Kainakary, which will bask in the glory of its *chundan* warriors for many months to come.

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Kalaripayattu , The Martial Art of Kerala



A villager pulling a the bike with four men with a rope tied to his ear

## Rural Sports of Punjab

*Vikram Kalra*

About 66 percent of Punjab's population lives in the villages and there are about 7000 villages. The villagers have their own ways to find happiness and enjoyment either through sports or other recreational activities like folk dances, folk music etc. The people of Punjab play a wide variety of sports and games, ranging from modern games like hockey, cricket, basket ball, volley ball, athletics to the

more traditional games such as *kabaddi*, *kushti*, *gatka* etc. There are over 100 traditional games and sports of Punjab. A number of sporting legends have their roots in the villages of Punjab and they have brought glory to the state and the country. With this spirit of adventure and physical endurance, the Punjabi's have made tremendous contribution to the world of competitive sports.

Today in many villages of Punjab rural sports competitions are being held. These village sports have given an opportunity to many sports men to showcase their talents to the outer world and also helped in the development of the villages. There are a number of traditional rural sports and games for men, women and children. Male sports and games include *Kushtian*, *Khuddo khoondi*, *Gulli danda*, *Rassakashi*, *Dand parhangrha*, *Bandar keela*, *Tibla tiblee*, *Rabb di Khuti* and *Noon miani*. Some of the games played by ladies are *Thaal*, *Kikli*, *Adhi chharhapa*, *Gheeta pathar*, *Peecho bakree*, *Hara samundar*, *Khidu* and *Pangurha*. The children play *Lattoo*, *Bantey*, *Chicho chich ganerian*, *Kidi kada* or *Stapoo*, *Shatranj*, *Lukan miti*, *Kokla chhapaki*, *Alye patalye*, *Bhanda bhandarya*, *Kooka kanghrhey* and *Pithoo*

### **Gatka and the Festival of Holla Mohalla**

India had been attacked by invaders from many centuries. Punjab was the first state to face these attacks from Greeks, Afghans, Persians and Mughals. The Sikhs mastered the art

of *gatka* and perfected its use in the battle. The techniques involved were extremely effective for defence and attack and many battles were won by the Sikhs, despite almost always numbering far fewer than the opposite forces.

*Gatka* is the traditional martial art of the Sikhs. It is based on the basic principle of unification of the mind, body and spirit in a rhythm of life to train a saint-soldier to be able to defend himself or herself. The martial art, in which *gatka* is used as a weapon, is called *gatkabaazi*. The word *gatka* actually refers to the wooden stick used in training called *soti* and because the main weapon used in this martial art is *gatka*, hence people often call this martial art *gatka*, instead of *gatkabaazi*. Now, it is very common in Sikh community to use the word *gatka* for all traditional martial arts, in which traditional weapons are used. Today, the art of *gatka* is practiced by Sikhs and passed through generations since their sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, but it was mainly promoted by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh.





The art of *gatka* involves a series of integral combat training systems that include several systems of duels armed - unarmed and the use of weapons of defense and offence. It aims at the coordination of mind & body. When learning the art, you go from bare handed combat to using various *shastars* (weapons). The first *shastar* that a student uses is a stick also called *marati* normally made out of bamboo through which they learn the basic physical movements. Once these techniques have been learnt, then they can be applied with other *shastars*.

Different weapons were learnt like the *khanda* (two-edged sword), the *tabar* (axe) , *barcha* (spear), *chakram* (steel ring carried on a pointed turban), *dahl* (shield), *gurj* (mace), *katar* (double-edged and straight bladed dagger), *khanda* (a sword which has a broad and straight blade), *kirpan* (curved dagger), *talwar* (sword), *tapar* (battle-axe), *tir kaman* (bow and arrow) and *chakar* ( a wheel with weights at the end of each spoke). Some instruments used in war were not even weapons, such as, the *Ranjit Nagara* - the drum of victory, was used to boost the morale of the Sikhs going to war, during the war and coming out of the war. Even *Bani* was used to help the soldiers during wars.

The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa tradition in 1699, which unified the Sikh community into a powerful fighting force. The festival of *Holla Mohalla* was started by him at Anandpur Sahib as a gathering of Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles on the day following the festival of *Holi*. The Guru and the Sikhs were at that time battling the Mughal empire. He decided to revive the spirit of *Holi* and weave its essence into a festival created in the Khalsa traditions. It is celebrated every year in the month of *phalguna*, a day after *Holi*. On this three-day festival mock battles are held by *Nihang* Singhs and *kirtan* (religious songs) and religious lectures take place. The *Nihangs* were members of the Sikh army that was founded by Guru Govind Singh. They perform daring feats and display of swordsmanship, horse riding, *gatka*, tent pegging, bareback horse-riding and standing erect on two speeding horses. Early morning prayers at the *Gurdwaras* mark the beginning of the festival and stories are narrated about the bravery of Guru Govind Singh in prose and verse.

On the last day a long procession, led by *Panj Pyaras*, starting from *Takth Keshgarh Sahib*, one of the five Sikh religious seats and passes through various important *gurdwaras* and the city of *Anandpur Sahib*. Sikhs, especially the *Nihangs*, dressed in their traditional martial costumes come in various *Jatthas*. These include the *Buddha dal* and *Karuna dal*. They come from different parts of Punjab to participate in the annual festival. These groups showcase their skills on horses, elephants or walking. They wear their swords, long spears, conical turbans and display their skills in archery, sword fencing, horse riding, shooting, also spray colors on people and battles are enacted. For people visiting *Anandpur Sahib*, *langars* are organized by the local people as a part of *sewa* where traditional cuisine is served to the pilgrims.

## Kila Raipur Games

In 1933, Philanthropist Inder Singh Grewal visualised an annual recreational meet where farmers from areas around Kila Raipur near Ludhiana could get together. When Mr. Inder Singh Grewal and subsequently Grewal Sports Association visualised the games, the solitary aim was, "healthy mind in a healthy body". Since then the rural sports festival has become an annual event and is known as the Rural Olympics and the pioneer of Rural Sports in the country. The Grewal Sports Association also sponsors and runs a hockey academy for schoolboys.

These games are held in one of the biggest rural sports stadium in the country at Kila Raipur. The three-day festival attracts more than 4,000 sportsperson and it provides a platform where everyone could come and exhibit their acumen not only in recognised sporting events but also in traditional rural sports. The villagers come in tractor trailers, bullock-carts, jeeps, trucks, cars,

scooters and cycles, but then there are others who trudge long distances on foot to be there. The participation of animals and machines, the dare devil stunts, horse races, mule cart races, power paragliding and motorcycle show attracts a large number of spectators at the Kila Raipur Sports Stadium. The *gatka*, hockey, *kabaddi*, tug of war, tractor trolley loading and unloading, tricycle race of physically challenged, camel and mare dance, *bhangra* by physically challenged and athletic events, including races, long jump and high jump are conducted.

Stunt performers pull the car using only their ear, while the track and field events not only attracts participation from the young athletes, but even the elders run the 100 metre race in categories of 75 to 80 years and 80 plus with such speed and poise, that the audience cannot stop applauding them. Salwinder Singh of Dodhe Sodhia village in Taran district lifted three ploughs with his teeth, a man got the bricks broken on his chest, three men passed through a



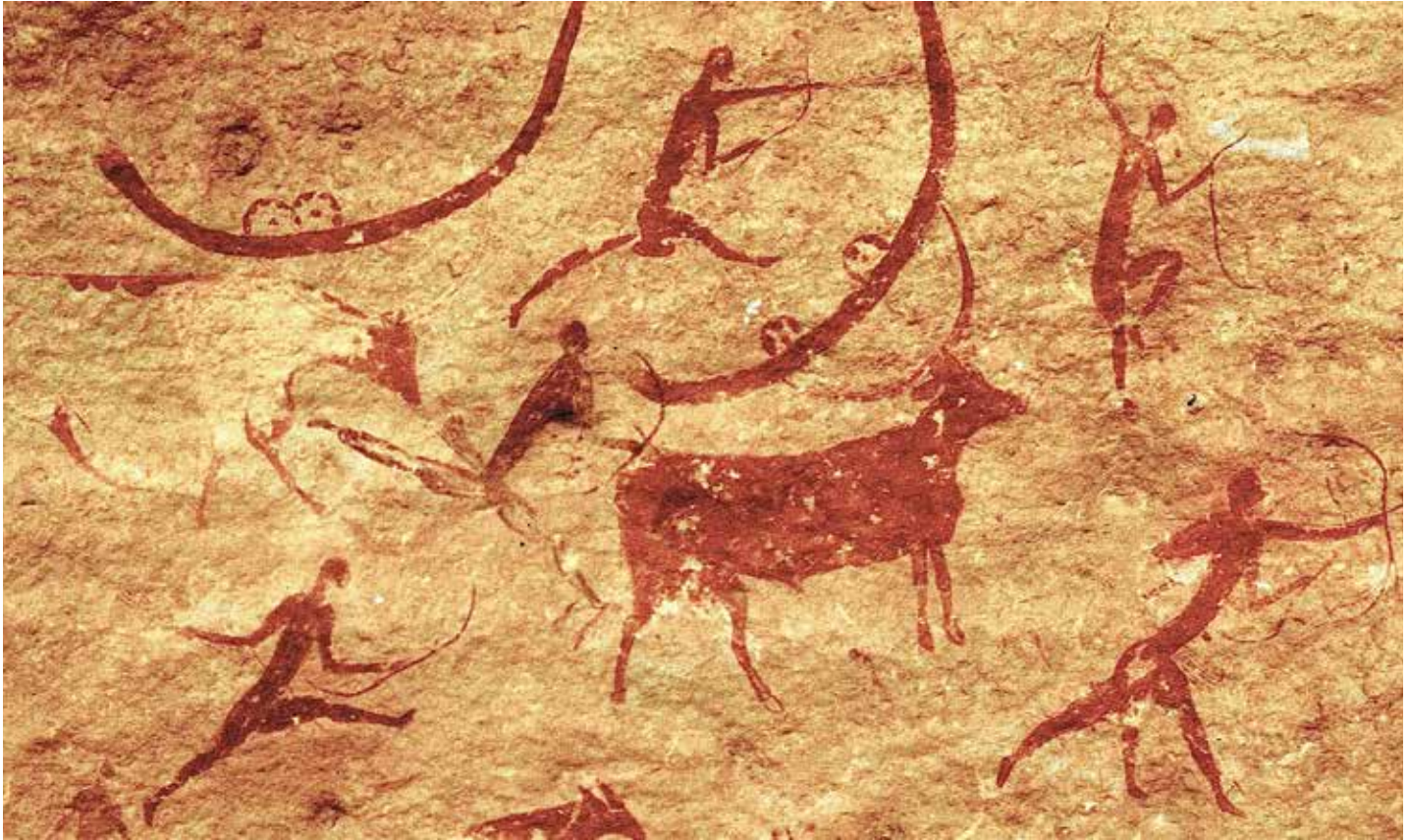


small ring and a stuntman lifted a bag of 1 quintal sand on his back. The kabaddi competition, the cart races and the tent pegging are the favourites of the rural folk. There are events organised specially for the physically challenged. Sukha Singh of Kila Raipur village bagged the gold medal in 100 metres tricycle race. The 29 year old Sukha runs a tea stall and expressed that the Government should organise such events to encourage the physically challenged people.

Realising the importance of the games and mass participation for many years, they have attracted a number of multi national companies to sponsor the events. There have been prize money for different events sponsored by different companies. Many of the events like the mule or horse cart racing are sponsored by companies and the prizes are given in cash or at times automobile companies give scooters or motorbikes as prizes. Tractor tyre rolling competition saw massive participation and the person who wins the tractor tyre racing competition gets a tractor tyre as the prize

Besides the rural games different groups and troupes from Punjab enthrall the crowd with traditional *bhangara*, *gatka*, folk music, horse dancing on the beat of drums, Nihangs showing daring skills on horses or driving a motor bike while standing up and the face covered with cloth.

