

FOLK GAME AS AN AGENT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF BHUMIJA TRIBE OF SANKHABANGA VILLAGE OF MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT, ODISHA

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***Abstract:** The current study is completely an empirical study done among the Bumija tribe (An East Indian tribe) to prove the gist of folk games in child development. Here in this article it has been proved that playing is not only just for making fun or doing competition. Rather, it plays a significant role in developing mental, physical, social, cultural and cognitive aspect of the child. The study focuses particularly on Bhumija children who learn their culture, language, social relationship, boldness, courage, ideas, intelligence, bonding between groups through folk games. Except this the folk games plays a vital role to develop their physical fitness as well. So, at the same time, the current study discusses about the folk game which have been played by the Bhumija children from their childhood, to become a perfect man of their society.*

***Key Words:** folk game, child development, Bhumija, childhood, adulthood.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

As we know Games are the activities that are engaged primarily for pleasure, fun, which include rules and often competition with one or more individuals. All are interested to play varieties of games and also create different types of game in the process. Play helps children develop motor skill and coordination. It contributes social development as children learn to share play materials, take turns, and try on new roles. It supports the development of cognitive qualities as curiosity, exploration, symbolic thinking and problem solving also. Therefore, here the present study keeps interest to prove how Bhumija children grow him/her selves as a perfect man or woman throughout the folk games.

2. METHOD:

It is completely a descriptive work done after carried out an extensive field work. Techniques such as Participant observation and interview have been applied extensively to collect data.

3. DISCUSSION:

3.1. Activities during infancy

In case of Bhumija child, different forms of play occur from infancy through adolescence and they have distinct antecedents and functions. Exploration is one of the dominating behaviours for the first nine months of a child. At the age of twelfth months, children observe and engage in the act of searching the objects before they can play with it. The knowledge resulting from this exploration gives ideas for play. During this period, the Bhumija children normally sit and play with some lightweight objects make some sound by using those objects such as dolls, balls, stick, pen etc. and also enjoy hearing them. The Bhumija children play with their grandparents, siblings, neighbour's children and with other relatives too. During this stage in their games, they do not have any formal rules and regulations and there are no distinctions of games on the basis of the gender of the children. Sometimes the elders hide their face by their palm and show them again, they also call the child by uttering its name loudly to create the sense of identity. By repeatedly pronouncing the names of other persons, and objects the children acquire knowledge by imitation from others. During this period, they do not have any specific time for play and they can play these whenever they are interested.

Fantasy plays begin during the second year of child and continues till the preschool years. Girls engage in fantasy play more frequently and in more sophisticated manner than do the boys. In this period they imitate others activities. In this age, also they wish to play with dolls and other objects such as; household objects etc. From this, they indirectly learn the gender based division of labour that is prevalent in their society. Other important

developments happening through these games are physical growth, learning the mother tongue, and very importantly understanding their culture.

3.2. Games in Early Childhood

Locomotors plays are common for the children when they enter third year of age. The games played by the children during this stage involve running, jumping etc. Varieties of games are played by the Bhumija children both individually or with the other playmates and some of them are as follows: *polegadhma* (bridge hole), *patarnuka* (hiding leaf), *badichaddha* (climbing on stick), *balikhel* (play on sand), *putulkhel* (play with doll), *nukanuki* (hide and seek), *chakadauda* (running after wheel), *gaditana* (pulling vehicle made of soil), *chhuanchhuin* (run and touch) etc. Details of those games are explained below.

a. Name of the game: “*Polegadhma*”

Meaning of the game: ‘*Pole*’ means bridge and ‘*Gadhha*’ means hole.

Number of persons play: One or two

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: On hip of sand

Material used for the game: Only sand

Time to play: Any time in the day

Explanation: When the mothers go to work with their children and get engaged with their work, the children feel lonely and start playing games with very interest. The children dig the sand by hand, make one small hole and dig another hole nearer to the first one, where the distance between these two holes is fifteen to twenty centimetres approximately. In between these two holes, they make a connecting passage by a horizontal hole. They insert right hand through one hole and left hand through another and feel happy to touch both their hands through this game.

Benefits: Relaxation and happiness.

b. Name of the game: “*Patarnuka*”

Meaning of the game: ‘*Patar*’ means leaf and ‘*Nuka*’ means hide.

Number of person can join in this game: Two

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: On hip of sand

Material used for the game: Sand and leaf

Time to play: Any time in the day

Explanation: A circle is drawn and one hides a leaf inside. Another one has to search the leaf and find the same before the first one completes a ten counts. If the searcher finds the leaf then the one who has hidden the leaf or an object will go for searching and it is repeated several times. This is a kind of hide and seek game.

