



Marriage Rituals Traditional Games: Ethnographic Study

Dr. Pradip Tudu

Assistant Professor of Physical Education

Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta Smriti Mahavidyalaya

Po- Hatgobindapur, Dist- Purba Bardhaman, PIN- 713407, West Bengal, India

Abstract

Introduction: Ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures. It is designed to explore cultural phenomena where the researcher observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study or a scientific description of the culture of a society by someone who has lived in it.

The Santal is a name of an ethnic group native to India and Bangladesh in South Asia. Santals are the largest tribe in the Jharkhand state of India in terms of population and are also found in the states of Assam, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal.

Bapla is a Santali word which means marriage. Marriage in Santal tribal community is a sign of a prosperity and beginning of new life. Without joyful night by singing, dancing, drumming and playing flutes Santal marriage is not considered. Santal marriage takes five days and it involves various, often complex, rituals.

The most important and heritage part of the Santal Marriage is that, it is designed with lots of Games and some war like activity, that's the fitness competition in between two groups, Groom's side and the Bride's side, that has a direct relationship with the societies basic need and the new couples private need.

Traditional games are more than just a games. They build body and spirit through the game and built harmony within the family and community and pride in one's heritage.

Aim of the study: This researcher worked on the traditional games practices and the social values of it in the rituals of marriage ceremony of a particular Santal Tribal group.

Study Area: Santal villages of Birbhum District, West Bengal, India.

Methodology: Direct observation, Documents, Archival Records, Personal Interview.

Results: Researcher found lots of games that is an essential part of the Santal Tribal marriage ritual and that has a direct relationship with the Santal Tribal Society.

Conclusion: Social practices, rituals and festive events are habitual activities that structure the lives of communities and groups and that are shared by and relevant to many of their members. They are significant because they reaffirm the identity of those who practice them as a group or a society and help reinforce a sense of identity and continuity with the past. The games were played by all age and sex, children, youth, and adults, old age. The games have roots in ancestral tests of strength that reinforced group cooperation and sharpened survival skills in often hostile environments.

Keywords: Ethnographic discourse, Santal, Bapla, Traditional Games

Introduction: India is a land of ancient civilization rich in traditional science, art and culture. These traditions have passed on through the centuries to the present period. They are reflected in the form of socio-religious festivals, costumes, folk songs, dances, music, drawing & painting, sculpture and architecture, traditional medicine sports & games, etc.

A tribe is a group of people living under primitive condition and still not popularly known to more modern culture. There are numbers of tribes living all over India as well as various parts in the World. More than 55% of the total tribal population of India are living in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh and remaining tribal population is concentrated in the Himalayan belt, Western India, Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.

Out of them, Santal is a tribe which contributes more than 50% of the Indian tribal population and can be found mainly in the states of Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Tripura and Orissa, as well as Nepal and Bangladesh. In India, 90 million people belong to the indigenous communities known as Adivasi or tribal. According to the 2011 census, India has 8.10% of tribal population. The Santals constitutes more than half of the total Tribal population of the West Bengal (51.8 per cent).

Indian traditional sports and games cultural heritage is a reflexion of the society and environment as a whole. This researcher took this opportunity to unfold traditional games and sports of Indian Santal Tribal community.

Any in-depth study in this area was hardly found.

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to find out the Santal traditional games in the event of Marriage ceremony (Bapla) and collect information about the sociocultural need of those games with the Marriage Ritual, and to promote and protect the excellency of this cultural heritage.

Inclusive Criteria:

- Santals of Birbhum District West Bengal
- Traditional games
- Bapla

Review Related Literature:

Prasanta Kumar .s, N.G. Kannur and Rajkumar Karve(2015) conducted a study on selected rural culture games of Gulbarga district and they showed that Culture games are part of the village life they are evolved over a period of time and in their theory and practice suggestive of the mode and attitudes of village culture. The values that we achieve by playing these games are more when compared to the games that we play nowadays.

Sanjaya Kumar Bag has Studied on Cultural Aspects of Traditional Games of West Odisha and he concluded that, it is a fact that players of Western Orissa developing new games whatever may be the influence; but it is also a bitter truth that most of the traditional games of Western Orissa are in imminent danger of disappearance and extinction, due to the various tendencies of globalization and modernization.

Pallab Ghosh (2015) conducted a study on Traditional Sports and Games Culture around West Bengal and he observed that there are some games associated with lifecycle. It includes all the sports of physical movements. So, nine games can be grouped into these four broad categories: (1) running games: *luko-churi*, *rumal-chori*, *pittu*; (2) jumping games: *Kit-kit*; (3) skill-demonstrating games: *goli*, *lattu*, *ghuri*, *danguli*(4) throwing games: *lathi chhora* . A four category of games appears necessary to be included here. In addition to these games, there are many other traditional games which children play at different stages of their childhood.