Punjab, the land of five rivers is famous not only for its valour but is also formidabile force in different sports at National & International level.



Pre-historic rock art

## The Last Vestiges of Hunting as a Sport in West Bengal

*Kalyani Chaudhuri*

Reflecting India's diversity, West Bengal is a melting pot of many races and languages with a varied culture of amazing span. Many will be surprised to know that hunting as a traditional sport still lingers here, albeit a dying one. Its genesis goes back to the origins of man.

From a gatherer, man became a hunter the day he picked up a stone and killed some small prey, ages ago. Weapons improved from round stones to sharpened ones, to slings, traps, spears, swords and bows and arrows. Gunpowder took a long time to be invented, and the so-called

primitive tribes, who were wiser in so many ways than their supposedly sophisticated members, disdained the same – it was not manly to treat a beast other than as a worthy adversary, on terms not quite equal, but with a lot of respect for each other.

As civilisation evolved, hunting became less and less important, agriculture and animal husbandry reducing the risk of food collection, till hunting became a religious ritual, then a rite of passage, a test of courage and level-headedness, and finally of skill. Thereafter hunting came to be discredited as a sport – an act of wanton cruelty. Many wild animals got the protected tag and even vermin were not to be killed in sport - for entertainment; all life deserved respect. But the art of hunting continues to linger, for the fun of the chase as in the UK, or as a ritual sport in West Bengal, although likely to disappear soon.

I am not discussing individual hunters, licensed for specific purposes, or otherwise, but group activity. My topic is the hunting traditions of the rural *Santhals* who seek to preserve their way of life even as it crumbles and for whom hunting encompasses many strands. There are many tribes in Bengal, but the largest is the *Santhal* tribe, numbering around 25 lakhs at the time of the 2011 Census. They are also found in several neighbouring states, as well as sporadically in Bangladesh and Nepal. Jharkhand has the highest *Santhal* population. Thus this essay has relevance for all those parts of eastern India, where their presence dates back well before the Aryan arrival.

In West Bengal, *Santhals* are located mostly in the districts of West Midnapore, Purulia and Bankura, but they are scattered across other districts too, in small pockets of North Bengal and of the 24 Parganas districts, etc. Education and migration have broken stereotypes, but the need to preserve identity is imperative, which encourages the study and preservation of much that would be lost otherwise. So festivals are often also observed by those

who hold jobs in towns and also participate in community rituals with fervour, joining their relatives in their native villages, a fusion of the past and present, with hand-painted cottage walls, exhibiting the symbiosis of man and beast. Let us go back in time to understand what hunting meant to the *Santhals* and then continue with what it means today.



*Santhals* had six hunting festivals, but gradually the April festival is the one celebrated with fervour. The Forest Department has been steadily working to reduce the frequency with success. The emphasis is increasingly on the skills aspect and killing of protected animal is completely forbidden. The old encounters between leopard and man, tiger and man are only tales to be told at the bonfire at night and to be re-lived without re-enactment. Deer killing too is forbidden and stray incidents are investigated and punished.

The *Disua Sendra* - the hunting festival as known in *Santhali*, is held during April full moon, at Ayodhya Pahar in Purulia District. It is considered the most prestigious. Apart from participants from the neighbouring villages, as well as other districts of West Bengal, *Santhals* from other states arrive each year to take part in the traditional celebration, not quite a religious rite, nor completely a sport, but an amalgam, testing skill, confidence, belief and fervour, in which only the males participate. Their villages have elaborate preparatory ceremonies with the hunting priest (*dihiro*) evoking the blessings of their village hunting deity, whose village name is kept a secret. Only the most physically fit, young adult men, fleet of foot, eyesight perfect, steady of hand and sharp of hearing,



meet with success and are feted and rewarded when they return with the small prey they have bagged. The elder men who have seen many hunts also take part, but they are content to let the younger ones exhibit their prowess. For a *Santhal* hunting was, and continues for many to be, a test of manhood, of proven bravery and the art of tracking, ears and eyes finely tuned, of agility and strength.

However, as it is not possible for all those interested, to go to Ayodhya, smaller hunts too take place, in Kokrajhar of West Bengal, in Belpahari in Jhargram sub-division, in the hills and undulating deep forests, where game can be found and there is no habitation nearby to cause disruption, in the battle of wits between different species, with the risk of getting mauled and the prospect of return with meat and skins.

Ayodhya Hill, in Purulia District of West Bengal, is an outcrop of the Chota Nagpur Plateau, spread across 98.20 sq. km. with an average height of 1200 ft [not the peak]. The name Ayodhya Pahar was given by ancient non-tribal settlers who brought with them Mahabharata mythology and influenced *Santhal* lore. There is also a *Sita Kund* at Ayodhya Pahar

The *Santhals*, while engaged in ritual hunting did not adopt modern firearms or binoculars, but firmly stuck to ancient practices with reverence for the sanctity of animals. They used sharpened sticks, unique bows and arrows with the string drawn from bamboo strips, not the intestine of an animal. The arrow tips were crafted from cheap cast iron, the *Santhals* being particularly skilled in metal casting. The non-ferrous castings of a sister tribe, the *Dokras*, are famous the world over and the tribe is also found in West Bengal. *Dokra* figurines are primitive yet eternal, harking back to the stylisation of cave paintings with man an integral part of nature, elemental and as forceful. This slight digression is to introduce a *Dokra* figurine of a hunter, bold and classical in its lines.



Dokra figurine of a hunter

William Wilson Hunter, of the Indian Civil Service (the name is just a coincidence), in his “The Annals of Rural Bengal” 1868, mentions that the *Santhali* hunter’s arrows were unique – heavy, sharply pointed ones for big game and smaller with broad knob heads for the birds – who were stunned to death rather than ripped apart. These heavy arrows were very difficult to handle without intensive practice.

While the *Santhals* were happy to join hunts organised by the British or by zamindars before Independence and to use guns and bullets, if called upon, they carried with them their traditional weapons. *W.W.Hunter* notes with amusement that often the non-tribal *shikaris* would come back empty-handed having failed to find the big game, but their accompanying escorts, the *Santhals*, would have skilfully bagged many birds and small prey on the side, so to say, with their spears and stunning stones tied to handles.

Festive hunting in the hills and forests adjoining *Santhal* villages, has been steadily decreasing after the Forest Department took up a major initiative to replace this with tests of related skills, archery, sprinting, long-jumping, with mastery of javelin and discus, so akin to the ancient weapons used. Their efforts met with a considerable degree of success but clamping down completely on the isolated hunting of unprotected species in remote areas was well nigh impossible.

Today the *Disua Sendra* continues in a subdued manner with clans gathering in all solemnity, with worship of the

village hunting deity, with processions and prayers, with young men eager to prove their strength and the old men advising caution, narrating stories of the sudden danger of charging wild animals cornered and fighting back, with injury of limb and chest, fleetness of foot proving inadequate when surprised by a fierce animal hiding in the bush. They are conscious of the restrictions imposed by the Forest Department and do not seek to break rules, but wild animals - wolves, jackals, leopards and elephants roam around, as do the rare tiger or bear, and a fine line has to be drawn between self-defence and the unintentional breaking of laws that they do not fully understand.

Soon however, the fruits of development will erase this part of human history where men and beast lived in forest and preyed on each other, but with respect for the other's prowess and only time will tell whether some apocalyptic calamity, some earth-shattering destruction will force the wheel to turn back making the sport as it exists now, once again a survival mechanism for man.

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#### Sources

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A Villager shows his strength by lifting bricks with his mouth

# Glimpses of Traditional Rural Sports in the North East

*M.P. Bezbaruah*

Over 84% of the population of the North East lives in the countryside. Urbanization has been a slow process here and the rural scenario dominates the socio-cultural and economic landscape of the region. Yet modern influences are rapidly percolating to the rural areas. Values and outlook of the common people have changed with time and such changes have influenced rural social behavior and community activities. All over the North East, like any other places in the country, urban sports like cricket have made great inroads into the rural scene.

“The people from the North East are highly regarded for their innate sporting talent”, says the official report, “NE Vision 2020”. North East has a great tradition of sports. The game of Polo is believed to have started in Manipur. In recent times the North East has dominated national football. Such assertion of sporting talent is a natural evolution of a process of traditional sports activities that encouraged and nurtured natural talent. In spite of the inevitable urban influences, traditional sports of the North East have survived, if not as regular social activity as it used to be in the past, but as part of occasional social and cultural events. In many respects, many of them have moved from the daily life of the villages to the cultural stage.

Contrary to the common perception of the North East as a homogeneous entity, the beauty of this area is its variety. There is great diversity among the people of different states in language, ethnicity, culture and customs. Within

each state also there is wide and fascinating variety. The region is home to about 165 scheduled tribes of the country apart from other 400 tribal and sub-tribal groups and communities. Colourful they all are in their own ways and all of them are marked by very distinctive costume, tradition, looks and behavior. For example, each major tribe of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh can be identified by the distinctive costume designs, art, craft, dance forms and sports. Due to such diversity and because the tribes passionately guarded their distinct identity in every sphere, the North East is a treasure house of colourful indigenous sports.

The NE vision 2020 of Government of India recognizes the importance of this resource and states-“some of the North Eastern states have a long tradition of indigenous games and martial arts”. The Government has proposed to set up two schools, one in Assam and another in Manipur to specially revive, nurture and promote such sports. Out of a very wide range of sports and games of this nature in the region the following have been identified for such promotion.

## **Assam**

- *Dhopkhel*

## **Manipur**

- *Mukna*
- *Khong Kangjei*
- *Sagol Kangjei*

- *Kang*
- *Yubee*
- *Hiyang*
- *Tannaba*
- *Lamjei*
- *Cheibi gad-ga*
- *Thanotha*
- *Sari sarak*

#### **Mizoram**

- *Inuknawr*
- *Inbuan*
- *Mizo inchai*

#### **Meghalaya**

- *Archery*

#### **Arunachal Pradesh**

- *Hole Taso dukaranam*
- *Hinam*
- *Tuman*
- *Parok-pamin sinam*

#### **Tripura**

- *Gella chut*

#### **Nagaland**

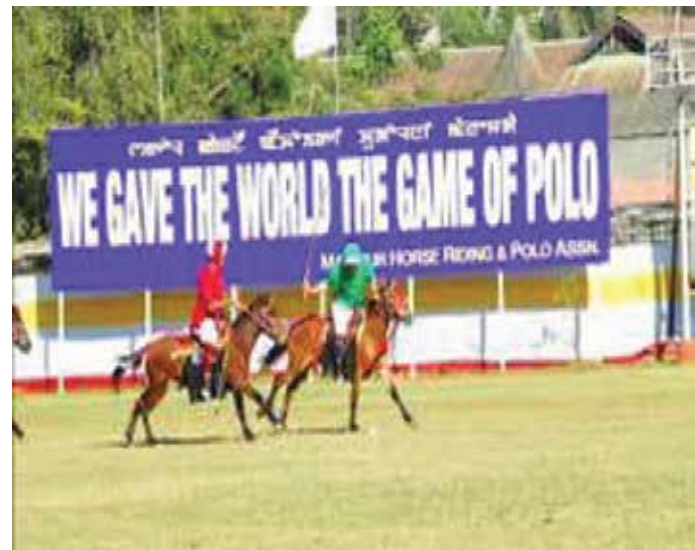
- *Wrestling*
- *Cock fighting*

Most of these games have significant martial overtones. Sports, which demand physical fitness and skill in martial arts, are predominant in the North East. It is understandable in the socio-political context in which the tribes existed. Historically each tribe had to fight constantly to protect its space as inter tribe clashes were quite common and often continuous. The nature of traditional sports had to be attuned to the realities of existence. Archery, for example is very popular among the tribes, particularly in

Meghalaya. This traditional sport in Meghalaya has given into the ingenuity of being developed as a betting game like horse racing-daily participated by a large number of people.