Benefits: Mental exercise, joy and relaxation.

c. Name of the game: “*Chakadauda*”

Meaning of the game: ‘*Chaka*’ means wheel and ‘*Dauda*’ means running.

Number of persons involved: One or two

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: Village road

Material used for the game: Broken cycle wheel and a stick

Time to play: Any time in the day

Explanation: The Bhumija children are very much interested to play this game. They hold a stick and through which move the wheel on the road and then they run after it and when it becomes slow, they move it again by the help of the stick and they continue do it until they are tired. In the case, two friends then they run together and handle it. If one cannot handle the wheel, the next one runs after the wheel to that place where they want to go.

Benefits: Physical exercise and relaxation for both the body and mind.

d. Name of the game: “*Chhuanchhuin*”

Meaning of the game: Run and touch

Number of person can join in this game: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: Open field near home

Material used for the game: Nil

Time to play: Any time in the day

Explanation: In this game one child says to another ‘touch me’ and starts running. Then second child runs after the first one to touch. After the second child succeeds in it then the first one has to repeat the process. Like this they

continue this game and when more players are there, one can try to touch all the persons and the person who has been touched would become odd man out and he to run after all of them to touch. Likewise, this play is continued.

Benefits: Physical exercises and relaxation of mind.

e. Name of the game: “*Badichaddda*”

Meaning of the game: ‘*Badi*’ means stick and ‘*Chadda*’ means climb

Number of person can join in this game: Two or three

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: Village road

Material used for the game: Strong stick

Time to play: Any time of the day

Explanation: Two children hold the two poles of a one-metre length stick and they keep it in-between their two thighs. Then they walk slowly by making a sound like a horn of a vehicle. Sometimes they call another friend to sit in the middle place of the stick.

Benefits: To learn the balancing skill.

f. Name of the game: “*Balikhela*”

Meaning of the game: ‘*Bali*’ means and ‘*Khela*’ means play

Number of persons: One, two or more

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: On sand

Material used for the game: Sand, sometimes small sticks and flower

Time to play: Evening time of the day

Interested person: Girls are more interested to play this than the boys

Explanation: The children are engaged in the competition of drawing pictures or building some structures such as houses, temples, caves etc. on the sand. Some of the pre-determined winning factors, which are decided in consensus, are as follows: whose one is big one or small, who makes it fast or who destroys it fast or who reaches home first after demolishing it etc.

Benefits: From the art and picture, they develop their ideas and can learn many things from each other. Emotional attachment also gets developed among them.

g. Name of the game: “*Putulkhela*”

Meaning of the game: ‘*Putul*’ means doll ‘*Khela*’ means play

Number of persons: One, two, or more.

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable places for playing: Both inside and outside veranda of their home

Material used for the game: Soil, Sand, Sticks and Flower, Clothes, Broken Utensils, Broken Nut, Broken Stationary etc.

Time to play: Any time of day

Person more interested to play: Girls are more interested to play this game than the boys

Explanation: They first search and gather the above materials. Then they go for searching the soil, which is suitable to make doll or they get help from their grandparents to make these dolls. Then they make a boy and a girl doll and leave it for drying. After that, they decorate both the dolls with clothes and colours and imitate a marriage ceremony they have seen before in their home and perform all the rituals through this game. Likewise, they imitate other rituals also and play with their playmate with very interest.

Benefits: They get many ideas on their culture, rituals, rules and regulations of their society and the emotional attachment develops from these kinds of playing.

h. Name of the game: “*Nukanuki*”

Meanings of the game: Hide and seek

Number of person: Minimum two, maximum more than two

Age group: Pre-school children

Suitable Places for playing: Both inside and outside of home

Material used for the game: Nothing

Time to play: Mostly evening or night

Persons interested to play: Both male and female are interested to play this game

Explanation: At first, they form a circle and call out the numbers from one to ten and the person who tells the number ten becomes odd man out and that person has to search the others who have hidden. The first person who has been identified by the catcher should take the role of the catcher. Thus, it is repeated for several times.

Benefits: Both physical and mental exercise.

i. Name of the game: “*Gaditana*”

Meanings of the game: ‘*Gadi*’ means vehicle and ‘*Tana*’ means pull

Number of person can join in this game: Minimum one, maximum two

Age group: Pre-school children

Types of playmates: Sibs or neighbour children

Suitable Places for playing: Village road

Material used for the game: Broken Tin, Soil Made Wheel, Wire, Soil, Rope etc.

Time to play: Mostly evening or night.

