



## Indigenous Games and Its Importance

### Author

**Dr. Somappa Badiger,**

College Director Of Physical Education & Sports Science

Govt.First Grade College, Mariyammanahalli,

Hosapete Tq. Ballari Dt. Karnataka

### Abstract:

Sports and games have always been an integral part of India's rich culture and history. Sadly, today's kids are so engrossed in playing video games that traditional games like Pallanguzi, Lippa, Kabaddi, Gilli-danda have been completely forgotten. Gone are the days when kids simply couldn't wait to go out and play a few rounds of Pithoo or Kith-Kith (Hopscotch) with their friends. The reduction in physical activity has given rise to a host of health issues in kids. Therefore, reviving traditional games will provide a host of health benefits. Throughout history, indigenous peoples have had many traditional sports and dances. It is through their history that they have turned these into competitive games and have made it an influential impact on the world and their people's culture. Playing games has always been an exciting part of growing up for us all. We recollect with happiness our childhood games and gadget free days. Sports is a great way to make friends and be healthy as well.

**Keywords :** Sports and games, Indigenous, Aboriginal, Playing, culture, country, Importance.

### Introduction :

Once upon a time, way before the impressionable minds were corrupted by video games and play stations, kids made games out of all that was available to them: wooden sticks for dice, shells and stones for making their next strategic move, and floors for gaming boards. It was tradition tirelessly passed down from one generation to another. But then came a day when wood and shell were replaced by plastic. Traditional games took a modern avatar and were called by chic English names. Paramapadha Sopana Padam became Snake and Ladder, Chaupad became Ludo. Intervention of television and computers further pronounced the doom, and all that was good and fun about the past was lost.

As part of the launch, Kreedaa invited people to join them in a day-long gaming session, where both the young and the old tried their hands at Pallanguzhi, Chaupad, Kattam Villayatu (square game), Aadu Puli Attam (Goat and Lion game), Ashtaa Chemma, Chathuvimshathi Koshtaka (a war game), Dahdi (a traditional game from Andhra Pradesh similar to noughts and crosses), etc.

### Meaning:

naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place: Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native. Indigenous people or things belong to the country in which they are found, rather than coming there or being brought there from another country.

**Synonyms:** Native, original, aboriginal, home-grown More Synonyms indigenous, existing, growing, or produced naturally in a region or country; belonging as a native innate; inherent; inborn NATIVE, INDIGENOUS, ENDEMIC, ABORIGINAL mean belonging to locality. NATIVE implies birth or origin in a place or region and may suggest compatibility with it. *native* tribal customs INDIGENOUS applies to that which is not only native but which, as far as can be determined, has never been introduced or brought from elsewhere.

### Importance of Indigenous Games:

#### Environment-friendly

Kreedaa has paid special attention to make these games environment friendly. “For Pallanguzhi, we have used wooden board with 16 cups. To preserve the bio-diversity, we have made use of paper powder instead of using shells for playing the game. All board games have been screen printed on canvas sheet, and there is no use of plastic. Dice are made of wood and paper powder,” said Ms. Shivagami.

#### Peer group participation

Today, video games and games on mobile phone do not involve peer group participation and contribute little to a child's development. “In those days, games were played not just for passing time but also formed an essential part of the learning process. Pallanguzhi, which was mostly played by women on ‘Shivaratri’ night, helped in improving the hand-eye coordination and increased concentration. Daya kattam or Chaupad enhanced the mathematical skills. Panchkone is a strategy game which helped improve concentration. Chinesepiel, which is a colour identification game, was ideal for helping children recognise colours. Above all, these games taught children to accept loss and victory with equanimity,” she added

Apart from these traditional games, Kreedha has created a game-version of Ramayana, which is divided into three parts.

The first part deals with Ram, Sita, and Lakshman's journey into the forest, the second is about search for Sita after her abduction, and third is called the Battle of Lanka. While the first two parts are canvas games, the third is a card game.

“Now to know the Ramayana all kids have to do is play the game.” With the Snake and Ladder game comes a list of virtues and vices. The ladder, representing virtue, has qualities such as honesty, patience, and compassion, while vices have been named after demons such as Mahishasur, Kumbhakaran etc. With the game comes a list of demon and a brief history about them. ‘Memories of Madras’ is another card game created by Kreedha, with 70 buildings of importance printed on them. It is mostly targeted at first time visitors to the city. Kreedha Games are also available in Landmark and Odyssey showrooms.

