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ROLE OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN GAMES IN PROMOTING PHYSICAL FITNESS AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Indian games have played an important role in promoting physical activity, physical fitness, social interaction, and cultural values among children and young people. Games such as Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Lagori, and Gilli-Danda involve various physical movements, including running, jumping, dodging, balancing, and coordination. These activities can contribute to the development of speed, agility, endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility among students. In the present era, increasing screen time and sedentary lifestyles have reduced opportunities for regular physical activity among many students.Incorporating traditional Indian games into educational institutions can offer a fun, economical, and culturally significant method of physical education. This article analyzes how to incorporate traditional Indian games into school and college events, looks at their educational and social benefits, and talks about how these games can help promote physical fitness.

Keywords: Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, students, physical education, traditional Indian games, physical fitness, and health promotion.

1. INTRODUCTION

A vital part of pupils' overall development is their level of physical fitness. It supports academic engagement, emotional and physical health, and the growth of an active lifestyle. Students can form healthy habits that last into adulthood by engaging in regular physical activity during their time in school and college. Indian sports are deeply rooted in the country's cultural legacy and have been played for generations. Many of these activities may be set up in school playgrounds and require very little equipment.Communal areas and college grounds. Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Lagori (Seven Stones), Gilli-Danda, and conventional running and chasing sports are a few examples. These games contain fast-paced motions that call for teamwork, focus, physical exertion, and quick decision-making. While Kabaddi requires strength, endurance, balance, and tactical awareness, Kho-Kho promotes speed and agility through quick movement and direction changes. Lagori promotes collaboration, coordination, running, and accurate throwing.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of traditional Indian games in promoting physical fitness among students.
2. To analyse the contribution of traditional Indian games to the development of physical, mental, and social skills among students.
3. To suggest strategies for integrating traditional Indian games into educational institutions

to encourage regular physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Deepak J. S. and Harigaran (2026) examined the effects of indigenous games-based physical education on tribal school children aged 11–15 years. The study found that an eight-week programme involving Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and Lagori improved sprint performance, agility, lower-limb power, and aerobic capacity. The authors also reported improvements in neuromechanical efficiency, social cohesion, and intrinsic motivation. The study provides experimental evidence supporting culturally relevant game-based physical education for tribal school children.

Sudhakar and Jagadeeswari (2025) examined the role of traditional indigenous sporting games and physical activities in children's sustainable development. The article discussed games such as Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and Gilli-Danda and their potential contribution to physical fitness, agility, and endurance.It highlighted the importance of traditional games in developing teamwork, discipline, leadership, and social interaction.The authors also emphasised cultural preservation and the integration of indigenous games into educational curricula.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study is descriptive and grounded in literature. It makes use of secondary sources, such as pertinent research papers, books on physical education, studies on fitness and physical activity, and reliable publications about traditional Indian games. The material is examined topically, with an emphasis on how traditional games relate to physical health, how they help students grow as individuals, and how they could be incorporated into educational settings. The original experimental findings are not reported in the paper. Conclusions or survey information. Therefore, rather than asserting that a particular intervention has been shown to be successful through experimentation, its discussion offers a conceptual examination of the possible advantages of traditional Indian games.

4.1 Nature of the Study

The research is exploratory, analytical, and descriptive.

• Descriptive: It explains how many aspects of physical fitness are related to traditional Indian Games.

• Analytical: It looks at traditional games' purported advantages, educational uses, accessibility, And drawbacks.

• Exploratory: It pinpoints areas that need more study as well as chances to include classic games Into physical education curricula.

4.2 Data Sources

Secondary data from academic and institutional sources is used in the study. Because the study is based on previously published research publications, books, official reports, and other pertinent academic sources rather than on original data gathered directly from students, a secondary-research approach is used.