#### **Manipur**

**Polo** - The modern game of polo is derived from Manipur, India, where the game was known as '*Sagol Kangjei*', '*Kanjai-bazee*', or '*Pulu*'. The first polo club was established in the town of Silchar in Assam, India, in 1833. The origins of the game in Manipur are traced to early precursors of *Sagol Kangjei*.



#### **Meghalaya**

***Ka Iasiat Thong or Archery*** – A favorite sport of the elders is archery. In the past the centre for archery was Jowai town, to which competing archers flocked from far off places. Archery in old days was conducted according to the term *Ka Kular* of Agreement between the two rival teams as to the number of arrows, archers the minimum amount of pooled wager, time and other terms and conditions to ensure fair play and sanctity of the game.



**Mawpoin** – is an old and very popular game that used to be played by children in most households in earlier times in Meghalaya. It consists of two teams; each team has to alternately play the part of chasers (*nongskhoi*) or builders (*nongteimaw*) during the game. Builders are required to arrange or build a stack of stones while the chasers attempt to eliminate them by throwing a ball at the builders. The team with the maximum number of stones arranged and builders eliminated is declared the winner.



**Gando Makal Pala** – It is a form of wrestling and is also known as 'Chagripa' or 'Gogripa'. There are no rules governing this game and the two wrestlers simply require holding each other from any part of the body, trying to pin down one another to the ground and if one is able to hold him on the ground for a considerable period of time he is

adjudged the winner. In olden days, it is said, a wrestler used to go round the neighboring villages asking everyone to accept the *gando* (loin cloth). Accepting the *gando* was an indicating of the acceptance of his challenge to fight and the wrestling match would take place on a fixed day and place.



## Assam

**Nao Khel or Boat Race** - Over 69 per cent of the total population of the North East lives in the state of Assam alone. The mighty Brahmaputra river flowing through the state has for centuries influenced the life and culture of the people. During summer the river and its many tributaries create flood havoc for the people of the Brahmaputra valley.



Boats have therefore become a part of the survival of the people in many areas. In happier times the boats are used for racing and enjoyment and boat race is a part of the important socio-cultural events of the plains of Assam, particularly in the lower region. In Assam this game has a long history. Though it is held even today, mostly as part of ceremonial events, the sport has diminished in its popularity and is no longer an integral part of the vibrant rural life in the plains of Assam as it used to be.



***Dhup Khel or Bhonta Guti*** - In upper Assam this game is known as *dhup khel* whereas in lower Assam it is called *bhonta* or *bhota khel*. In this game, a ball or *dhop* is prepared with cloth and glue of the banyan tree with great artistry. One piece of cloth or *asol* is kept loose so that it can be used to throw the ball. Two teams of four to five players in each team play this game. When the game starts one player from one team kicks the *dhop* to the rival team and the players from the rival team have to catch the ball before it falls in the ground. The player who is able to catch the ball goes and stands in the line and the player who kicks the ball stands opposite to him. Then the two players run with the *dhop*. The player who gets beaten by the other player 'dies' and the player is said to be '*balki*'. There are many ways by which *balkis* are freed. In this way the team, which has less *balkis* is declared as winner. This sport was very popular among many tribes and communities in rural Assam.



The North East is a colourful mosaic of vibrant and varied range of traditional rural sports. With the fast changes in social and community life, they are slowly dying out. While efforts are made to revive some of them, it is also necessary to document the essence of this treasure and preserve them for prosperity.

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The pictures and inputs are courtesy - Government of Meghalaya for Meghalaya and Shri Chiranjib Sharma and Shri Gohin Sonowal for Assam.

# Conventional Playoffs of Karnataka

*Pawan Sharma*

Traditional games have forever been an ingredient of Karnataka's rich traditions. There is a diversity of interior, outside and board games that were customary in Karnataka. Many of these fascinating games were played by both the young and the old. But with the dawn of computers, mobile phones and play stations the perception of playing games have significantly changed in the State along with the rest of the country. Though a few of the traditional games are still played in Karnataka, public dwelling in the cities have lost contact with most of the traditional games.

Below are some of the traditional games that were once enthusiastically played across Karnataka:

## ***Chinni Dandu (Gilli Danda)***



*Gilli Danda* is one of the most popular outdoor games played all over India and even in South Asia. It is called *Chinni Dandu* in Kannada. This game is believed to be the origin of many European and American games such as

Cricket, Baseball and Softball. The game is played with a peg (*gilli*) and a stick (*danda*), both of which are made of wood. The stick is used to hit the peg. It is a group game that involves hand eye co-ordination and focus of the team member.

## ***Goti (Marbles)***



Popularly known as marbles, *kancha* or *goli*, it is a much loved street activity in the country. It is called *Goti* in Kannada. This archetypal game requires the player to hit the chosen target 'marble' using his/her own marble ball. The champion of the game walks away with all the marbles of the other players. This sport requires planning and attention skills on fraction of the player.

## ***Kambala (Buffalo Race)***

*Kambala* or Buffalo Race is a well-known sport in Karnataka. Though it is difficult to trace the ancient times of this sport, it is popularly claimed that the sport had its origin in the farming society of Karnataka. Following the age-old traditions, today *Kambala* is played as a frivolous



sport by the farmers and is played before the harvesting season originates. It is a way of showing appreciation to the gods who guard their crops from annihilation. To celebrate this moment different kinds of outdoor sports are also arranged.



*Kambala* is also seen as the beginning of the sowing period for the next round of crops. Besides these the sport is also organized during the holy festivals such as - *Kodamantaya* and *Jumaadi Bhuta Kolas*.

### **Buguri (Spinning the Top)**



Spinning the top or *Lattu* is a fun game played across many parts of India. It is known as *Buguri* in Kannada. It is an

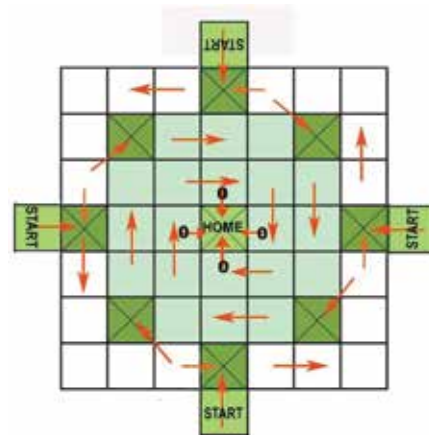
interesting customary game where a wooden top is made to spin. There are furrows in the lower half of the top and a nail at the bottom to spin on. A thread is wrapped around the furrows to deploy the top and make it spin.

### **Kabaddi**



*Kabaddi* is a team sport that originated in primeval India. Two teams dwell in opposite bisects of the field and each team sends in a raider to the other side in turns. The raider has to gear the members of the opposite team while intone *kabaddi- kabaddi* during the raid before he returns to his side of the area. It is a very popular sport that is played not only across India but as well in Asian countries.

### **Chowka Bara (Chakaara)**



*Chowka Bara* is one of the oldest floorboard games of India that is still played in several parts of the country. It is known as *Chowka Bara* in Mysuru and as *Chakaara* or *Chakka-Vachchi* in North Karnataka. This game is similar to Ludo and can be played by 4 troupes. It is a game of chance that is played with cowry shells (called *kavade* in Kannada). The players attempt to race their pawns from

the starting point to the safety of home. The game develops eye-to-eye coordination and educates to make tactics.



### ***Kallu Gundu Ettuvudu (Stone Balls)***

*Kallu Gundu Ettuvudu* or *Kallata* is an outdoor sport of rustic Karnataka. It requires the participants to lift round stone balls (called *kallu gundu* in Kannada) of a mixture of sizes and weights. The sport demands that the players be bodily strong adequate to lift weighty stones.

### ***Ali Guli Mane***



*Ali Guli Mane* or *Channe Mane* is a traditional indoor board game of Karnataka. The game is normally played by two players on a wooden board that has 14 pits. The pits are

used to stash up 70 tamarind seeds or cowry shells that act as counteract in the game. It is an engaging game that facilitates to develop judgment, hand-eye synchronization and absorption.



### ***Pagade***

*Pagade* is a cross and circle board game that is very similar to the ancient game of *Pachisi* or *Chaupad*. This game requires two or four players to race their respective pawns to reach the innermost square. The origin of the game can be traced to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and it has stayed popular throughout times gone by.

### ***Ashtapada***

*Ashtapada* is an Indian board game that starts off before chess. The game is played on a board having eight-by-eight grid of squares of same color and the board has unique markings



identified as “castles”. Each player has an even number of game pieces and the objective is to move a game piece in the region of the board in clockwise direction, enter the castle and regain the castle back in a counter-clockwise direction so as to make the game piece arrive at the center. It can be played by two or four players.

### ***Paramapada (Snakes & Ladders)***



Snakes & Ladders is a classic board game that originated in primordial India. It is known as *Paramapada* in Kannada. The game can be played by two or more players on a game-board that has numeral gridded squares.

The board has several ladders and snakes drawn on it. Players have to pilot their game piece from the start to the conclude based on die rolls. The ladders help the game piece to movement while the snakes hinder their movement.

### ***Hagga Jaggata (Tug of War)***



Tug of war or rope pulling is an age-old sport that is known as *Hagga Jaggata* in Kannada. The sport involves two groups who pull on contrary ends of a rope in a test

of force. The objective is to pull the rope by both teams at opposite ends in anticipation of one team tows the other in excess of a central line.

### ***Saalu Mane Ata (Nine Men’s Morris)***

Nine Men’s Morris is a time-honored board game. It is known as *Saalu Mane Ata* or *Jodpi Ata* or *Char-Par* in Kannada and is popular as *Navakankari* in assorted parts of India. This alliance game



requires two players. Each participant is given nine coins and they try to accomplish as many points as potential by getting three coins in a row on the game board. It is a multifaceted game that requires premeditated accepted wisdom.

### ***Lagori (Seven Stones)***



The traditional game of seven stones or stone gallery is called *Lagori* in Kannada. It is played in many places across India and South Asia. This game is played among two teams and necessitates a ball and a heap of seven flat stones of decreasing size that are stacked up to form a small tower. It’s a fascinating game that engrosses a member

thuds down the stone stack and his team restoring the tower again before members of the opposite group beat them with the ball.

### ***Adu Huli Aata (Tiger & Goat)***



Tiger and Goat is a hunt game that is known as *Adu Huli Aata* in Kannada. This sport is played between two players where one player gets three tigers and the other player has fifteen

goats. The game is regarding the tigers trying to take life of the goats while the goats look for ways to halt the tigers. This game requires forecast and deliberation on part of both the players.

