

Tribal Games of Lakhi Jungle Region of Punjab

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Abstract

Punjab has endless customary games played by its kin. In rustic Punjab one can locate the genuine picture which no uncertainty conveys genuine conventions of the state. Games are a vital piece of any general public. These consider the way of life and customs of that society and are the primary wellspring of amusement of its kin. This research paper deals with the games of the tribal people of the Lakhi jungle region of Punjab such as Bauria, Bangla, Bazigar and Gaadi-lohar to mention the major tribes.

Keywords:- Lakhi Jungle, Tribe, Games, Bazigar, Gadi-Lohar, Bangala, Bauria, Play, Folk.

Introduction

It is believed that entertainment or game is the basic need of human beings, it being a social expression as old as the human society. Games are considered to be useful from the point of view of assessing the physical strength and mental skill of human beings. Mental capability and personality of a person is based on her socialisation and games are an important component of this process.

There is considerable variation in the opinion of various scholars regarding games. Groos (1898) explains games as a practice and preparation for the requirements of life's duties. Schiller- Spencer theory explains play as a result of surplus energy. In German language a game is any activity which is executed just for pleasure and without conscious purpose. In this definition every activity that brings pleasure is a game, the examples are people dance, play musical instruments, act in play etc. Manfred Eigen and Ruthild Winkler (1975) define games as a natural occurrence, 'half necessity and half coincidence'. Gomme writes that games are survival of our primitive past, Huizinga (1949) and Gomme (1985) felt that games are a civilizing force. According to Brunvand, folk games are a form of structured play, which have an objective, and generally need no special equipment or specific playing area. Basically games constitute training of young creatures for the serious work that life will demand later on.

Folk games are being played for the purpose of learning, for entertainment etc. Folk games in tribal communities of Punjab are creative and resourceful. Though it is hard to fix games for any specific caste, even though, development of any game is deeply connected with its geographical, cultural, environment, economic, and religious conditions

Aim of the study

One cannot conduct research without clarity of aims. Undirected and aimless collection of data is always unscientific. For maximum benefits in research, certain concrete and specific aims are to be kept in view.

The objectives of present study are as follow:

1. To know the details of games which tribal people of the Lakhi Jungle region play or used to play.
2. To find out inter-tribal variations in them.

Research Methodology

The research design is the blueprint of the various methods for conducting research. Even though the research designs are plenty, the present study have been followed the descriptive research design. Qualitatively descriptive method has been used as per the requirements of the objectives of the study. Hence it is an attempt to undertake a deep and thorough study of different aspects of tribal games in this region. Qualitative research basically focuses on the thick description of context and ethnography is another key type of qualitative research. The universe of my study was the Bangala, Bazigar, Gaadi-Lohar and Bauria communities in the Lakhi Jungle due to their concentration there.

In this study, a simple stratified sampling technique has been used to collect data. Aged respondents were preferred as more information can be gathered from them. Interview schedules and non-participant observation methods are also applied. The study was conducted on a sample of 240 respondents; 60 respondents were taken from each tribe as per the requirement of the study.

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Review of Literature

Punjab has endless customary games played by its kin. In rustic Punjab one can locate the genuine picture which no uncertainty conveys genuine conventions of the state. Games are a vital piece of any general public. These consider the way of life and customs of that society and are the primary wellspring of amusement of its kin. Games are viewed as valuable from the perspective of surveying the actual quality and mental ability of people. A few authors have perceived two essential perspectives towards the significance of games in life-one that says it is a groundwork for the future and the other, that it is an acclimation to the present (Sutton-Smith, Goldstein,1994). Others have identified games as reflecting different developmental stages which children pass through. Basically games constitute training of young creatures for the serious work that life will demand later on. There are two types of games: traditional and non-traditional or modern games. E. Sidney Hartland defined game as 'it is an organized occupation, undertaken by two or more persons, the primary intention of which is not utility but pleasure or pastime by means of the exhibition of skill or good fortunes of the players. It proceeds according to rules and sometimes necessitates special instruments and apparatus.' (Hartland, vol.6 1913,167).

According to Brunvand, folk games are a form of structured play, which have an objective, and generally need no special equipment or specific playing area. On the other hand, institutional games are highly organized with codified rules that are played in a specially demarcated area with specified dimensions and generally require special equipment characteristics of each game.

Folk games in tribal communities of Punjab are creative and resourceful. Bazigars are traditionally jugglers who entertain people with the tricks of hands and experts in bazis (Singh B.P 2010). Traditionally, it served to preserve culture and ceremonies, teach traditional values to the community members and children. Traditional games played by tribal people of Punjab had cultural and religious significance and games are often sacred act connected to myth, legends and rituals.