Subrata Guha & Md Ismail (2015) studied on Socio -Cultural Changes of Tribes and Their Impacts on Environment with Special Reference to Santhal in West Bengal they describes that it has already been mentioned that Santali people are the largest community & ethic group in West Bengal. Traditional art & crafts are a part in their life. They celebrate their festivals and rituals throughout the year wearing their traditional dresses.

Mariate Linaza, Kieran Moran, and Noel E. O'Connor studied on Traditional Sports and Games: A New Opportunity for Personalized Access to Cultural Heritage and suggested that Sport is the most universal of cultural pursuits it is accessible and of interest to all. Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) are as diverse as our cultures. TSG organizations work tirelessly to promote participation in their sports, but also act as custodians of custom, language and history.

Ursula Barrett (2014) conducted a study on Traditional Sports and Games as a Means for Integration of People with Disabilities and he has concluded that selecting the best that modern sport and games and traditional sports and games have to offer there is a greater likelihood of offering a variety of physical activity and social experiences to young people across each of the areas of the Inclusion Spectrum.

Suresh Harihar Deshpande (2014) conducted a study on The Indian Heritage of Traditional Sports and Games and he has shows that India is endowed with a rich cultural heritage. The tangible and intangible heritage of India is known for its diversity of languages, costumes, religions, rituals, flora, and fauna, climate, food habits, sports and games, art and architecture, music, dances, festivals and pastimes.

Methodology: The researcher collected the data and information related to the present study in the following methods.

Selection of subject: The subjects were selected randomly from various villages in and around the districts of West Bengal

Study Area: Santal villages in and around Birbhum District, West Bengal, India

The researcher have travelled through several Tribal (Santal) villages in Birbhum district of West Bengal, India.

Tools:

Direct observation: This strategy involves observing the subject, often in a natural setting.

Documents: Letters, newspaper articles, pamphlets, magazines, photos, administrative records, etc.

Archival Records: Census records, survey records, name lists, etc.

Interview: Personal interview, Group Discussion brings old age ancient games.

Equipments Used: Video Recording Camera, Digital Camera, Voice Recorder, Diary, Pen, etc.

Findings:

Gathering food is the first basic need of human being at early age. According to the Archaeological evidence, early humans obtained food via scavenging, not hunting. Early humans lived in forests and woodlands, which allowed them to collect seafood, eggs, nuts, fruits honey from beehives, etc.

Hunting and gathering was presumably the subsistence strategy employed by human societies beginning some 1.8 million years ago. Then they had two ways of obtaining food, by hunting and gathering. They were using the stone weapons for hunting as well as for self-defense, to escape themselves and their family from the wild animals.

Earlier people lived alone and then in small groups, after that they form family and a society. Later on some customs and Rituals began. Earlier no Marriage ceremony was required to be a family. After that formal ceremony was started. Marriage's primary purpose was to bind women to men, and thus guarantee that a man's children were truly his biological heirs.

For the santal ritual, marriage in own group or own family was not allowed. Even it is continuing the same from ancient times. The boy have to go to marry in other group at other village. The village use to lead by Five men committee, they are named as **Manjhi Haram, Paranik, Naiky, Jog-Manjhi, Godet**. When two groups are ready to arrange a marriage in between them. They are the administrative body of a Santal village. None of a man can go outside without their permission nor can any outsiders enter to the village. They arrange all the rituals in the village. They serve as the means to bridge the gap between the living being and the divine being.

The rule of the marriage was that, if one villagers can defeat other village in a fight, then only they are allowed to marry their girl. Before entering to the other village for marriage, the boys group have to stop at the end of the village premises. Then they have to fight with the soldiers of that village.

The social need of this activity was, the family of the girl and the villagers have to see that how strong they are, whether they know fighting or not, they are capable to hunt or not, whether they can fight with the wild animal for surviving or not. Ultimately they examine where their girl is going is they are strong enough. If not the marriage is cancel. The judgment use to done by the five men committee.

Conclusion:

Sports and games have remained inseparable parts of human culture.

The researcher visited several Santal villages in and around districts of West Bengal, India. After completing this study the researcher found Santal peoples are still practicing their traditional sports and games in various social and religious events. These games have a rich socio-cultural heritage value. They are an important vehicle for passing on some ancestral knowledge to the posterity.

Since ancient times human habitation had developed typical culture of its own, involving skills in art, rituals, costumes and customs, festivities, innovative and creative craftsmanship, music, sports and games.

These human activities got converted into traditions and further carried over from generations to generations. Of course, some of them were lost with the destruction of ancient civilizations, but some had survived in the form of tangible and intangible heritage.

Games in the social life of the Santals generate kinds of attitude, competitive, comparative, cooperative etc. They have more a ritualistic significance. The study is a comprehensive understanding of them to some extent as social religious being. National traditional sports culture should select the development path of cultural self-consciousness.

National traditional sports culture should select the developmental path of cultural self-confidence.

Traditional sports culture should select the development path of cultural self and at last it may conclude that before extinction all these Santal traditional sports and games should be preserve and protect.

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