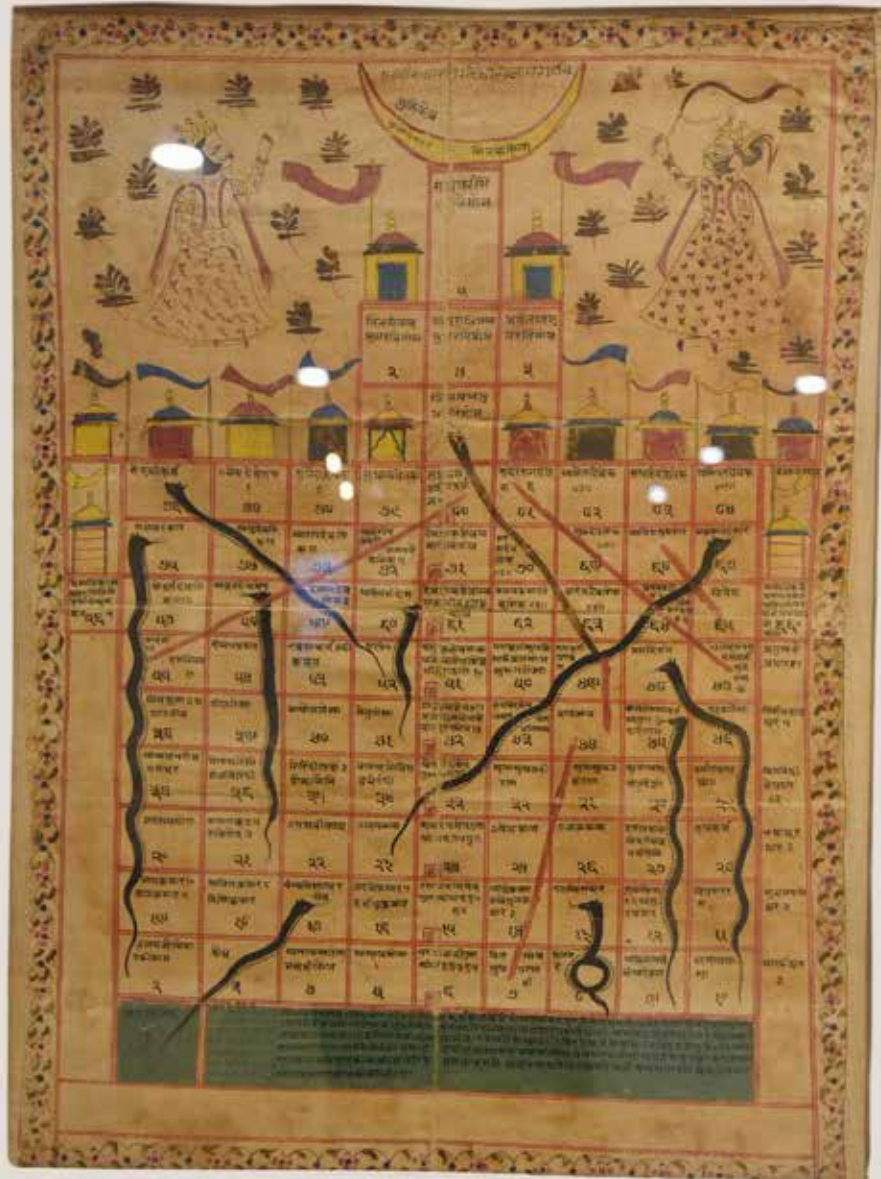
### ***Kunte Bille (Hopscotch)***



Hopscotch is a traditional children's game that is well-known as *Kunte Bille* in Kannada. The game can be played single-handedly or with quite a few players. It involves

drawing a court on the floor and then flings a small article into the numbered rectangles of the courtyard. The player then needs to leap or jump from side to side the spaces in order to salvage the item.

These are some of the traditional games that are still played in Karnataka and many other parts of urban as well as rural India. It is imperative and our duty to revive these games and keep our heritage alive.



An Educational Game of Jain Gyan Chaupar

Photo Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

# Sümi Naga Indigenous Games

*Dr. Hesheto Y. Chishi*

## Introduction

Traditionally Sümi Naga tribe of Nagaland is known as a warrior tribe and is athletic in nature. Their migratory life style, hunting skill and performing arts - especially war folkdance speaks amply about their sporty life. Indigenous games are artistically adapted to showcase their identity and life style.

From time immemorial Sümi games have had many traditional sports and dance. Throughout history they have turned it into entertainment, exhibition and competitive games to gradually have an influential impact on the community and culture. Traditional games have a rich culture and heritage value and are tools of passing on, some inherited knowledge for developing professional skills, logical thinking, building strategy, concentration and community living. It performs as a learning aid, and teaches us many things while playing, for instance - learn to win and lose, improve personality development, self discipline and allow both the participant and spectators to enjoy in fun.

Cultural activities and the value of traditional games are emphasized more in the festivities and community celebrations. Sümi Naga Indigenous Games and Sports can be broadly classified into three or more categories i.e.; entertainment, exhibition and competition:

## Competition Games

1. *Apukhukiti* (kick fight /Kitido) - individual game played by the male
2. *Amiküküla* (fire ignition) - game played by mixed

couples

3. *Angüküpüsü* (spear kick) - male individual
4. *Pükakuxü* (jumping game) - female individual
5. *Akhetsü kühütsü* (top) - male individual game
6. *Akhedu kumugho* (bamboo greased pole climbing) - male team game
7. *Akighiküküsü* (tug of war) - male team game
8. *Kükha* (wrestling) - male individual
9. *Asü gari pokuxu* (wooden cart race) - male individual game
10. *Tughukishi* (water breath control) - male individual game
11. *Awotha chukuxu* (pork fat eating) - male individual
12. *Shelupa kiche* (spear rolling ball) - male individual game
13. *Awuchobo kiche* (banana plant) - male individual
14. *Aqhekishi* (sparing)-male individual game
15. *Asükighilhe* (high jump) - male individual game
16. *Itsakuxu* (war cry)-female individual game
17. *Awudu kumugho* (cock fight) - male individual game
18. *Awushi kishi* (mithu heart) - male team
19. *Ayezü kuxu* (cotton spinning) - female individual
20. *Kakapu pokuxu* (bamboo stilt race) - male individual

## Entertainment/ Fun Games

1. *Alaukikive* (seeds) - played by both male and female teams
2. *Anhethi jukuxü* (eye contact) -played by both male & female
3. *Atuvepuu kuxu* (Stone throw) - Male game
4. *Kiyeku* (hide and seek) - played by children girls and boys

5. *Aghiyi michekuxu* (chopping thatch) - male game
6. *Kukokile* (push) - team game played by men and women

### List of the Sübmi Naga Indigenous Games



**Apukhukiti (Kick Fight / Kitido):** This game resembles taekwondo and is played by males. It is leg and foot artwork and traditionally it was commonly played and very popular. This game is also played at a higher level with a handsome reward during festivals and community gathering. Today with the introduction of many alien games, this game is seldom played and is almost vanishing.



**Amiküküla (Fire Ignition):** The origin of this game is traced back to the invention of fire in human history. It is a couple game and is considered a ritual game. *Amiküküla* is always

to be played partnered with a woman. Superstitious belief surrounds this game and is played with a toss to omen predictions. In the event the competitors fail to ignite fire in the competition, it's failure is projected as a negative omen. Thus, to nullify it, wind is blamed for disrupting the game procedure



**Anguküpisü (Spear Kick):** This game style is more martial art in nature. A plantain leaf stem pierced on the sharp tip of the spear placed approximately six and half to seven foot high is kicked with the toes of both feet. If the

competitors are competitive the level of the stem line is raised higher. The game is judged by the pre jump step, the kick balance of both toes and landing of the competitor is strictly observed. The highest-level kicker is the winner. Spear kick is also played only during festivals and student's conferences.



**Püxakuxü (Jumping Game):** This athletic competition is one of the most cherished and commonly played female traditional sport. Huge numbers can participate depending on the playing space and the number of willing participants. Ultimately the exhausted participants are dropped and pulled out by the judges. The longest jumper is the winner. This athletic game is still practiced during *Ahuna* and *Tuluni* festivals and also at students' conferences.



**Akhetsü küghütsü (Top Spinning):** The longest spun top wins the toss and the loser will spin his top to allow his opponent to hit it. If the opponent succeeds in breaking

the targeted top he is declared the winner and the game is over. However, if he fails to break it, the turn reverses to his opponent who does the same. The game continues until the top is broken or the player surrenders and the opponent is declared the winner. Traditionally this was one of the favorite games of village boys but today, it is reduced to a mere festival game.



**Akhedu Kumugho (Greased Pole Climbing):** This is a team game of four to six members. A tall greased bamboo pole measuring approximately forty feet or more, with a pierced hole on the side of the top for provision to drip down stored pork fat oil when the pole shakes as it is climbed. The team is permitted to carry ash, paddy husk and a sack cloth for wiping off the oily pole while climbing it. Usually, the award is in the form of cash or parcel of meat or both is/are placed on the top of the pole for the climbers to own it in addition to a price award. This game is still played with gusto during festivals and community gatherings.





**Alaukikive (Seeds):** An ancient game played by both males and females with large seeds pods from a giant bean. This game has completely vanished, the children today are not aware that this even existed.

**Akighiküküsü (Tug of War):** This is a game of muscle and strength and is played as an exhibition and competitive sport. It usually accompanies festivities and community feast celebrations.



**Kükha (Wrestling):** Except for a few rules it is common to the universal style. Traditionally this game is played on grassy areas in the village.

**Anhethi Jukuxü (Eye Contact):** In this game the longer the competitor prolongs eye contact without blinking is declared the winner. Today this game is seldom played.

**Asü Gari Pokuxu (Wooden Cart Race):** An indigenously designed three wooden wheel cart is raced by competitors who work in pairs in a race to the finishing line, with one

partner hand pushing the partner driver who negotiates the steering with his legs.

**Atuvepuu Kuxu (Stone Throw):** An indigenous form of shot-put, in the game a small piece of stone is thrown in imitation of shooting birds on the tree top with stone. Each competitor competes for the longest distant stone throw.



**Kiyeku (Hide and Seek):** This game of the past is a very common universal fun game enjoyed especially children. Unfortunately this most interesting children game has been replaced with technology games.

**Tughukishi (Water Breath Control):** *Tughukishi* is performed generally during village community fishing using herbal poison to stun the fish. Participants are made to dive into the river water to compete, as to who manages the longest duration in sustaining his breath over the others. It is also a fishing skill competition for the maximum catch under the water.

**Aghiyi Michekuxu (Chopping Thatch):** This sport is a test in machete handling skills. To test the skills and sharpness of the machete blade, the competitor will split with a single cut the tender thatch blade.



**Kukokile (Push and Shove):** Similar to the cock fight this is also a pushing game to test the strength and balance of the opponent. The opponent is pushed with force and body weight while keeping their bodies in a slanting posture.



**Awotha Chukuxu (Pork Fat Eating):** *Awotha kuchu* game compliments agrarian festivals or any prominent feast of the village community. It is a fat eating competition. Approximately a kilogram of thick sliced cooked pork fat measuring a foot long and 5 inch in width is eaten. Ultimately, the fastest and extra consumer is the winner. This game is still practiced as complimentary to merry making during feast festivals.



**Shelupa Kiche (Spear Rolling Ball):** Traditionally this is a hunting skill game. A spear is thrown at the rolling *ghogho*

*mushuthi* (large pomelo) at an approximate distance of 50 foot. This game signifies piercing a chased animal in the forest. With the change of moving times, hunting with spear has become a thing of the past.

**Awuchobo Kiche (Banana Plant):** in this game a spear is thrown at a plantain stem placed approximately a hundred feet away. It is also judged as a hunting skill game but today this is replaced by target shooting with rifle guns.

**Aqhekishi (Sparing):** This is a game of demonstrating head taking skills. The game is performed in full traditional war attire including spear and *dao* (sword). Till today this warfare performance accompanies male folkdance as demonstration of war skills.

**Asükighilhe (Hurdle Jump):** It is related to war tactics of running and jumping spikes and bunkers in the battle field. This traditional high jump hurdle is different from the Olympic discipline sport.



**Itsakuxu (War Cry):** Traditionally this is a game of war cry called out by females. The longest screamer wins the game. For the Sümi Naga tribe unlike other Naga tribes, women status is highly honoured, hence accompaniment of a women in many strength related works is very important. For example: head taking, war folkdance, tiger hunting etc. Women would cheer by shouting and giving out war cries to encourage and support the men in action.

