CRITICAL REVIEW ON HISTORY OF SPORTS AND GAMES IN INDIAN CONTEXT WITH SPECIAL FOCUS TO WEST BENGAL

Pritiranjan Bag[1], Dr. V. K. Tiwari[2]
1 Research Scholar, Department of History, Mansarovar GlobalUniversity, Sehore, M.P., India.
2 Research Guide, Department of History, Mansarovar Global University, Sehore,M.P., India.

ABSTRACT:
The value of games and sports in fostering cultural variety and identities on a local, national, and even international scale. The foundation of a community can be formed through sports and games. Similar to gender roles, games and sports are influenced by societal norms and cultural practises. Although social status and age were also very important factors with regard to participation in the significance of physical activities, since men dominated and continue to dominate most societies, they typically tended to play the leading role in sporting activities. As they embody the values and norms of a particular society, gender roles are also closely entwined with sports and games. However, there have always been societies where women participated in games and athletics. In this article, critical review on history of sports and games in Indian context with special focus to West Bengal.
Keywords: History, Sports, Games, India, West Bengal

INTRODUCTION:
The growth of histories in sports has imparted many lessons on both the nature of sport and social advancements. Recent discoveries of cave art in France, Africa, and Australia have revealed signs of archaic ritualistic conduct. According to carbon dating, several of these sources are older than 30,000 years. Even though there isn't much direct evidence of sport in these sources, it is safe to assume that there were sports-related activities in existence back then. Chinese constructions and artefacts from 4000 BC show that the Chinese were already engaged in sports at that period. According to mythology, gymnastics was a well-liked sport in prehistoric China. Pharaonic monuments show that a variety of activities, including swimming and fishing, were well developed and regulated in ancient Egypt thousands of years ago. The high jump, wrestling, and javelin throwing were other Egyptian sports. The traditional Iranian martial art of Zourkhaneh was closely related to fighting techniques in antiquity. Other Persian-inspired sports include jousting and polo. Legend has it that warriors were trained for battle in Europe as early as the 13th century BC using a sport similar to hurling today. Ancient Greece was home to several different sports, including chariot racing, discus throwing, and javelin throwing, sprinting, and boxing. It is plausible to conclude that the variety of activities had a significant impact on both the military culture and the growth of Greek sports. The ancient Greeks invented the Olympic Games, which were held in Olympia, a small village in the Peloponnesus, every four years. From the time of the Ancient Olympics to the twenty-first century, sports have gotten more and more regulated and monitored. Both populations of industrialised and developing nations have more free time as a result of industrialization, which has boosted accessibility, spectator sports viewing time, and athletic activity involvement. (Coakley, 2004) With the development of mass media and international communication, these patterns continued. Sports fans began to follow professional athletes' exploits on radio, television, and the internet, all while taking pleasure in the action and competition associated with amateur participation in sports. This led to a rise in professionalism. Football is the most popular sport in the world. Baseball, basketball, and American football are all well-liked sports in the US.Many games have evolved in India. The world was given games like chess, snakes and ladders, playing cards, racing, polo, and judo, which had their beginnings as sports in India. (Huizinga, 1962) These were initially developed in India, but other nations modernized them. Sports in India refer to the wide range of activities that are practised there, from old tribal games to contemporary sports like cricket, badminton, football, etc. Sports in India cover a vast range of disciplines, reflecting the country's diversity in terms of culture, religion, and people.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WEST BENGAL:
Systematic Approach:
Sports in India have a long history that dates back to the Vedic era. Ancient India's physical culture benefited greatly from the religious rites that fueled it. The Atharva-Veda states that "duty is in my right hand, and the joys of success are in my left," which is an example of an evident ideal. In terms of ideals, these lines are similar to the traditional Olympic oath, "For the Honor of My Country and the Glory of Sport."The game of badminton is thought to have originated in India as an adult adaptation of the very old children's game known as battledore and shuttlecock in England. In this game, the shuttlecock is a small feathered cork that is now commonly referred to as a "bird."