### There are several Objectives/benefits of traditional indigenous games.

- **bringing-together** of indigenous and non-indigenous people;
- help **reconnect** urban indigenous youth to their **culture**;
- boost **education retention**
- promote **reconciliation**;
- provide essential training in **social interaction**;
- enhance **physical health**.
- Enhance the attendance at school
- Improvement of emotional bindings among people
- Builds life skills
- Pass our heritage
- Traditional Indian games are extension of Yoga in a practical form
- Bridge generations

Many indigenous people see their traditional games as a strong indicator that their culture can survive. In this way traditional games are not only helping indigenous youth to get physically fit but also inspiring older members of the indigenous community.

Playing games has always been an exciting part of growing up for us all. We recollect with happiness our childhood games and gadget free days. Sports is a great way to make friends and be healthy as well.

Here are 4 reasons why we think playing traditional games is good for kids

Indian traditional games like – Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Langadi (one-leg hopping), Skipping, Sagar-gote (five stones) and many more don't require expensive equipment to play, nor does it require any uniform or specific shoes and accessories, all that is required is people to play with and space to play in.

Sports is a great connector – across countries, ages, religions and even across socio economic statuses too. No wonder sports bridge all gaps pulling people and connecting them emotionally. Playing traditional games as a family brings the family closer, and the bond stronger. Children need unstructured playtime and introducing conventional games to the family routine can be a great bonding activity for all. Children who have strong family relationships fare well at all other aspects of life as well.

Traditional Indian games are extension of Yoga in a practical form. There are 8 sections in Yoga. Out of this 3 focus on physical well-being, refining the senses, strengthening the body and balancing your breathing. All Indian games generally encourage one or more of these three.

Unstructured play has a vital role in developing various aspects of children's growth, behaviour and interpersonal skills therefore, the need to re-establish traditional play in children's lives.

## In this Article

Sports and games have always been an integral part of India's rich culture and history. Sadly, today's kids are so engrossed in playing video games that traditional games like Pallanguzi, Lippa, Kabaddi, Gilli-danda have been completely forgotten. Gone are the days when kids simply couldn't wait to go out and play a few rounds of *Pithoo* or *Kith-Kith* (Hopscotch) with their friends. The reduction in physical activity has given rise to a host of health issues in kids. Therefore, reviving traditional games will provide a host of health benefits.

## 15 Traditional Indian Games

### Indian Traditional Indoor Games:

#### 1. Chaupar/Pachisi

*Pachisi*, a board game, was quite popular in ancient India. The game finds its mention in the Mahabharata. Akbar and his descendants also played this game. It involves two to four players who strategise their pawn's moves on a piece of cloth designed in the shape of a symmetrical cross to win the game.

*Chaupar* is also a board game which was invented around the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It includes two to four players who use cowry shells and wooden pawns to plan their manoeuvres and win the game. The contemporary version of *Pachisi/Chaupar* is Ludo which you might have played in your childhood.

## 2. Pallankuzhi

It is one of the famous games which was played in ancient South India. *Pallankuzhi* is believed to have originated in Tamil Nadu and later spread to other places like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and even Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Variations of the game are called *Kuzhipara* in Malayalam, *Ali Guli Mane* in Kannada and *Vamana Guntalu* in Telugu. The game includes a rectangular board, divided into two horizontal rows and seven vertical columns. Thus, there are 14 cups on the board and 146 counters. Usually, cowry shells or tamarind seeds function as counters. Two people can play this game at a time.

## 3. Gutte/Five Stones

*Gutte* is a fun game can be played by both adults and kids. It generally requires five pebbles or small stones. There is no limit on the number of players who can play this game at a given time. The player needs to spin a stone up in the air and gather the remaining stones lying on the floor with one hand without allowing the one in the air to fall to the ground. Next, the player has to throw two stones up in the air and collect the rest and so on. The player who finishes eight steps in the minimum number of tries is the winner.

## 4. Lattoo

Spinning top or *Lattoo* is a popular game in Indian villages even today. This simple game has been in existence since 3500 BC. At the beginning, tops were made of clay. Later, wooden tops began to be used. Today, coloured and designer tops are also available. There is a string which helps to spin the top and also to lift up the spinning *Lattoo*. Two or more players can play this game. All the players wrap their tops with the string and then unwind it by pulling the string, making the top rotate on the ground. The players need to pick the top with the string as fast as they can. The player whose top spins the longest is declared the winner.