**Awudu Kumugho (Cock Fight):** This game is commonly played even today, by folding one leg and holding it and hopping with the other leg. The task of the game is to pursue the opponent to release his folded leg or make him fall.



**Awushi Kishi (Mithu Heart):** This game is bit wild in nature. The game is a part of the *mithun* sacrifice ritual. Soon after the *mithun* is sacrificed to benevolent spirits the competitors flock to get the heart of the *mithun* by tearing the skin with bare hands. This game has been completely abandoned today.



**Ayezü Kuxu/Tüghükeu (Cotton Spinning):** This is traditional cotton spinning skill game. One of the oldest traditional female games played at night in *Iliki* (traditional ladies dormitory). The winner is the one who spins the

most cotton skeins. This traditional game vanished along with the extinction of female village dormitories.



**Kakapu Pokuxu (Bamboo Stilt Race):** A bamboo stilt ranging from seven to eight feet, for the handle with one and a half to two feet in height for the foot hold is prepared for the race. This game is no longer played with the change of time and demonstrated only during festivals and cultural events.

### Social Values of Traditional Games and Sports

1. Enables tribal community to remain content with their traditional identity and values
2. Manage their need within the limited resources
3. Fun oriented and people participation
4. Honour those that give you the most challenge
5. Respect the regulations of the competition
6. Value your competitors
7. Have courage, intuition, persistence and patience
8. Do not boast with winning
9. Facilitate others to be the best they can
10. Recognize how your environment contributes to your quality of life and respect it

### Conclusion

Sumi Indigenous games and sports are almost diminishing for many practical factors; shift of life style emphasis in

the modern world, declination of culture practitioners, undue recognition from the government and society, lost of traditional rural life and cultural values, and lack of resources for awareness and promotional programme. Thus, Indigenous Cultural Society (ICS) is deeply concerned in safeguarding and promoting the Sümi Naga traditional and cultural heritage. Today, through ICS initiative and its networking relation with different civil societies and tribal forums it is beginning to revitalize different traditional arts form and interestingly many are slowly, but gradually beginning to learn and revive the game.

# Tamil Nadu

## A Treasure House of Traditional Sports

*M.G. Devasahayam*

Tamil Nadu is rich in traditional sports-rural and martial. Ancient Tamils paid a great deal of attention to physical care and development of the body. For them it was adherence to the Greek phrase of “*mens sana in corpore sano*” meaning “healthy mind in healthy body.” Hence, in the olden days, youth in Tamil Nadu were encouraged to get involved in games, sports and various kinds of physical activities. Some of these activities were meant as pastime for women and for children to sharpen their intellect.

There were many exercise-centres similar to today’s gym known, as *poravai*, *murankalari* etc, and *kalaris* were physical and martial art training centres. Since young men as soldiers needed to be well versed in martial arts these centres were popular with them. During times of peace, they kept their physical fitness at optimum level by involving in competitions and tournaments of all sorts. During the Pallava, Chola and Pandya period, there was great interest in the development of martial arts. Narasimharman, one of the famous Pallava emperors

was a martial art expert and had the title ‘*Mamalla*’, meaning great wrestler.

Below are some of the more prominent rural- traditional sports of Tamil Nadu.

**Jallikattu (Sallikkattu):** This *prima donna* of Tamil Nadu’s rural sports, which was very much in the news in recent times, is also known as *Eru thazhuvuthal* and *Manju virattu*. This is a traditional spectacle in which a *Bos indicus* bull, such as the *pulikulam* or *kangayam* breed, is released into a crowd of young men, and multiple participants attempt to grab the hump with both arms and hang onto it while the bull attempts to escape. Participants hold the hump for as long as possible, attempting to bring the bull to a stop. In some cases, the participants must ride long enough to remove the flags on the bull’s horns. *Jallikattu* is typically practiced as part of Pongal (harvest festival) celebrations on *Mattu* Pongal day, which comes annually in mid January.



**Rekla Race:** This is a bull-cart race conducted during the Thai festival soon after Pongal. A small cart drawn by a single bull or two bulls is used for this. Races are held under various categories on the basis of the bull's size, height, capacity and physical fitness. While big bulls had to cover 16 km, those in other categories had to cover 14, 12, 10, 7, 5, 4 and 3 km respectively. Separate races are conducted for each category.



**Kabaddi :** is a contact team sport. It is popular in South Asia and is the state game of Tamil Nadu. This sport is played between two teams of seven players with a single player on offence—referred to as the “raider” - running into the opposing team's half of the court, tag out as many of their defenders as possible and return to his own half of the court—all without being tackled by the defenders.

Points are scored for each player tagged by the raider, while the opposing team earns a point for stopping the raider. Players are taken out of the game if they are tagged or tackled, but can be “revived” for each point scored by their team from a tag or tackle. The word *Kabaddi* might have been derived from the Tamil word “*kai-pidi*” meaning “to hold hands”.



**Malyutham :** is a traditional Indian martial art of full-contact grappling that originated in Tamil Nadu. *Malyutham* is one of the 64 arts mentioned in ancient literature and is closely related to Southeast Asian wrestling styles such as *naban* and is the ancestor of *gusthi*.



**Gusthi:** This is a traditional sports activity, practiced in Tamil Nadu since time immemorial. This sport is also known as *Kaikuthu Sandai*, a form of traditional boxing, slightly deviated from wrestling. It is a derivative of *Malyutham* and includes grappling as well.



**Silambattam:** This art is popular in the southern districts, particularly Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. In *Jalli Kambu* method, the opponents fight with each other armed with two short sticks of two and half feet length. The person who teaches this art is known as *Silambam Vaathiyar* or *Aasan*. This art was practised as a game during festival times, accompanied by song and music.



**Curled Sword:** The curled sword has thin, tensile blades of steel, attached to a strong handle. When it is swung at the opponent, the blades unfurl, slicing through the flesh. A very dangerous and versatile weapon it needs a lot of practice and dexterity to wield this weapon.



**Burning Torch:** In this sport the artist literally plays with fire. Many methods of skillful display are performed in this art. A long and flexible pole is chosen and at either end, cloth soaked in oil is tightly wrapped into a ball and set on fire. The performer holds the pole in the centre and twirls it to create a magnificent display of light and fire. Two burning torches can also be held in each hand and moved skillfully around. Similarly, at the ends of a one-foot long stick, a chain is attached and the ball of fire is fixed to the end of the chain. This is twirled during the act and there are few other methods also.



**Urimaram eruthal:** This art involves gymnastic skill and perseverance. At the top of a tall pole, a pot filled with coloured water is tied. The bark of the pole is stripped off and the trunk is rubbed well with oil to make it as slippery as possible. As the youth try to clamber up the pole, bystanders pour water on them and shout to distract



them. The first one to reach the pot and break it gets rewarded. This is still considered as an activity of courage in Tamil Nadu.

**Killithattu:** is a game that requires quick reflexes, tactical thinking and tremendous team effort and is an integral part of Tamil heritage and preserves the Tamil identity. The 'kili' or last player must stand on the centre of the first lane when the game starts. The 'kili' player can move anywhere around the court or through the middle of the court but not horizontally. The team that is guarding the base and capturing it is chosen by a coin toss. In this game the participants must try to run from one side of the playfield to the other side, without being touched by the opponents and the opponents are allowed to run only on the drawn lines in the sand.



**Kho Kho:** It is a tag sport played by teams of twelve players who try to avoid being touched by members of the opposing team and only 9 players of the team enter the field. A match consists of two innings with each inning consisting of chasing and running of 9 minutes each. Each team member sits on his knees in the middle of the court, in a row, alternately facing in the opposite direction. The runners play in the field, three at a time and the team that takes the shortest time to touch all the opponents in the

field, wins. There is a pole on each end and the runner can go between two players who are sitting, but the chaser is not allowed to turn back while running and go between the players. However, the chaser can go to the pole and touch it and can go back or towards the other side.



**Uriyadi :** involves smashing a small earthen pot with a long stick. A traditional and funny game from Tamil Nadu, it resembles the game of smashing a piñata. In this case, however, a beautifully decorated earthen pot is hung high in the air and the participants have to smash it with a stick or pole. To make the game hard, they are blindfolded and one never knows what might fall out of the pot!



**Ilavatta kal :** is a game in which, spherical stones are lifted by men to test their strength. This used to be a common game in many villages.





**Paandi:** also known as *pandi* or *nondi*, is a regional hopscotch game played in Tamil Nadu and is played mainly for fun and does not involve many rules or regulations. *Nondi* is played by folding one leg and hopping squares.



**Pallanguzhi:** is a board game played with beads patronised by the women of Tamil Nadu in ancient times. Tamarind seeds, small pebbles or shells are used to play this game, which has fascinated researchers for its anthropological and social aspects and the game is believed to improve mathematical and motor skills.



**Bambaram:** is another traditional game played in Tamil Nadu that involves spinning of top. All the players have to start at the same time. At the count of 3 all players who had wound their *bambarams* with threads, unwind it on the ground to rotate and then pick it up with the thread as quickly as possible. The primary skills of this game relies on shortest rope length usage and still make the *bamabram* to rotate on the ground allowing you to catch it back with the thread.



**Dhayakattai :** employs a pair of long dice that are shaped like cuboids called the *dayakattai*. These dice are also known

as *daayam* and *daala*. They are typically made of brass and have dots punched onto the long faces (1, 2, 3, 0). Each player starts with six coins or chips at 'home' in the center of the game board.



***Aadu Puli Attam (Goat and Tiger Game)***: is a strategic, two-player or 2 teams board game that originated in Tamil Nadu. The game is asymmetric in which one player controls 3 tigers and the other player controls up to 15 goats. The tigers 'hunt' the goats while the goats attempt to block the tigers' movements.



***Nongu Vandi*** : is a tactile game that helps children improve their sense of touch as most children like the feel of sand slip through their fingers. *Nongu* (palm fruit) is available in villages of Tamil Nadu in the summer and the children in the villages play games and also do experiments with available waste items. "*Nongu Vandi*" is easy to make a toy with a long stick and "*Nongu*" palm shell as tires and various games are played using it.



The rural and traditional sports of Tamil Nadu are extremely rich and very versatile. But unfortunately, most of these sports are either extinct or on the verge of extinction. In the craze for modernity and addiction to white-collar pastimes these sports are completely lost.



Ganifa Card Games of Odisha

Photo Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi



## Paika Akheda

### Martial Art Tradition of Odisha

*Vikram Kalra*

The present state of Odisha was known as Kalinga, Utkal and Odra in ancient and medieval times. Kalinga was a powerful state and extended its boundary from the river Ganges to the river Godavari. The Greek ambassador Megasthenes at the court of Mauryan King Chandragupta Maurya described of an independent territory on the

border of the Maurya Empire, which he described as the *Gangaridum Calingarum Regia* and marked its eastern limit on the back of the Ganges. He referred to the powerful army of Kalinga because of which, it could not be conquered by any foreign king.

The military glory of Kalinga is marked from the time of King Ashok of the Mauryan dynasty, who ruled Magadha in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. The famous Kalinga war was fought between Ashok and the people of Kalinga. There were other wars like the war of Kharavela with Satavahan, the historical expeditions of Narasimhadeva-1 against the Muslims of Bengal and the far flung conquest of Kapilendradeva etc. and later the war with the East India Company.

The Paik Rebellion also called the '*Paika Bidroha*', was an armed rebellion against the British East India Company's rule in Odisha in 1817. The Paikas rose in rebellion under their leader Bakshi Jagabandhu and the rebellion quickly spread across most of Odisha before being ruthlessly put down by the company's forces. When the rebellion broke out in March 1817, the Paiks came together under his leadership. Raja Mukunda Deva, the last King of Khurda was another leader of the Indian rebels. The rebellion

enjoyed widespread support in Oriya society with feudal chiefs, zamindars and the common people of Odisha participating in it. The uprising spread rapidly across Odisha, and there were several encounters between the British and Paik forces, including at Cuttack, where the latter was put down. By May 1817, the British managed to re-establish their authority over the entire province, but it was a long while before the tranquility finally returned to it.