India has developed a huge selection of games in the sectors of recreation and sports. You might be surprised to learn that games like chess, snakes and ladders, playing cards, polo, and the martial arts of judo and karate were all first developed as sports in India before spreading to other countries.(Avedon, 1971) The strength and speed contests that were popular in ancient India and Greece have likely evolved into many of the Olympic sports we see today. Chess, wrestling, polo, archery, and hockey (perhaps a spin-off from polo) are among the sports attributed to India.Hockey is the recognised national sport of India, and the nation has a remarkable track record, having won eight Olympic gold medals. Football, cricket, basketball, volleyball, and badminton are some of the other well-liked sports. In India, cricket has become more popular. The IX Asian Games were held in New Delhi in 1982, and as a result, the nation's capital possesses contemporary sporting facilities. In other regions of the nation, facilities akin to this are being constructed. There are now a number of competitions and sports that are not on the international sporting calendar. They include many forms of martial arts and wrestling. Early Indian sports and games were largely concerned with the skills of offence and defence as well as physical development. Games were viewed as a form of leisure that helped a man develop his individuality. Indoor games, music, boating and fishing, singing and dancing, water sports, and other pastimes were among the most well-liked activities. Literature from the Puranas, Kautilya, Kalidasa, Panini, Dandin, and a plethora of Buddhist and Jain texts, as well as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, show that India has a long legacy of these practises. They are supported by a variety of archaeological evidence, such as coins, inscriptions, and monumental carvings. Indians invented many games, including chess, ludo (which contains ladders and a snake), and playing cards. The Mahabharata claims that two teams of rival relatives engaged in a game known as Chaturanga. The epic Mahabharata is thought to have been written between 800 and 1000 BC. The game endured until it was given the new name "chess. H. In his book A History of Chess, J. R. Murry asserts that chess originated as an Indian game played in the seventh century AD. The top academics agree that chess was played in India before it was known to have been played anywhere else. In ancient India, cards were also devised. The Mughal emperor Akbar's court scholar was Abul Fazal. The game of cards has Indian origins, according to his book Ain-e-Akbari, which is a mirror of life at the time. The martial art form known as Kalaripayattu was developed in Kerala. The complex movements of Kalaripayattu help both the body and the mind grow.Games and sports have emerged as a new type of healthy and prosperous amusement as a result of their pervasiveness, the widespread use of the new motive, and the necessity to develop more engaging traditional practises. In contrast, many now recognize how games and sports can complement and enhance formal norms. A paradigm shift in revealing historical value since the previous century is made possible by the possibilities of games and sports. (Ananthamatydu, 1952) The effects of this shift to a new model for computer-based games and sports will reveal how society has changed. The evaluation and certification of the peer and individual attitudes of the people will place a focus on the social interactions based on customs and rituals. As a result, there will be more options for synchronizing feedback and feed-forward loops, and multimodal interfaces between people and society will be integrated.

Indus valley civilization (3250 BC to 2750 BC):
In the Mohenjadaro ruins, a figurine of a dancer was found, proving that singing and dancing were common pleasures at the time. Swimming was the other popular pastime at the time, and there is strong evidence that the "Great Bath," an ancient swimming pool, existed. Games involved dice, balls, and

marbles, with dice being the most common—as evidenced by the sheer volume of dice discovered. A board game that resembled contemporary chess was also well-liked. At Harappa, a cylindrical gamesman that resembled the game Draught nowadays was also found.

Vedic period (2500 BC-600 BC):
In terms of physical culture and military training, Vedic women received a lot of attention from men. The Rigveda claims that numerous women once served in the military. One of the most common games during the Vedic era was a kind of chariot race. Back then, swinging was a well-liked pastime. Both men and women enjoyed playing ball back then. As an alternative, the girls played games like "hide and seek" and "run and catch" in the courtyard. Dice games are growing more and more well-liked. The dice appeared to have been made of vibhidaka nuts. The Rigveda claims that the Vedic Aryans were skilled fighters.