5. TRADITIONAL INDIAN GAMES AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

The capacity to carry out daily tasks effectively and engage in physical exercise without experiencing extreme exhaustion is referred to as physical fitness. Cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, speed, agility, balance, and coordination are all crucial elements. Combinations of these fitness elements are included in traditional Indian games, albeit the requirements differ according on the rules, length, level of difficulty, and playing circumstances of each game.

5.1 Kho-Kho and the Growth of Agility and Speed

In the traditional Indian team sport of kho-kho, players must follow opponents, avoid defenders, accelerate quickly, and change course repeatedly. The game requires rapid movements and frequent brief spurts of running. When properly planned, regular participation can offer chances to improve cardiovascular health, speed, agility, and response time. Endurance. Additionally, Kho-Kho calls for focus, foresight, and strategic thinking. Students gain the ability to move in unison with their colleagues and react fast to changing circumstances.

5.2 Kabaddi and Physical Power

Physical strength, balance, agility, endurance, and tactical judgment are all combined in kabaddi. Within the parameters of the game, players engage in activities including raiding, defending, avoiding, and resisting opponents. Participation can offer chances to enhance coordination, body control, muscular strength, and physical endurance. Additionally, the game fosters teamwork, discipline, focus, and self-assurance. However, because Kabaddi entails physical contact, age-appropriate instruction, safe playing grounds, acceptable rules, and adequate supervision are crucial, particularly for younger pupils.

5.3 Hand-eye coordination and Lagori

Lagori, also called Seven Stones, is a game in which players use a ball to knock down a stack of stones or markers and try to rebuild it without getting struck by the other team. Running, accurate throwing, catching, spatial awareness, and hand-eye coordination are all encouraged by the game. Additionally, it encourages collaboration, dialog, and prompt decision-making. As long as a secure playing place and the necessary equipment are available, the game may be set up using basic equipment, making it acceptable for a variety of educational contexts.

5.4 Motor Skills and Gilli-Danda

A longer stick and a little wooden piece are used in the traditional game of Gilli-Danda. Hand-eye coordination, timing, balance, focus, and deliberate striking motions are all necessary. Basic motor abilities can be developed through the game. However, it necessitates cautious safety precautions because the technology can be harmful if used unsupervised or in crowded areas.

5.5 Additional Conventional Games

Students' physical activity can also be encouraged by a variety of localized games, such as running games, chasing games, hopping games, and local team activities. Their versatility, minimal equipment needs, and capacity to engage pupils with varying interests and skill levels

are what make them valuable. Games can be chosen by educational institutions based on the ages of the students, the facilities that are available, the cultural backgrounds of the students, and safety regulations.

6. ROLE OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN GAMES IN PROMOTING PHYSICAL FITNESS

6.1 Enhancement of Cardiovascular Capacity

Playing games that require constant running, chasing, and mobility can raise heart rate and offer chances to enhance cardiovascular fitness. Students' total levels of physical activity can be influenced by consistent engagement at a certain level of intensity. The frequency of participation, the length of play, the level of movement intensity, and the kids' current fitness levels all affect the fitness advantages.

6.2 Growth of Muscular Endurance and Strength

Players must maintain body positions, fend off opponents, and execute repetitive physical maneuvers in games like Kabaddi. Other classic games include tossing, running, and jumping. When done frequently and in conjunction with other appropriate physical activities, these activities can aid in the growth of muscles.

6.3 Improvement of Coordination, Speed, and Agility

Fast direction changes, acceleration, deceleration, balance, and precise movement are often needed in traditional games. Kho-Kho and related chase games offer chances to hone these abilities in fast-paced settings. Students' responsiveness and control over their movements may improve with repeated engagement.

6.4 Encouragement of an Active Lifestyle

Playing traditional games can enhance the enjoyment and social interaction of physical activity. Students may be more inclined to exercise regularly if they appreciate the activities they participate in.Offering a range of games can also assist students in finding activities that fit their skills and interests. Long-term physical activity habits may benefit from this.