## 5. Antakshari

*Antakshari* is an entertaining Indian *desi* game is often played by grown-ups and children alike. It originated in Indian and is now played worldwide with alterations. Variations can be made to the original idea to suit the occasion such as family gathering, weddings, parties, etc. To play this game, two teams are made. One team sings a song, typically a Bollywood song. The other team has to sing a song beginning with the last consonant of the song sung by the first team. Both the teams keep taking turns until one can't think of a song and thus loses.

### Indian Traditional Outdoor Games

#### 1. Kancha

One of the exciting childhood games played in India was *Kancha*. Other names of the game include *Golli*, *Marbles*, *Goti*, and *Lakhoti*. It began during the Harappan age. The game involves the use of round glass marbles or *kanchas*. Several people can participate in this game. The objective is to collect the maximum number of marbles by striking the chosen *kancha* with another one. The winner gets to take home all the marbles of the other players.

#### 2. Nondi/Hopscotch

This hopping game, also called *Stapoo*, is a popular outdoor game. In Tamil Nadu, it goes by the name *Nondi*. The game involves drawing a grid on the ground and numbering it. Players take turns and throw an object, usually a small stone, onto the numbered blocks. They have to hop across the blocks to pick up the object jumping on one/two legs to finish the lap, taking care not to step on the border lines. It is a group game.



### 3. Gilli Danda/Lippa

*Gilli Danda* is an older version of modern-day baseball and cricket. Its fame once matched that of cricket in India. All it requires is two unevenly sized sticks. The smaller stick is called the *Gilli* and the longer one which is used to strike the *Gilli* is called the *Danda*. The objective is to flip the *Gilli* into the air with the *Danda*. While the *Gilli* is in the air, the player must hit it with the *Danda* as far as possible. The player also needs to run to touch a pre-decided point before the opponent can lay his hands on the *Gilli*. It can be played by many people at the same time.

### 4. Kabbadi

*Kabbadi* is a team sport which requires no equipment, only agility and strength. It originated in India and is now played globally. *Kabbadi* in Hindi means holding the breath. Players form two teams with 7 to 12 members each. Players of one team have to break-in the opposing team's area. While doing so, they need to try and touch as many opposing players as they can. The 'touched' players are declared out. The team with the least number of players at the end of the game is declared the winner.



Source: Pinterest

## 5. Satoliya/Pithoo/Lagori

*Satoliya/Pithoo/Lagori* is basically seven stones. It originated in India and has found its way to other places. It involves a ball and a pile of stones, usually seven. There are two teams of players. One player of the attacking team needs to strike the pile of stone with the ball to knock them over in three shots. Then the whole team has to try and restore the pile before being hit by the ball and declared 'out'.

## 6. Chain

Chain is another delightful children's game. This game is more fun to play when there are more players. The 'denner' has to catch the other members. When the denner catches someone, he joins hands with the denner to form a chain. Together they try to catch the other remaining members. Thus, the caught members keep joining to form a chain till all the players have been caught.

## 7. Kho Kho

*Kho Kho* is a team game which started in India. It gained popularity in 1935 when its rules were brought out by the Akhil Maharashtra Shareerika Shikshan Mandal. It comprises of two teams with nine participants each. Members of the chasing team sit on the ground in a straight row with alternative players positioned in opposite directions. The chasers have to catch the opposing team members before the stipulated time is over.





### 8. Hide and Seek/Chhupam Chhupai

The origin of this game is unknown. It is commonly played all over the world under different names. The players hide in a previously decided marked area. The 'denner' has to shut his eyes and announce numbers loudly while the other players get time to hide. Then, the denner has to find the hidden players. Any number of people can play this game.

### 9. Dog and the Bone

Dog and the Bone is a kids' game contains two teams of 5 or more players each. An object like a handkerchief or stick is designated as the 'bone'. A member of each team steps forward to encircle the bone placed in the middle of the playground. The aim is to retrieve the bone without being caught by the other player.

### 10. Maram Pitthi

*Maram Pitthi* is similar to dodgeball. It comprises of two teams with any number of players. A large area is required to play this game. Players from one team form a circle and hit the opposing team members who enter the circle with a ball. The opposing team players have to try and evade being hit by the ball and those who get hit by the ball are declared 'out'.