From 600BC-320BC period:
The Ramayana
At the time, people had a lot of interest in gaming. The three largest cities at this time, Ayodhya, Kiskindha, and Lanka, were hubs for a variety of pursuits and sports. Riding a chariot and riding horses were common pastimes. Hunting was revered as a noble activity. It is said that Ravana swam in the lovely lake of Asoka Vatika during a time when swimming was extremely fashionable. Dice gambling was another well-liked pastime. During this period, "Chaturang," or chess as we know it now, developed, and India is pleased to be recognised as the origin of this wonderful sport. There was a lot of female interest in ball games.

The Mahabharata
Gymnastics and games have received a lot of attention throughout this period. The most common games back then included jumping, contracting one's arms, wrestling, playing with balls, hide and seek, and chasing animals. It is a common belief that Lord Krishna engaged in ball sports with young women on the banks of the Yamuna. One of the games played was "Iti-Danda" or "Gullidanda," which called for a long and a short stick.
Bhima was an expert at it, and it's comparable to contemporary cricket. The Mahabharata mentions the Pandavas and Kauravas participating in Gulli Danda.

Buddhist and Jain Literatures
The canonical writings of Jainism include references to the board game chess. Chess was a very well-liked game on the Nalanda University campus. Dice used for gambling have been discovered during archaeological digs in Buddhist monasteries and other places. Swimming was an enjoyable way to pass the time. There were swimming pools at the Viharas. Additionally popular at the time was boxing.The peak of Indian sports' splendor was reached with the spread of Buddhism in that country. According to legend, Gautam Buddha was an expert in equitation, chariot racing, archery, and hammer throwing.

Jataka stories
There is mention of archery in the Jataka stories. According to the Bhimsena Jataka, Boddhisatva attained archery mastery at Takshila. The Jataka stories contain descriptions of these breath-holding competitions, since wrestling was common at the time. Udyana Krida (garden games) and Salila Krida (water sports) are the two types of games mentioned.In Villas Mani Manjri, Tiruvedacharya describes numerous of these games in great detail.

Later Period (320AD-1200 AD):
During this time, prestigious universities like Takshila and Nalanda were founded. Popular pastimes in Takshila included mountain climbing, archery, and wrestling. Yoga, breathing techniques, and swimming were all part of the Nalanda curriculum. The greatest athlete of the Gupta dynasty, Harshavardhana, encouraged his people to take up sports. The Pallava emperor and excellent wrestler Narasimha Mamallah was another renowned Harsha's time period cohabitant. Women at this time were just as engaged in archery, as evidenced by the Ahicchatra murals. Popular pastimes at the time included hunting, elephant fighting, ram fighting, and partridge fighting.Someshwara writes extensively about weightlifting and walking, both of which are currently Olympic sports, as well as mall-stambha, a unique kind of wrestling

in which the players sit on the shoulders of their opponents while the game is being played in waist-deep water.

After 1200AD period:

When a Portuguese envoy visited Krishnanagar in the 16th century, he was impressed by the city's wide variety of sporting events and diverse sports venues. The king, Krishnadevraya, excelled in horsemanship and grappling. The Mughal emperors were avid sports fans, especially of wrestling. They also enjoyed taking part in wild animal hunting. Throughout the reign of Emperor Shahjahan's, wrestling matches were frequently held at the Red Fort and Agra Fort.

Modern Era- Sports and Games in Indian context with special focus to West Bengal:

Sports and Games in Indian context:

Games and sports are clearly an integral aspect of modern life if we take a quick look around. It records the total number of pages published each day in daily newspapers around the world. Sports and games can be thought of as a process of sublimating human instinct. Studying traditional sports and activities in the context of social evolution thus piques my attention. As a result, the planned study is going to concentrate on games and sports in the context of local culture. To be honest, the researcher would want to stress how intimately tied games and sports are to the advancement of human civilization. In addition to contributing to evolution, games and sports primarily serve two purposes: maintaining physical proficiency and maintaining physical fitness. Additionally, it is a way to make the most of downtime by turning it into enjoyable activities. The phrase "traditional game" was created to distinguish between older games and what are now considered "modern" games, such as football and cricket, which were introduced to India as a result of colonization. A game should belong to folk traditions; it should show the spiritual potency of the ethnos; it should be accepted as a non-official culture of non-ruling social strata; it shouldn't be fixed in the form of written documents; and the players' creativity should be collective and anonymous. Games that are passed down from one generation to the next while keeping their core despite certain alterations are referred to as traditional games. These games are played in an oral fashion. The fact that these games' developers remain anonymous because they cannot be identified is their most notable quality. A few qualities may be emphasised while characterizing traditional games. Traditional games are played purely for amusement and relaxation. The choice of when, how, and location for these games is made by the players themselves. They have nonnegotiable principles that are simple to comprehend, retain, and adhere to. Traditional games can be played anytime, anywhere, and they don't require expensive components. The term "game" in this study solely refers to traditional games; it does not include video games. Traditional games are those that are passed down orally from generation to generation while keeping their core characteristics.