6.5 Accessibility and Affordability

Many traditional Indian games require little to no specific equipment. School playgrounds, college campuses, and neighborhood areas are common locations for them. This quality might be Especially beneficial for academic schools with tight funding for sports. Adequate space, oversight, secure equipment, and inclusive participation procedures are still crucial, nevertheless.

7. MENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF TRADITIONAL GAMES

7.1 Concentration and Decision-Making Development

In traditional games, students frequently have to watch their opponents, predict their motions, and make snap decisions. These exercises offer chances to hone problem-solving, strategic thinking, and attention skills.

7.2 Fostering Collaboration and Teamwork

Students are encouraged to share tasks, coordinate tactics, communicate, and strive toward shared objectives through team games. These encounters can enhance interpersonal and collaborative abilities.

7.3 Growth in Sportsmanship and Discipline

Participating in sports requires adhering to regulations, showing respect for rivals, accepting decisions, and handling success and failure. Conventional games offer kids real-world chances to cultivate these values.

7.4 Identity and Cultural Awareness

An essential component of the nation's recreational and cultural legacy are traditional Indian games. Students can learn about local customs and develop an appreciation for indigenous athletic practices by playing these sports in classrooms.

7.5 Pleasure and Social Engagement

Students can engage with classmates, form friendships, and take part in shared leisure activities through group games. Though the effects differ from person to person, enjoyable physical activity may also promote emotional well-being.

8. ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In order to encourage pupils to play traditional games, educational institutions play a crucial role. These activities can be incorporated into regular programs by institutional managers, sports committees, and physical education teachers.

The following actions could be taken into consideration:

1. Incorporate traditional games into regular physical education programs.
2. Competition organization: Hold classic game tournaments between classes, departments, and Colleges.
3. Teacher training: Educate physical education instructors on age-appropriate exercises, safety Protocols, and game rules.
4. Facilities development: Choose appropriate playgrounds and supply reasonably priced, secure Equipment.
5. Inclusive participation: Modify guidelines and exercises to suit students with varying skill levels, Degrees of experience, and fitness.
6. Awareness campaigns: To promote involvement, plan protests, sporting events, and cultural Gatherings.
7. Fitness evaluation: When appropriate, compare students' levels of fitness before and after a Structured program to see how certain fitness components have changed.

9. CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING TRADITIONAL INDIAN GAMES

Traditional Indian games have a number of drawbacks despite their apparent advantages.

9.1 Diminished Interest

Some students could favor globally popular sports or digital entertainment. Engaging game formats and awareness campaigns could boost interest in customary activities.

9.2 Limited Facilities for Playgrounds

There may not be enough open space in urban institutions and schools. Smaller gaming formats, altered regulations, and secure multifunctional spaces are among options available to institutions.

9.3 Ignorance

It's possible that teachers and students are unaware of the physical advantages or regulations of some regional games. Organized demonstrations and teacher training can help solve this issue.

9.4 Safety Issues

Certain sports have fast movement, physical contact, or equipment that needs to be handled carefully. It is essential to have the right kind of supervision, warm-up activities, appropriate playing surfaces, and adaptations.

9.5 Research Evidence Requirement

Even while a lot of traditional games include exercises that can improve physical fitness, it is not reasonable to expect that the results of these exercises will be the same for all games or student groups. To compare fitness results using standardized metrics and well-defined training regimens, more study is required.

10. CONCLUSION

Traditional Indian sports have a great deal of potential to promote students' overall development and physical fitness. Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Lagori, and Gilli-Danda are examples of physical games that offer chances to improve strength, balance, coordination, speed, agility, and endurance. Additionally, they can promote sportsmanship, discipline, collaboration, focus, and respect for cultural heritage. To sum up, encouraging traditional Indian games is a significant approach to link cultural heritage with modern physical education. These games can help students become healthier, more active, and socially engaged with the right preparation and ongoing institutional support.

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