The martial arts of Odisha, though popularly known as '*Paik Akheda*' in present days originated from the ancient war skill. It has some literary meaning. The term 'Paik' derived from the Sanskrit word '*Padatika*' which means foot soldiers. The Paik learnt all sorts of physical activities and techniques of war from his Guru. The Paiks were recruited from all classes and castes but mostly they rare belonging to chasa or the cultivating caste. Occasionally, individuals of the reserved castes such as *Panas*, *Bauris* and *Kandaras* were





also recruited. Even more savage inhabitants of the remote hills, called *Kandhas* were enrolled. The Brahmins were not encouraged to enlist themselves as foot soldiers. Besides, the thieves, robbers, cheats and such other category of persons were debarred from enlisting themselves in the army. Social status and conditions of the family were taken carefully into account in the enrolment of the soldiers. In case, there was only one son in the family and in cases of recent marriages, enrolment was not permitted. The elder son of the family was bound to join the military duties of the king and the younger son was supposed to look after cultivation and the family. At the age of twenty, they were eligible to join the army after obtaining necessary training from their Guru.

For their Military services, the Paiks were not paid in cash but were given rent free service lands which, they cultivated with their own hands in times of peace and subject to military and police duties - whenever called upon by their chiefs. The Paiks enjoyed their agricultural lands on hereditary basis.

At times of war, different types of soldiers and officials of the higher ranks are found. This shows that the efficiency



of a soldier was taken into account to place him in the rank, suitable for his physical strength and ability. The Paiks were divided into three ranks and were distinguished by the names taken from their occupation or the weapons, which they used. They were called *Paharis*, *Banuas* and *Dhenkiyas*. The

*Paharis* carry a large shield made of wood covered with hides and strengthened with knobs and circles of iron, and the long straight national sword of Odisha, called the *Khanda*. They are stationed chiefly as guards. The *Banuas* use the matchlock principally and have besides them a small shield and sword. It was their duty to take the field, principally and so on distant expeditions. The *Dhenkiyas* were armed with bows and arrows, and a sword. They were supposed to perform all sorts of duties.

### **Musical Equipments used by Paiks**

The Paiks marched to the battlefield to the beat of the drum and other musical instruments like *Bheri*, *Singha*, *Turi*, *Dholki*, *Changu*, *Dhipa*, *Khudua*, *Jhanja* etc. and the practice of singing songs during the marching of the soldiers was very popular.

## Weapons used by the Paiks

The weapons used by the Paiks were numerous. Bows and arrows were frequently used and other weapons like *khadga*, *bjara*, *barchha* which, were used during the *Puranic* days were in vogue. Various other types of weapons were also used by the Paiks in the battlefield. The deadly weapons like the *havalina*, reference to which, is found in Sanskrit works were used by them; the Paiks were known to use guns and muskets. They were equipped with weapons like *nail*, *thunka*, *baruda kumpa*, *jhuli kata*, *sagadin ali*, *olata dhara khanda*, *khapur*, *dhal*, *kanda*, *katari*, *bank achuri*, *katidhal*, *katimala*, *rudhi* and *dhanu*.

## War Costumes used by Paiks

Paiks, who were the greatest warriors used a special kind of dress in the battlefield. This was mainly designed to ensure their safety and security. Uniform wardress was insisted upon and it consisted of a cap and vest made out of the skin of a tiger or leopard, a sort of chain armour for the body and the thigh and a girdle formed by the tail of some wild animal.

## War Dance and Military Literature of Odisha

The various war dances of Odisha like *Naga Nacha*, *Paika Nacha*, *Ranapa Nacha*, *Chhau Nacha* etc., are associated with martial traditions of Odisha. With the help of drumbeats and other war music they perform the dance which, recalls the past military glories.

## Classifications of Martial Arts of Odisha

In the present scenario, the martial art '*Paik Akheda*' is seen in various parts of Odisha. The Paik Guru and their Paiks demonstrate these martial arts during *Bijaya Dasami* (Durga Puja). Sometimes, the state level Paik Akheda competitions have also been organised by the Government. The present martial arts of Odisha can be divided into two parts (a) Martial arts without weapons and (b) Martial arts with

weapons. The martial arts without weapons consists of (i) *Bhui nghar Bidya* (floor exercises), which is the same as the modern gymnastics stunt (ii) *Danda*, *Baithak* and *Mati Kusti* (wrestling is conducted on the soft soil called *fluka*) (iii) *Ghara* (steps) and *Challi* (marching). Before learning the skills of various weapon fighting, they first keep their body fit with the help of *Danda*, *Baithak* and other floor exercises. Then they learn the types of *Ghara* (steps) namely *Aka Ghara* (one step), *Duie Ghara* (two step), *Timi Ghara* (three step) and *Chari Ghara* (four step). The Paiks of Odisha demonstrate various types of *Challi* (marching) at the time of the demonstration and also during the competition.

## Martial Arts with Weapons

- (a) *Dhala Tarabari* (sword and shield)
- (b) *Banka Churi* (curve knife)
- (c) Staff play with one hand and both hand
- (d) *Banati* (fire arm)
- (e) *Gada Mudugara* (Indian club)
- (f) *Patta* (long sword with forearm guard)
- (g) *Banna* (long sword with hilt)
- (h) *Ranapa* (war foot)
- (i) *Naga phasa* (cobra knot)

Now days the martial art *Paik Akheda* is seen in various parts of Odisha. The physical and martial activities with and without weapons are demonstrated by the Paik Guru and their disciples on *Bijaya Dasami* and other festivals like *Dolo Jatra*, *Raja Sankaranti*, *Makar Sankaranti* etc. and are extremely popular even today.

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Pitthoo - Sakariya Village, Raj

## Game Pitthoo - Generating Women Power in Sports

*Kamal Dogra*

India is a country with people from diverse social backgrounds and even today India's sound pillars are its senior citizens from the rural background who are not in the favour of sending girls out of their respective villages. As a result the girls are not encouraged to play sports and their desire to do so remains in her heart and

slowly vanishes. Through *pitthoo* they can represent their respective village, coaches and referees can be taken from the village itself and this can generate employment among the girls in their village and also result in support from the parents and the village heads.



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## न्यू रेनबो स्कूल ने जीती पिठू प्रतियोगिता

फाइनल में सिल्वर लाइन प्रेस्टीज स्कूल को 67-43 से हराया

एनपीटी न्यूज, प्रताप विहार, प्रथम अड्डा अग्रजल मेथेरियल टैल स्कूल पिठू प्रतियोगिता में नवभारत न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल ने जीत ली है। फाइनल मुक़ाबले में न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल ने सिल्वर लाइन प्रेस्टीज स्कूल को हराया। प्रतियोगिता का उद्घाटन स्कूल के निदेशक कैलाश अग्रवाल व प्रधानाचार्य रवि गुप्त ने शेष नलकर किया। रवि गुप्त ने बतवाय कि पिठू को फ़िर से लोकप्रिय बनाने के लिए ही इस प्रतियोगिता का आयोजन किया गया था, जिसमें 8 स्कूलों की टीमें ने भाग लिया।

लोग मैचों में शक़ात प्रदर्शन कर न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल, वेनबैल पब्लिक स्कूल, सिल्वर लाइन प्रेस्टीज स्कूल व एयरफ़ोर्स सीनियर सेकेंडरी स्कूल ने मेथेरियल में प्रवेश किया। इसमें न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल ने एयरफ़ोर्स सीनियर सेकेंडरी स्कूल तथा सिल्वर लाइन प्रेस्टीज स्कूल ने कटे शेषों में वेनबैल पब्लिक स्कूल को हराकर फ़ाइनल में प्रवेश किया। फ़ाइनल में न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल के खिलाड़ी उमर ख़ान और उमरीने 67-43 स्कोर से जीत ख़ासिल की। इस मैच का सारा



न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल की टीम टोपी के साथ ट स्कूल के निदेशक रवि गुप्त व न्यू रेनबो पब्लिक स्कूल के निदेशक काशीराम सिंह, वेनबैल इंटरनैशनल स्कूल के निदेशक कल्याण शेट्टी और एयरफ़ोर्स सीनियर सेकेंडरी स्कूल के निदेशक कल्याण शेट्टी खैरान रहे।



The bottom line is quite simple, when a society actively promotes sports into its culture, encouraging children and specially girls to not only play sports as a hobby or as a recreational activity but to actively, intensely compete – it benefits the society not only at the educational, health and societal level, but also benefits the country’s economy as a whole. It is very clear that India is a cricket-crazy nation. Cricket is a part of our culture but *pitthoo* is in our culture and there is a vast difference between “part of culture” and “in our culture”.

India is home to several traditional sports, which originated in the country and continue to remain fairly popular. But with mobile phones and virtual reality taking over our everyday life, our children are fast losing interest in playing sports. The biggest causality has been the traditional sports of India - the reason being, over-scheduling, over supervision and lack of appropriate playing environments especially for women and girls. This results in many children having less access to play time and play spaces than children in the past and further

results in bad effect on their health and natural growth. Games appear to be the common property of people who know them either professionally or as an amateur. By means of games, children or youth are engaged not only in self-discovery, explorative and experiments with its senses, but also understands its relation with the concept of universe. They gradually learn to get along with the big world outside and there is also an opportunity for the growth of the mind. For a healthy society, games have been a part of everyone’s life, be it children, adults or even the senior citizens but the women in India consistently lag behind in terms of sports. The reasons could be various, some women could be deprived of the opportunities they can get in sports because the men don’t want them to or others may be restricted due to family pressures.

Game *pitthoo* is meant for everyone and at every level emphasizes to empower women to attain economical participation in order to overcome poverty and inequality. *Pitthoo* gives women a platform to prove their power through sports.



It is believed that *pitthoo* will emerge to be the world's biggest sports economical venture in next five years. Every Indian is well versed with *pitthoo* as it has been one of the most popular games for many in their childhood, but with passing time it has lost the impact that it used to create. There are only few ways to generate economic growth and sports industry is regarded one of the largest industries worldwide and discovery of *pitthoo* in the new '*avtaar*' is a better economic resource. An example of this is – a pilot workshop was conducted in one of the *Aganwadi* sectors in Delhi to see the impact of the game with emphasis on women empowerment in sports. '*Aganwadi* is known to be the under privileged sector'. The girls dedicated to the game were generated as *pitthoo*'s first maiden coaches and referees, who were further hired by the Department of Women & Child Development, NCR, Delhi on a wage of Rs.700/- per coach per day for six months. Coaches and referees further growth was that, they were facilitated in villages, schools and colleges to promote the game. Today from *Aganwadi* sectors to high schools every girl child wants to become a *pitthoo* player. The under privileged sector is the biggest community sector worldwide and every girl and women has the right to play, right to work and right to earn.

The word *pitthoo* really is a very beautiful word. '*Pitth*' is a Punjabi word, which means '*peeth*', the backbone or spine and '*thoo*' means 'to carry', so *pitthoo* means to carry. In fact, *pitthoo* means, the process of giving new life to something. The game *pitthoo* is about cognitive skills and improving physical skills. Talent is the backbone of any sport. Now is the time to cultivate new talent, create opportunities, provide appropriate infrastructure for training and build the sport *pitthoo* as a career option and an upcoming revolutionary venture of decades.