Sports and games play a significant role in our daily social and cultural lives. But games in cultural practise or historical philosophy have never reached a deep and arrogant level. The importance of games nowadays is seen in politics, society, the economy, culture, spirituality, and aesthetics. The game's mirror reflects ethnicity, communalism, economic ideas, and a variety of cultural complexions, which are more significant and compelling than the game's approach, outcomes, or statistics.

The delegates evaluated traditional and indigenous sports and games from several geographically dispersed countries with diverse cultural backgrounds. (Kumar, 2018)

The history of sports not only aids in comprehension of the development of national traditions, Evidently, it aids in the deductively descriptive discussion of topics like nationalism or colonial culture, where the focus is on what is said about the subject's astringent effects rather than the game itself. There have been several talks about how the political and socioeconomic history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be altered. Because of this, the traditional interpretation of contemporary Indian politics or social history, nationalism, communalism, popular culture, or commercialism has been unable to adequately explain the significance of cricket or football as a mirror. (Kaur, 2015)

Numerous works of popular historical gaming literature have been written. However, other than some football games and cricket, our country does not have any writing that is oxidizable. The critique of gaming history in Europe began in the 1970s. At the age of 80, J.A. Mangan, Wary Vamplew, Tony

Mason, Allen Buttman, and Rechard Holt in particular have developed it. The British Society of Sports History, giving this attempt at historical criticism of games an organisational foundation. (Bandyopadhyay, 2005)

A scholar at Akbar's Mughal court was named Abul Fazal. According to his book "Ain-e-Akbari," which is a reflection of reality at the time, the game of cards has Indian roots. Kalaripayattu is a style of martial arts that originated in Kerala. The complex movements that make up Kalaripayattu exercise both the body and the mind. Games and entertainment have a significant role in social life. It gives us inspiration to take on all of life's difficult obstacles. (Kottak, 2002)

Its games and culture are defined by geographic variety. People in mountainous regions work very hard. However, due to a shortage of suitable locations, they can only play indoor sports at sites like Tas Khela, Putul Khela, Cowry, Daba Khela, Ludu Khela, Chor Police Khela, Ramshyam Jadhumadhu Khela, etc. People play both indoor and outdoor games in the horizontal region. Traditional games dominate the outdoor activities. Climate and environment also define outdoor games such as Charak Khela, Chor Chor Khela, Dariyabanda Khela, Madonkam, and Mecheni Khela. They live in the forest and tea garden areas. They were raised in a diverse culture. In addition to Laigai Chalk, they also play Naila Wayasa, Khailao, Bongrai Bir, Iyakhai, Pangrudi, Salaio, Fan Solaio, Sukoi, Yila, Maighor, Beja khela, and Lota khela, among other traditional games.

Pallankunzhi is an indigenous game with two players that is well-liked in south India. Traditional games like yoga, mallakamb, kho-kho, wrestling, elephant riding, and boat races have advanced to some level over the years. An old game called patangbazi is well-liked in western India. Traditional games are still practised in a number of rural villages. Gollachhut, Ekka-Dokka, Ekir-Mikir, Chamri, Elating Beleting Sailo, Madan or Bas Khela, Danguli, Baghbandi, and other traditional games are examples. Native American games like Dodhikadho, Lathi Khela, Laxmidak, Chorchor, Chor-churni, Holi, etc. make up the majority of religious games.