The mere mention of games like *Kancha*, *Lagori*, and *Kho Kho* is sure to make you nostalgic about your own childhood. It's time to pass on the magic of these childhood games to our current generation which tends to live in a virtual world.

## 5 Indian games from our childhood that are vanishing from the lives of children today

Outdoor games from our childhood are needed to be revived in today's children.



Playing outdoor games is vanishing from the youngsters life as they rely more of virtual games more for refreshment. It is important to revive the importance of playing on ground in their life Games for children now-a-days are confined to the virtual world of video games. Also, because of the rapid infrastructural growth, there are only a few parks left for children to go out and play outdoor games. Playing outdoor games offers a healthy mental and physical status in a growing kid. They help to shape a better personality in kids, keep them in touch with nature and help them develop essential social skills.

Here is a list of five forgotten childhood outdoor games of India:

### Gilli danda



Gilli danda sport similar to cricket and baseball is one of the most popular outdoor games played in India.

- Gilli danda is a very popular Indian game, quite similar to baseball and cricket
- This game is played with small piece of wood reduced and shaped at the edges known as 'gilli' and a long piece of wood known as 'danda'
- The 'gilli' is used as a ball and 'danda' is used as a bat to hit the 'gilli'
- The game is played by two teams of any number of players

- One of the team bats and hits the 'gilli' as far as possible and the fielding team has to catch the 'gilli' before it drops in the ground

### Kho kho



Kho kho is a traditional sport in India played between two teams

- Kho kho is a popular sport in India. It is played between two teams with 12 members, out whom only nine play
- It is one of two most popular traditional games in India, kabaddi being the other
- It is played in a rectangular field of 36 by 18 meters in length and width
- Eight members sit on the mid lane, facing alternate directions and the ninth member is an active chaser
- This game lasts not more than 37 minutes

### Hide-n-seek



Hide-n-seek is known as chuppan chuppai in India.

- Hide-n-seek known as "chuppam chappai" in India are played by the kids
- In this game, the players hide themselves and one of the players finds the other members
- The chosen players close their eyes and count till 10, 50 or 100 and then try to catch the hidden players

## Kabaddi



Kabaddi is a popular sport played between two teams

- Kabaddi is a famous Indian game played between two teams of seven players
- One player of each team alternatively run into the opposite teams court and try to tag as many people as possible while chanting "kabaddi-kabaddi"
- If the player tags the players of opposite team and touches the midline without losing breath, his team wins points and the tagged players are out of the game
- If the players of the opposite team catch the player and succeed in holding him in their court till he loses his breath, the raider gets out and the defending team wins points
- This game is very popular in South African countries, Iran and Pakistan

## Langdi



Langdi a game originated from Maharashtra, India

- Langdi is a very famous sport in the Maharastra. It is played between two teams with 12 players on each side
- The match lasts for about 36 minutes. It is played in four innings of nine minutes each
- The team that wins the toss defends and the other team chases
- A chaser tries to tag the members of defending team while hopping on one foot
- The team that tags the most number of defending players wins

## Conclusion:

Here are 4 reasons why we think playing traditional games is good for Children's.

**1. Does not require expensive gear**

**2. Builds life skills**

**3. Pass our heritage**

**4. Bridge generations**

Indian traditional games like – [Kho-Kho](#), [Kabaddi](#), [Langadi](#) (one-leg hopping), Skipping, Sagar-gote (five stones) and many more don't require expensive equipment to play, nor does it require any uniform or specific shoes and accessories, all that is required is people to play with and space to play in. Playing conventional games have always brought kids together encouraging teamwork and social interaction.

It is equally important to teach our kids about our culture and tradition as it is to teach them new age concepts. It is vital that they know their roots and have a sense of pride about it. By playing Indian traditional games, children can connect with their heritage through sports and this has a deep lifelong positive impact on them. Sports is a great connector – across countries, ages, religions and even across socio economic statuses too. No wonder sports bridge all gaps pulling people and connecting them emotionally. Children need unstructured playtime and introducing conventional games to the family routine can be a great bonding activity for all. Children who have strong family relationships fare well at all other aspects of life as well.

Traditional Indian games are extension of Yoga in a practical form. There are 8 sections in Yoga. Out of this 3 focus on physical well-being, refining the senses, strengthening the body and balancing your breathing. All Indian games generally encourage one or more of these three.

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