Tragically, none of the accessible writing talks about game or play activities of tribal aside from a couple of Punjabi writers in their work. A significant part of the accessible writing talks about their historical background, financial conditions, their culture, marriage rites, funeral rites, migration etc. In above mentioned literature, it either makes no specific reference to tribal people, or does so only incidentally. In most cases, it is difficult to assess how or where the leisure activity of tribal people fit into this broader picture. The present study focuses on the folk games of tribal people of Lakhi Jungle region of Punjab because the older or aged generation of these tribal communities is coming to an end and this study intends to record the details about their games that they had been playing over time. It will help us to understand the nature and culture of tribal societies.

Historical Background of Lakhi Jungle

Malwa region of Punjab holds a very important place in the history of Sikhism. The Punjab plains where the only forested area was that of the Lakhi Jungles on the banks of the Sutlej which, according to Sujana Rai Bhandari (1695-6) were so thick that it was difficult even for a man on foot to get easy passage. In the Indus basin too, flood channels and swamps created large stretches of jungle. The most noticeable was the Lakhi Jungle around Divalpur, situated between the two long arms of the Sutlej-Beas River. It has been now obliterated by the canal colonies. Malwa region of Punjab and Lakhi jungle are synonyms to each other. This place has a very old gurudwara named gurudwaraLakhi Jungle sahib. It is believed that at this place the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev has recited holy one lakh path of Japji Sahib. The sarovar present in the gurudwara is blessed by Guru Nanak Dev. It is believed that anyone who takes a dip in the sarovar and recite Japji Sahib on full moon night will get cured of all types of disease. Guru Hargobind, sixth guru had visited this place during his return from Lahore to Delhi. The tree where Chandu Shah, the culprit of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, was tied is still present here. Lakhi jungle region was also blessed with the footsteps of tenth guru who came here in 1706. A twig was planted here by Guru Gobind Singh which grew up into a tree called falahi sahib. During his visit, Guru Gobind Singh blessed this place as 'Place of Liberation' and he arranged kavi darbar at this place. Lakhi Jungle khalsa is a pious composition RaagMaajh, was said to be composed by Guru Gobind Singh. Namdev Singh has written that now the area between Goniana and Deon is known as lakhi jungle but in past the area covering Bathinda, Faridkot, Firozpur, Patiala, Nabha and from Jind to

Bahawalpur (Pakistan) came under the territory of Lakhi Jungle with Bathinda being headquarter.

Tribes of The Region

Bazigar

The Bazigar are a Punjab based individuals with unique way of life, Linguistic, and cultural characteristics that are not really recognizable to their neighbours in the area. The term Bazigar is an expression of Persian deduction signifying 'one who performs *'bazi'*. *Bazi* which implies 'play', alludes in their substance to a sort of engaging presentation dependent on actual acts. In Punjab, The Bazigar is a community of bold, however bashful, all around assembled and tough individuals. Their names owe to their specialization in performing bazi, (*bazi pauna*), that is, giving an exhibition of aerobatics. *Bazis* Persian word signifies "play".

Bauria

Bauria, one of the significant clans of Punjab, speak to the horticultural portion of the tribal population in Punjab. They are broadly dispersed in an enormous number over the south-western region of Punjab. Their focus in areas of the Malwa district viz. Faridkot, Bathinda, Mansa, Moga, Ferozepur, Shri Muktsar Sahib, Sangrur and Ludhiana is very thick. This community comprises a huge piece of populace in these areas. These regions being nearer to the bone-dry zones of Rajasthan were and still are a famous moving base for the nomadic or semi nomadic communities, who come here searching for work and livelihood. The most acknowledged is the inference from the word *baur* the snare they used to lay to chase animals.

Bangala

The bangala are an itinerant tribal people who live in north India, whose fundamental customary occupation is snake beguiling by playing tunes on been, an instrument comprised of the gourd line, and selling natural medications. K. Suresh Singh, in his People of India, alludes to them as Bengali, Sapera, Sapela, Spoda or Jogi (2003:66). These individuals are dispersed practically all over Punjab.

Gadi-lohar

Gaadi-lohars are a migrant network of Rajasthan. They are lohar by calling who move all around on bullock carts. These carts in Hindi are called *gadi*, henceforth the name 'gadi-lohar'. As they have been on a steady move since numerous years, they are found in different parts of the nation as well. They by and large camp in the edges of city for few weeks or months, briefly building up work place.

GAMES TRIBES PLAY

There are some common games which are played among children of all four tribes. *Lukan miti* (hide and seek) is old and popular children's game. In all tribal communities it is played among both girls and boys. *ChaplanChaknais* also famous among bazigar, bangala, gaadi-lohar and bauria children. Kushti is also played by the kabila men in all tribes. *GharGhar* is a popular game and almost played among every community in society. *Pichu Bakeri* is also a very common game among girls of all communities.