Person interested to play: Both male and female are interested to play this game

Explanation of the game: Children arrange all the above materials and tie the things together and make it in the shape of a vehicle and then they pull it with the help of a rope which is attached in the front of the vehicle. They seek the help of their grandparents for this.

Benefits: Children perform various designs and thus understand its functions.

3.3. Games in Middle and late Childhood Age

The Bhumija children play the following games between the age of five and fourteen. In this stage, children will spend most of their time with their neighbouring friends. The games, which are played by Bhumija children at this stage are mentioned below: Statue (statue), *gachha chadhha* (climbing on tree), *gachha dian* (jumping from tree), skipping (skipping), kit kit (magic stone), *lambadian* (long jump), tongue twister, *antakhchori* (songs play), *puchi*, *bengadian* (jumping like a frog), *alikhela*, *mangsachori*, *bahuchori*, *doli khela*, *biasa amruta*, *kabadi* etc. The detail of these games has been explained below.

a. Name of the game: Statue

Meaning of the game: Standing like a sculpture

Number of person can join in this game: Two or more

Age group: School-going children

Types of playmates: Siblings and neighbourhood friends

Suitable Places for playing: Any open ground

Material used for the game: Nothing

Time of play: Preferably evening

Persons interested to play: Both male and female are interested however, it is gender specific.

Explanation: Children play this game within groups. Among them, a person who is the catcher will say the other participants in the game to remain as a statue and the others will obey the command; they should not change their position till the catcher tells them to relax. If there is a need to move from their position, they can move that too only without the knowledge of the catcher. If anyone doesn't follow the above mentioned instructions they will be excluded from the game.

Benefits: Improves concentration as the players keep attentive in the game.

b. Name of the game: “*Gachhachada* and *Dian*”

Meanings of the game: ‘*Gachha*’ means tree and ‘*chadhha*’ means climbing and ‘*Dian*’ means jumping

Number of person can join in this game: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Sibs, neighbouring children.

Suitable Places for playing: Tree to climb

Material used for the game: Broken tin, soil made wheel, wire, soil, rope etc

Time of play: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Boys are more interested to play this game

Explanation: In this game, they start running from the ground level and they try to reach the top of the tree and get down from it as soon as possible. The person who completes this task first will be declared as the winner.

Benefits: Physical exercise and fun.

c. Name of the game: Skipping

Meanings of the game: Jumping with rope

Number of person can join in this game: One or two

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Sibs and neighbouring children

Suitable Places for playing: Any open ground

Material used for the game: Rope, two handles made by wood or bamboo. This is also available in the market.

Time of play: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Girls are more interested to play this game than the boys

Explanation: This game is nothing but a skipping and played in school. A child holds the handles at each end, which she turns over her head and then jump over with speed. The person who can do it continuously for a long time is the winner. Sometimes while one is skipping, another one joins for jumping over.

Benefits: Friends could make their emotional attachment strong along with physical exercise and fun.

d. Name of the Game: “*Kit kit*”

Meanings of the game: It is a sound produced by tongue at the time of playing the game

Number of persons: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school children

Types of playmates: siblings and neighbouring children

Suitable Places for playing: Everywhere in an open place

Material needed: A flatten stone

Time of play: Any time of the day

Persons interested to play: Girls are more interested to play this game than the boys.

Explanation: A rectangular box with a length of about two meters and a breadth of one meter is drawn. Then they make twelve squares with in it. One stand on the starting point of the square and keep a flatten stone on a feet and jump with the help of one leg without touching the lines and not allowing the stone to fall down by keeping a balance. During this time, she cannot take breath at all. In the same manner, she has to complete all the squares to call it one cycle. If she failed at any moment, the other one would continue the task in the same manner.

Benefits: Physical development.

e. Name of the game: Tongue twister

Number of persons: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Siblings and neighbouring children

Suitable Places for playing: Inside the house

Time of play: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Irrespective of the sex, both the boys and girls are interested to play this game.

Explanation of the game- When all the friends are together they feel very happy to play this game and it gives fun and pleasure. First, they make a circle and sit inside it. Then one says a sentence to all and they say this very quickly and for a long time. In the game, the person who could not spell out that sentence or could not say for a long time will be sent out from the group and who remain till the end is the winner. One of the sentences they use in this game is given below. For example: ‘*babla gachhare baghha jhhuluchhi*’ meaning tiger is swinging on the babul tree.

Benefits: Cognitive development of children.

f. Name of the game: “*Antakchhori*”

Meanings of the game: Singing songs with the end of the letter of another song

Number of persons: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Siblings, neighbouring children

Suitable Places for playing: Indoors

Material used for the game: Nothing

Time to play: Anytime of the Day/ Night

Persons interested to play: Both boys and girls are interested to play this game.