The Game of Carrom

# Traditional Sports in the Malwa Region

*Manohar Dubey*

Various games and sports have been played in different areas on the basis of the geographical and social conditions of the region and available resources. In today's globalization era, sports have become nation-wide or worldwide without staying in the boundaries of the zones, but this situation is only for some sports. Due to globalization, where some games were benefited, and were identified in the world, there was a lack of interest in many traditional sports, due to which many have become extinct or on the verge of extinction. 'Malwanchal' is also not untouched by it. There are national and international identities in the sports *Kabaddi* and *Kho-Kho* being played in Malwa for centuries, but many games are not seen today or very rarely seen.



*Sittoliya* is a game that is played in the rural area of 'Malwanchal'.

In this game the players go to bands in two teams and only one ball and seven small and flattened stones are enough. The seven flattened stones are kept one over another. A player of the first team, from a distance, throws the ball towards the mound of flattened stones and the players of the other team stand behind the mound. When the player of the first team drops the stones with the ball and the player who is fielding, catches the ball, the ball thrown player is considered to be out.



The players of first team try to regain the mound, if they succeed to regain the mound without the ball touching them, then *Sittolia* gets completed and the team wins. At the same time, the other team has to hit the ball to any player of the first team and not allow the stones to be stacked.



## **The Game that Became a Tradition**

There are games that are not always played but are played on very few occasions in the year. These games have

become the tradition of Malwa region. One such game is *Hingot Yuddh*, which is played on the *Padwa*, the second day after Diwali in village Gautampura of Indore district of 'Malvanchal'. In this game the players are called *yoddha* (warriors). There are two teams - one team belongs to village Gautampura, and is called *Turra* and the other belongs to village Runeji, known as *Kalangi*. In this game, the number of warriors (players) is not fixed, nor it is necessary to have equal number of players in both the teams.



Instrument of the game - Players start preparing for this game months before. In the regional forests, the players look for the tree, which produces the fruit, whose shell is hard and is called *hingot*. They collect this fruit, remove the pulp and stuff it with gunpowder and then put a thin stick in it. This then becomes like a rocket or an arrow used on Diwali. When it is burned and thrown towards the other team, the burning arrows lead towards them like a fire balloon. The players of both teams gather in a large field outside the village and stand in front of each other. Each player has rockets made of *hingot* in a bag, and a slope

in one hand to safeguard him from the *hingot* arrow. The players burn the *hingot* arrow and throw it towards the opposite team; in the same way the players of the opposite team run the burning *hingot* arrows. If a player sees the *hingot* arrow coming over it, he protects himself with the slope.



A very large number of people from far distances gather to watch the game. In the darkness of the night, the lights of the burning *hingot*, moving from both sides, present a great panoramic view. This game is entertaining and exciting but it is dangerous too, many players are injured every year. Sometimes the burning *hingot* loses direction and goes towards the audience, causing injury. There is no shortage of enthusiasm in players and spectators despite the risks in this game. However, given the possibility of injury and death in this game, a ban was also imposed, but due to pressures from local people and people's representatives, to continue this tradition the ban had to be removed.



Wushu warriors from Assam help in keeping the Army fighting fit (Source: Google image)

## History of Wushu

*Sohail*

Wushu is a Chinese Martial Art. The term Wushu comes from two Chinese characters “Wu (war) “Shu” (art) - Art of War and is known as Kungfu in most of the countries. China has for long been considered the father of all Asian martial art and Wushu is the collective name for all popular Chinese Martial arts today, i.e, *Taichi, Jiali, Jiaodi, Shobo, Xiangpu, Jijian, Jiaobang, Ciqiang* etc.

The origin of Wushu may be traced back to prehistoric times when our ancestors used stone tools and wooden clubs for hunting, both for subsistence and self-defense against wild beasts and poisonous snakes. In tribal strife’s they used their tools of production as weapons of war. Experience in battles told them that, in order to overwhelm their enemies, they must not only have good

weapons, but also should keep fit and improve their skills of fighting through intensive training in times of peace. Many Wushu styles were inspired from animal's skills and movements, the idea being to catch the essence of the animal to attack and defend. Wushu has nurtured human intelligence to develop physical and mental discipline, and to improve self-esteem, self-control, mental agility and mental concentration. This primitive martial art has an unbroken chain of evolution from the beginning of China's 5000-year-old history, till today. The process of evolution brought many developments and intricacies into the art. Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., Wushu came under the influence of Buddhism and Taoism, which elevated it from the position of a warrior art into deeply meditative art form. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. there developed strong links between the prevailing Tang Empire and the Shoalin Monastery, which was one of the oldest schools of Wushu. Wushu now found state recognition as a mandatory skill and practice of a soldier. Wushu is a Chinese sport, which pays attention to both internal and external exercises with fighting movement as its main content.

Today, both in China and around the world, millions of people are fascinated by Chinese Wushu and benefit from it. It is believed to be effective in preventing and curing some diseases like cold, indigestion and eyestrain. Among the many forms *Taijjuan* (slow yoga) may enjoy the highest popularity. Characterized by gentle, rhythmic movements, natural breathing and physical and mental coordination, it is particularly good for the old and weak and those suffering from chronic diseases

In the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Wushu was included as a demonstrative sports, since then it spread like wild fire across the globe with many International Associations and Championships. In 1990 Wushu became a regular event in the Asian games and since then it has featured in the Asian Games and recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

## **Wushu in India**

Wushu came to India in 1989 and since then 25 Senior National championships, 15 Junior National Championships and 16 Sub Junior National Wushu Championships have been successfully conducted. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India officially recognized Wushu in 1993. Wushu is a regular event in school national games and national games and regular courses have been offered by the Sports Authority of India at the NS NIS Patiala since 2001. 42 units are presently affiliated with Wushu Association of India including Departmental organizations and Union Territories. Wushu Association of India has now reached every part of the country.

The Indian Wushu team has been participating in the World Asian and South Asian championships and has brought many laurels for the country from time to time. Since 2006, Wushu is in the *Priority Category* in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and an affiliated unit of Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Since 2006, Wushu sport in India achieved new heights and three players W Sandhya Rani - 2011, M Bimoljit Singh-2012 and Y Sanathoi Devi-2015 were conferred with the prestigious Arjun Award and Kuldeep Handoo - Chief Coach of India, was configured with the FICCI Coach of the year, 2016.

## **Olympic Sports**

Wushu is a non-Olympic sport, but as per the IOC President Wushu is the best probable sport in the 2024 Olympics Games. Wushu was included in Berlin Olympics in 1936 as a demonstrative sport and in 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Wushu Championships was concurrently held at the same venue. In 2014, Wushu was a demonstrative sport in Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing (China).

## **Asian Games**

Wushu is a regular event at the Asian Games since 1990 and the Indian Wushu team participated in the Asian Games in

2006 at Doha, where they got the first ever bronze medal and Wushu in India was elevated to priority category from the other Category. Thereafter in Guangzhou Asian Games Indian Wushu team bagged 2 medals (1 silver and 1 Bronze) and the 17th Asian Games at Incheon, the Indian Wushu team bagged 2 Bronze Medals.

### **South Asian Federation (SAF) Games**

Wushu is a regular sport at the SAF Games and recently in 2016 the Indian Wushu team remained the overall champions and in the 11<sup>th</sup> SAF Games the team won many medals.

### **Lusofonia Games (Portuguese games)**

Wushu was inducted in the Lusofonia Games in 2011. The Lusofonia Games were held in Goa in January 2014, in which India swept the medals and topped the medal tally.

### **School Games Federation of India and Central Board of School Education (CBSE)**

Wushu is a regular event at the School Games of India and CBSE cluster and is being regularly carried out in different parts of the country.

### **All India Police Games**

Wushu is a one of the main sports at the All India Police Games. Wushu made its debut at the All India Police Games in the 64<sup>th</sup> Wrestling cluster in Haryana in 2015 and it was recently included in the Judo Cluster in 2017.

### **All India University Games**

Wushu has been included in the All Indian University games and the 1<sup>st</sup> National Level University Games was held successfully at the Patiala University in September 2016.

### **World University Games**

Wushu recently made its debut at World University Games and the World Wushu University games was held in Taipei in August 2017.

### **World/ Asian and SANDA World Cup**

Indian Wushu team has been participating in all official events of the IWUF at senior and junior level and has brought glory for the country from time to time. Indian Wushu team is in the best five countries of the world in the medal tally in both senior and junior category.

#### **Official Events of IWUF:**

1. World Championship
2. Sanda World Cup
3. World Traditional Wushu Championship
4. Taijijian World Championship
5. Asian Championship
6. South Asian Wushu Championship
7. Hongkong International Wushu Championship

#### **Continental International Events of IWUF:**

1. Pars Cup Iran
2. Armania International Wushu Championship
3. Polaska Wushu Championship
4. Georgia International Wushu Championship

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Credits - Wushu Association of India





Chaupar Spread, Himachal Pradesh

# Rural Sports of Uttar Pradesh - *Sthaniya Khel*

*Rajeev Dwivedi*

*Gilli-Danda*, *Piththu*, Snakes & Ladders, Ludo etc. are some such names, that with just a mention of these we return to our old memories and remember the stories from our grandparents. These are not just names of games, but a feeling that connects us with childhood memories. Below are a few games, which we have left in the corridors of our village several years ago.

## ***Piththu Garam***

Playing this game requires seven flat stones and one ball. In this game, the stones are kept one above the other and two teams participate in this game. The player of the first team drops the stones with the ball and then his team members have to recapture it shouting "*piththu garam*". In the meanwhile, the other team member hits the ball from the back and if the ball hits before speaking *piththu garam* then the team is out. Any number of players can play, but there should be equal players in both teams. The name of this game is spoken and written differently in various parts of the country.



Seven Stones Stack (Pic: [blog.compassion.com](http://blog.compassion.com))

## **Skipping Rope**

Well everyone knows that the rope is a good exercise for weight loss, but in the village it is played like a game with much excitement and fun. Two girls hold the rope at each end—and start revolving it. The third girl jumps in the middle, turns are taken and the one who jumps the most wins the game.

## **Lame leg**

This game is mainly played by the girls, but the boys also enjoy it. It is played in the house courtyard, field or any open area, where rectangular or square shaped boxes are made with chalk or brick pieces. Then a piece of stone has to be thrown in the boxes by standing on one leg and without touching the line. The stone has to be picked standing on one leg and with one hand without touching the line. At least two players are required to play this game. There are many other ways to play this game - style of which, varies from place to place.

## ***Gilli Danda***

*Gilli danda* is the most popular sport in rural areas. If there is a slight mistake in playing this game, then one's eyes can be damaged. In this sense, this game is also considered a dangerous sport. In this game, *gilli* is shaped like a spindle and with a small rod. One end of the *gilli* is hit with a *danda* (small rod), and the *gilli* is thrown as far as possible. The decision of the score is based on the extent to which the player throws away. This game has its own local rules.



*Gilli Danda* (Pic: VSF / youtube.com)

### ***Gutaka***

The *Gutaka* (small stone) gets thrown with the right hand and leaves the left hand in the shape of the house or dog, and the *gutaka* passed under them. Then everybody has to raise one *gutaka* with one hand at the same time. This game seems very easy, but in reality it is not so easy. It has a lot of hands-on exercise in play. The nature of this game is also reflected in the local places.

### ***Chhupan-Chupai***

*Chhupan-Chupai* (concealment) is a popular game for children even the urban areas. It is also known as hide and seek. In this game a person has to go a distance and count up to 100, so that the players who plays can get time to hide. After completing the count, all the players have to be found one by one and the one who gets caught first, he has to go through this process again.

### ***Kancha***

*Kancha* (trunk) is a traditional game. In the streets of the village one can still easily meet children playing it. In this game, there are very small balls of marbles known as *Kanchas*. There is a target to shoot from one small ball to another, and if the target hits, then the ball is yours. Often

this game is seen similar to that of billiards. There are many variations of playing this game.