Bazigar: The games played by the bazigar tribe are further categorized into category such as male children game and female children games and young men games or young women games. The games which fall in the category of male children games are *sakkarbhiji*, *ghodaghodi*, *bishu kata*, *daartood*, *Lakhad Kath* and *KhidoKhundi*. The games of female children are *Nadhivichkandete*, *Dittilokaan*, *RoodheKhedna* and *Uadhuadhchidiye*. The bazi performance by bazigars come under the category of games of young men. Bazigar, sabzi performances consisted of the display of a variety of physical feats of strength, balance, agility and courage. They are experts in *baziof* many sort-*uchi*(high), *lammi*(long), *sithi-Puthi*, *katriachhal*, *phattivalchhal*, also called *maut da khuh* (death well) *suli di chhal*, etc. which are a treat to the spectators. The other games are *Adhi-kotla*, *bhaaj*, *saunchi*, *viniphera*, *kala jang*, *bandechak*, *dhangnalladhna*, *bhindi*, *gaanchongna*, *chupad* and *bharath* played by bazigar men.

Bauria: The games of male children in bauria tribe are as follow *Kin Min KanniKa kirya*, *Hik du du*, *thanaal*, *ullan rakhna*, *chaarkchundaandnilli sari*. The games of tribal girls are *oche-neeve*, *canal tap* and day dude. The games of bauria men are *lammi kabaddi*, *lammichhaalor addichadappa*, *teer tukka*, *kaaroda*, *dugh*, *skhay*, *mazda*, *vanjukhedna*, *gopiya cheluva* and *makha*.

Bangala: The games of bengali boys are *peenaghodha, doomna, itt-roodhi, kaddu-kaddu, oonchineevithaan, bakari-bakari and langripala*. Girls in bangala tribe play with toys made up of mud. Making mud toys is a children's activity or game that consists of creating a mixture of soil, water and play. Girls in tribe gather at place and build mud structures to play and they make *ghuggu* with mud which produce sound like *been. Teeyan* is famous Punjabi tradition which is also popular among bengali girls. *Hellabunna* or *pajama* cord knitting is very common among kabila women. The knitting at home with their unique design are their specialty which also reflect their culture and tradition. Knitting *pajama* cord are very popular among bangala women and the different thing is that use *resham threads* or cotton treads to knit cord not wool threads like all other women do. The tug of war is one of the most ancient games known to the man is played among bangala men. *Paajave* is the name of stick fighting in bangala tribe.

Gaadi-lohar:The games played by gadi-lohar boys are *bahia bahia, balachadi, chidianfadhian, gulli danda, gendukhela, pitt hokhela and guthi pauna*. The girls of the tribe again have a limited number of games to play i.e. *leayodaalbaati, hinda de and kali jhota*. Girls in the tribe also play with *aka diankukdian*. The games played by tribal men are *kurkadanda, morchafadhna, khodain, kabaddi, taash* which is further divided into sub categories: *Bhabhi, Manghpata, noakhali khela, kanapa and bald gadian di dudh*.

Inter-Tribal Variations In Games

The traditional games of each tribe are shaped by their culture and environment so we notice difference in their games. Even though the way of playing game is sometimes same but they make it specific by different name or pronunciation. They have specific games which are not shared with other tribes for example *bandechak* in bazigar tribe, *vanjhukhedna* in bauria tribe, *punjabi* in bangla tribe and *bald gadi* in gaadi-lohar. Even though they share many games with each other and with Punjabi culture also because of the influence of Punjabi culture on them. *Gharghar, bandarkilla, pichoobakeri, lokanmitti, kusti* are some examples of common games among them.

Conclusion

The traditional games of each region and community are shaped by their culture and their current circumstance. The physical space, materials accessible and seasons may figure out where and when they are played, the props that are utilized and the structure a game takes. Social and cultural standards, articulations and attitude may be reflected in who plays, the manner in which the game is played or in the objectives of the game. They often consolidate cultural knowledge, qualities and abilities that have arisen after some time from the correspondence between a specific society and its given circumstances. Some games are unique to a particular tribal area and not known somewhere else by any means, this make all tribal societies so unique and intriguing. The extraordinary nature of traditional games is that they can be played anywhere.

Here we noticed that games are gender biased, gender differences in the games of children reflected in play activities of children and the utilization of playing area. Boys have greater variety of games when contrasted with girls and girls played games which always had definite boundaries whereas the play activities of boys need open space. The play activities of girls teach them the lesson of persistence, tolerance, attachment, responsibility, self-control and belongingness whereas boys play games which instruct them to be physical strong, skills of hunting, self-realization, defendant and defender. This shows that gender stereotype present in the tribal culture at the large level.

All these above mentioned game are noted from aged generation. Even the negative impact of globalization and western imperialism can be seen in tribal societies also. The traditional games have been almost vanished because of the approach of modern games such as cricket, football etc. The enthusiasm for modern games seems to be cultural than worries about health, psychological wellbeing, and social interaction. The traditional games, therefore, appear to be more hunting oriented than diversion yet as men moved from one occupation or wellspring of living to another, they changed their game activities accordingly. Every generation discovers and builds up its own specific ways of amusement and physical exertion. Moreover, the study results area useful guide in reviving some traditional games which may lost their significance or may have gone out of fashion for cultural reasons but otherwise extremely helpful for socialization, recreation and wellbeing.

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