Explanation: When children feel bored they play this game. At first, a person starts to sing a song and stops at a particular point. The last letter of the word with which he/she stops would be the starting letter of the song of the following person.

Benefits: Cognitive and mental development.

g. Name of the game: “*Puchi*”

Meaning of the game: A kind of play by sitting

Number of persons: One or more

Age group: Pre-school children

Types of playmates: Siblings, neighbouring children

Suitable Place: Anywhere, a small space is sufficient

Time of playing: Any time of the day.

Person interested to play: Only girls are interested to play this game.

Explanation: In this game, everyone sits and start to play at the same time. They have to slip their legs very quickly with a sitting posture. It is very funny and hard. In this way who continues doing this for the long time would be the winner.

Benefits: Physical exercise.

h. Name of the game: “*Benga dian*”

Meanings of the game: Frog jumping

Number of persons: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Siblings, neighbouring children

Suitable Places: Anywhere in a big open place

Material used for the game: Nothing

Time of playing: Any time of the day

Persons preferred to play: Both the boys and girls are interested to play this game.

Explanation: The children sit and then they hold their left and right hand with the toes of the corresponding legs and they jump with this posture. One who jumps like this for the longest time is declared as the winner.

Benefits: Physical development.

i. Name of the game: “*Ali khela*”

Meaning of the game: Play with glass stone

Number of persons: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: siblings, neighbouring children

Suitable Places: Anywhere in a big open place

Material used for the game: Glass stone, which is available in the market.

Time of playing: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Only boys are interested to play this game.

Explanation: First they dig a small hole and then draw a line, which is little far away from the hole. Then they throw the glass stones inside the pit. If it goes inside then it is fine and if not then they have to push it toward the hole by the help of their elbow. The person who can enter more glass to into the hole would be the winner of the game.

Benefits: physical exercise, enjoyment.

j. Name of the game: “*Mangshachori*”

Meanings of the game: ‘Mangsha’ means meat and ‘Chori’ means steal

Number of person: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Siblings, neighbouring children

Suitable Places for playing: Open field

Material used for the game: Four medium size stones.

Time of playing: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Only girls are interested to play this game.

Explanation: At first, they draw a big square and divide it into four squares. Then they place four stones, which are considered to be pieces of meat, each in the centre of the square. One person stands inside each square and the catcher walks slowly along the border of the square having an eye on the piece of meat .If anyone gets caught by the catcher while trying to take the piece of meat then he/she would play the role of the catcher.

Benefits: Growth of mental consciousness and physical fitness.

k. Name of the game: “*Doli khela*”

Meanings of the game: ‘doli’ means swing ‘khela’ means play

Number of persons: Two or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Sibs, neighbouring children

Suitable Places: Trees nearer to home

Material used for the game: Rope, sack

Time of playing: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Both boys and girls are interested to play this game.

Explanation: Children make a swing with the help of a rope which is tied onto the tree. Then they stitch a sack to sit on it. One or two children sit when others push them. Likewise when others sit, the seated person comes down to push them from the back side. This brings a lot of pleasure and joy amongst the children.

Benefits: Develops boldness and courage of children. By spending time together they also can make an emotional bond in between themselves.

I. Name of the game: “*Rumalchori*”

Meanings of the game: ‘*Rumal*’ means handkerchief ‘*Chori*’ means steal

Number of persons: Eight or more

Age group: Pre-school going children

Types of playmates: Siblings, neighbouring children

Suitable Places for playing: Open place

Material used for the game: Handkerchief

Time of playing: Any time of the day.

Persons interested to play: Both boys and girls are interested to play this game

Explanation: In this game, the participants of the game form a circle and the catcher runs behind them having a handkerchief in his/her hand. The catcher drops the kerchief at the back of any of the participants of the game without his/her knowledge. If the person finds that the catcher has dropped the kerchief near him then he will continue to remain in the game as a participant. If he misses that opportunity then he will be considered as the catcher.

Benefits: Physical and cognitive development.

Besides these games now a days the school going children especially the boys are interested to play long jump, high jump, magic chair, volley ball, hockey, cricket, football etc., and the girls are interested to play dice games. All these game increase intelligence power of the children including physical fitness as well.

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion we find that except physical fitness, children get chances to learn their culture, make social relationship strong, grow psychological strength, get happiness and joy, learns new languages, learn helping others and selflessness and make friendship with peers, learn good manner or behaviours and get current news from outside’s friends. Likewise various kinds of games teach children to improve themselves in every case and provide chances to become a good human being in the future time.

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