*Kancha* (Pic: hvrsports.com)

### ***Posampa***

*Posampa bhai posampa, Lal kile me kya hua, sau rupaye ki ghari churai, ab to jail me jana padega, jail ki roti khana padegi.* This song reminds you of the days in school. In this engaging game two children used to make a chain by holding their hands and the other peers had to pass through it. The song was sung, and then the chain was closed, if any player was left out and the song was over, then he was considered to be out.

### ***Aankh-Michauli***

In this, one-player eyes are covered with a cloth and he has to catch the other players. On capture, the other player has to go through the same process. Another way of playing this game is that the eyes of a player are closed and the other player is supposed to hit the hand (*thapaki*). If first hitting person is identified then he has to close his eyes. Interestingly, number of people can play in this game.

### ***Snakes and Ladder***

This is a very popular game in India. There is a board to play this game, on which numbers from 1 to 100 are

written. With this snakes are seated place to place and ladders are also made. In this, where one gets a chance to reach straight up on the ladder, on the other hand, the snake can bring you straight down.

None of the above games are currently being operated by the Department of Youth Welfare and as a result the data is not available. There is an urgent requirement to revive these games, else soon they will disappear and the future generation will not know about them.

# Traditional Sports in Jharkhand

*Shree Deo Singh*

## **Kati**

*Kati* is a game of quick reflexes and deft footwork. It requires a keen eye, strong limbs and expert eye-hand-leg co-ordination. Pioneered by the *Santhals*, it is traditionally played after the harvest season by teams each comprising 10 members. Every player has a *kati* or a semi-circular disc made of tamarind wood and a *tarhi* or a 6ft bamboo stick. All *katis* lie on the centre line of a rectangular court. Players try to propel the bamboo stick with their feet to hit the opponent's *kati*. Every successful hit gets a score.



## **Sekkor**

Traditionally, *sekkor* is a game played by the Ho tribe. Legend has it that this ancient game was first played between two men and devils and eventually the men won. *Sekkor* is a large oval-shaped wooden top loosely attached with a string. The players in the team are usually in odd

numbers, five being the minimum. The objective of the game is to keep on hitting the *sekkor* of the opponent team till it goes out of a marked circle. However, it is a time-bound game.

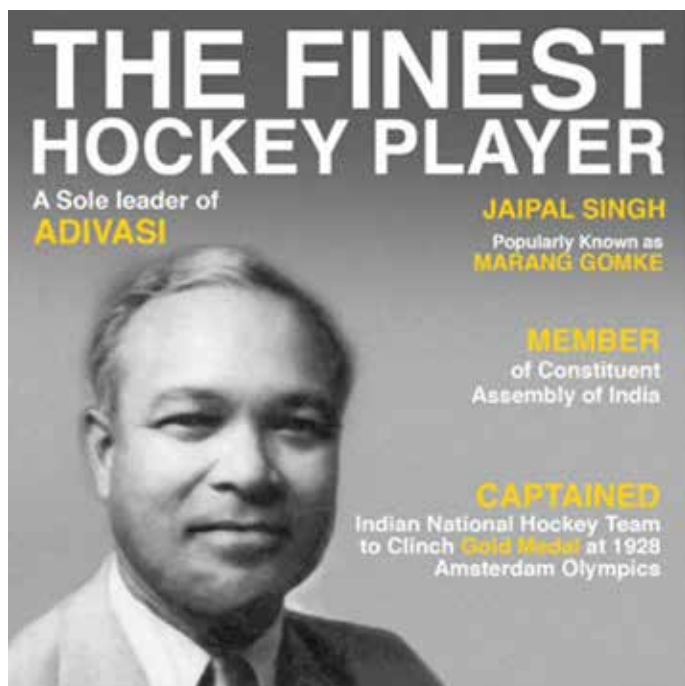


Other than this, sporting events on tribal games like *BahuChor* and *Chhur* are also held to popularise the ancient indigenous sports. *BahuChor*, an engrossing tribal game believed to be inspired from an incident in the Ramayana wherein Lord Ram rescues Sita from the Ravana, is based on the principles of defense and rescue. On the other hand, *Chhur*, traditionally played by tribal girls and boys in paddy fields, works on the principle of run and chase.

## **Hockey in Jharkhand**

Hockey is a popular game played across the state of Jharkhand, every village has both young boys and girls wielding sticks from woods and playing hockey in the fields in their area. Jaypal Singh Munda the captain of Indian Olympic hockey team in 1928 had won the laurel

for the state. His team had won the 1st Olympic gold medal for hockey in Amsterdam. Jaipal Singh Munda was born in a remote village in Ranchi district of Jharkhand popularly known as 'Marang Gomke', meaning 'Great Leader', by the tribals in Chota Nagpur. He started a Hockey Team of the Mohan Bagan Club and actively participated in various tournaments..



## Archery

Archery is another sport that is adopted at the village level in the state. The children and youth from far-flung areas practice this sport as their daily routine. Deepika Kumari is arguably one of the finest archers India has ever produced, after achieving a ranking of World number one in the women's individual recurve category. Now ranked number two in the world, she has won two gold medals in the 2010 Commonwealth Games and also secured three consecutive silver medal positions at the Archery World Cup in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Other games like shooting, kho kho, aquatics and many indoor sports activities are also popular among the people of Jharkhand.





The village boys show their flexibility skills by passing through a metal ring



The Students with Guru Dayanand Saraswati

# Archery Tradition of Uttar Pradesh

*Vikram Kalra*

## **History of Archery in the World**

The origins of archery were seen from the very beginning, with the evolution of mankind. Archery had been used initially for hunting and combat. The evidence of ancient archers has been found around the world and probably dates back to the Stone Age – around 20,000 BC. The earliest people known to have regularly used bows and arrows

were the Ancient Egyptians, who adopted archery around 3,000 BC for hunting and warfare. In China, the earliest evidence of archery dates to the Shang Dynasty – 1766-1027 BC. A war chariot of that time carried a three-man team, a driver, a lancer and an archer. During the Zhou Dynasty that followed – 1027-256 BC – nobles at court attended archery tournaments that were accompanied by



music and interspersed with entertainment. The Chinese people introduced archery in Japan in the sixth century and the Middle Eastern superiority in archery equipment and technique reigned for centuries. With bows and arrows, the Assyrians, Parthians, the Huns, Mongols conquered much of Europe and Asia. Some of these had mastered the art of archery from horseback. The English longbow became a force in the middle ages and was used in many famous European battles.

With the advent of gunpowder, the use of cannons and guns during the medieval period, archery's importance in warfare decreased. It is now a recreational and competitive sport and is one of the oldest arts still practised today. The first-known archery competition relatable to modern times was held in Finsbury, England in 1583 and had 3,000 participants. Archery is also the National Sport of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

## History of Archery in India

India had its archers from the time of Ramayana and Mahabharata who had excelled in the art of archery. It is said that these archers were trained in the use of supernatural weapons, which was presided over by a specific deity. They are depicted as used by archers such as Parashurama, Rama, Lakshman, Indrajit, Ravana, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Ashwatthaman, Arjuna and other warriors. The *divya astras* were generally invoked into the arrows. Ashwatthaman invoked Brahmashirsha *astra* using a blade of grass as his weapon and Arjuna was capable to shoot all his celestial weapons including Pasupata by using mind power alone.

The bow of Shiva was called *pinaka*. It is said, that he was able to destroy many *asuras* (demons) with it. The bow was given to Guru Parshuram and later was in the possession of King Janak and Rama had broken it in the *swayamvara*





to get married to Sita. The *Narayanastra* of Vishnu would create showers of arrows. The armies of all the kingdoms in India in Ancient and Medieval times had special divisions of archers for the attack.

In modern times in India, the Archery Association of India came to existence in August 1973, with the objective to organize, encourage, promote and control the sports of archery in India and to provide ancillary facilities to archers for training. Right from its inception, Archery Association of India is engaged in the upliftment of this ancient game in India. The first national meet was organized in New Delhi in 1973 in which, 50 archers participated. They used bamboo bow and arrows made in Meghalaya and West Bengal and the Bengal archers were to the fore with their superior techniques.

### **Archery in Uttar Pradesh and the Prabhat Ashram, Meerut**

Gurukul Prabhat Ashram at Nilokheri in district Meerut, comes under the the *Arya Samaj*. The ashram was established in the year 1972 and It is headed by Guru Swami Vivekanand Saraswati since then. The students are enrolled in the ashram from class 6<sup>th</sup> and they come from different parts of the country to study under the *Guru Shishya Prampara*. The students stay in the hostels and besides the vedic education system, the students are taught other subjects like maths, science, computers, etc. They communicate amongst themselves only in Sanskrit and have a choice to appear for their exams through different boards.

Special care is taken for the overall growth of the students. The day starts very early in the morning where emphasis is given on physical health and they exercise for about an hour, followed by breakfast and then regular classes. Lot of importance is given to meditation which, helps them in their concentration level.

Different games are played by students in the Gurukul, but archery has an important place. Guruji feels that archery has been taught in the Gurukuls from ancient times and plays a crucial role in *shastra siksha* under the Gurukul Vedic Shishya system and hence archery was introduced in the Gurukul in 1992. Local businessmen and families from Meerut initially donated some bamboo made bows and arrows to the ashram to start the sport. These families are closely associated with the Gurukul and always helps them in different aspects.

At that time archery was played only in a few districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Meerut. Now archery it is played as a sport in about 36 districts of Uttar Pradesh. Amongst them the popular ones being Meerut, Baghpat, Mathura, Lucknow, Varanasi, Sonbhadra, Ghazipur. Uttar Pradesh Archery Association conducts state level championships and ranking championships for sportsmen from the state. The state championships are held every year around Dussera or after Diwali in different categories like under 9, under 14 years, Sub Junior, Junior and Senior. The state of Uttar Pradesh boasts of 3 Olympians and 1 Arjun Awardee. Satyadev Prasad who was also a student of the Prabhat Ashram represented India in the 2004 Olympics at Athens. Sumangala Sharma also from Gurukul at Bareilly went to the 2004 Athens Olympics. Mangal Singh participated in the 2008 Beijing Olympics and was also an Arjun Awardee.

The Prabhat Ashram at Meerut has produced a number of archers who have brought laurels to the state and country at National and International levels, namely Ved Prakash,



Satyadev Prasad, Arjun Awardee & a former olympian was a student of the Gurukul

Kailash, Puneet and Smender Satyadev Prasad , a former Olympian at the 2004, Athens was a student of the Prabhat Ashram, Meerut. Originally from Nizamabad district of U.P, was admitted in class 6<sup>th</sup> in 1990 and started archery in 1993. He represented India at different International competitions-Olympics, World Cup, Asian Games and European. He has won about 100 plus medals at National and International levels. He is also made 9 national level records. He was able to break the previous record of Liba Ram by scoring 328/360 in 1996 when he was playing at the junior level. Presently Satyadev Prasad is the presiding officer in Sports Authority of India and coordinates between different centres of archery in the country. He was appointed as the national coach in 2006.

Satyadev feels that the students of Gurukul are in much better position to deal with any kind of situation in the sport, specially when the stress level is high. They are able to turn the negative situations into positive and he gives full credit for his success to his Guruji and Gurukul.

Some years ago, the state of Uttar Pradesh topped in the



sport of archery but now many other states like Haryana and Jharkhand have taken the lead. With so much of talent in the state in archery, many of the players are playing for other states as there is no quota to get any job in archery in the state. There has not been any kind of sponsorships from any corporate or private organizations for the sport of archery. There is a very strong need to help these sportsmen and the sport of archery for its further growth and developemnt.

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# About the Authors

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**Manohar Dubey** has been active for several years in rural areas of Indore, voluntarily providing subsidised education by establishing rural schools for children. He is the Chief Editor of quarterly magazine “Shri Shrigoud Navchetna Samwad” and is also engaged in conservation and promotion of ‘Malwi’ dialect and folk culture.

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