Sports and Games in West Bengal Context:

Modern sports are centered in the town of Barasat, which is a district subdivision. It is located in the western part of the district's North 24 Parganas. The city has a variety of contemporary sporting trends. Sports are typically organized by clubs, federations, academies, and other autonomous, government-recognized organizations. The club tents and their pitches are found to be set up at Maidan, the city's well-known sports complex. Most of the time, the players who represent the teams for the season are from different cities, towns, villages, and even other countries. One of the most noticeable elements of the state's urbanisation is the lengthy history of West Bengal, which is reflected in both professional and amateur sports as one of the state's most well-liked cultures.This study's main goal is to investigate and comprehend the consequences of institutionalized sports, which must be placed within the cultural settings of both urban and rural West Bengal.The effects of growing urbanisation and its cultural concomitants, including immigration, industrialization, transportation, and communication, as well as education and intellectual atmosphere, on the growth of commercialized sports by-products in West Bengal. West Bengal's population moved from being primarily rural to being primarily urban as immigrants poured into the state and industry grew in and around megacities like Calcutta. Folk games and other sporting activities could meet the leisure needs of the rural population, but new activities, such as western-style sports, had to be developed to meet the entertainment needs of a population centred in Calcutta. Additionally, the development of professional sports in West Bengal also required the wealth produced by industrialization.(Houlihan, 2008) Like West Bengal, the state has steadily grown to be a well-liked location for urban anthropological research on sports, including ethnicity, poverty, class, and subcultural variances. Sports, one of the leisure activities, have developed into a typical subculture in modern urban West Bengal. (Malcolm, 2012, Nanda, 1994) In other words, a shift in the way that men live their lives, both in urban and rural places, is the result of a socio-cultural process. Urbanisation has a growing impact on all facets of society, including sports, as well as the nature of economic development and many other socio-cultural processes. (Jarvie, 2012) The lengthy tradition of West Bengal is one of the most noticeable aspects of its urbanisation, and it is mirrored in the professional and amateur sports,

which are among the most well-liked aspects of its culture. (Kak, 2006) The developing by-products of commercialized sports in West Bengal are a result of West Bengal's fast urbanisation and associated cultural influences like immigration, industrialization, transportation, communication, education, and intellectual atmosphere. West Bengal's population inevitably moved from being predominately rural to being predominately urban as immigrants flooded the state and industries grew in and around the megacity of Calcutta. Folk games and other sports may be able to satisfy the needs of the rural population for leisure time, but new activities, such as sports with western roots, had to be developed to satisfy the needs of an urban population concentrated in the city of Calcutta. (Kamlesh, 1988) The wealth generated by industrialization was also a necessary precursor for the development of professional sports in West Bengal. Sports, games, and play are fundamental components of human culture. Each game or sporting event, being a cultural characteristic, comprises players, rules, symbols, technology or material equipment, institutions or organisations, sponsors, etc., combined with joy or success, mostly found in urban situations, which, in the end, makes it a "culture trait-complex". Games and sports have a dual significance in today's culture, particularly in rural and urban areas. (Chowdhury, 1990) Games and sports have a huge impact on our society because they regularly offer opportunities for interaction using well-known symbols that are typically learned in childhood. This constant framework is crucial in a culture where technological and institutional changes to interaction rates are the norm. Each person develops distinctive patterns of interaction within the context of the interaction made possible by various activities and sports, and as a result, these are connected to social systems.

CONCLUSION:

Sports have come a long way on the path of Indian society's advancement. Sport can best be understood from the perspective of sociology and history because it is fundamentally a social activity. (Vir, 1989) Athletic history demonstrates the connections between athletics and broader societal issues. In showcasing the development of sports in India, an effort has been made to comprehend how sports were socially constructed throughout India's history. Sports were seen as a crucial activity for the whole development of people. It has advantages, starting with keeping the body and mind healthy. (Caillois, 1961) Additionally, it amuses the viewer as well as the player. Additionally, sports foster a sense of community and unity among the populace. India, with its long history in sports, is a significant component of the world's cultural diversity. In this nation, many games were invented, many were changed, many went extinct, and many are still played today. In terms of popularity, sports today have made an impact in West Bengal, India. Sports like basketball, archery, badminton, kabaddi, football, and hockey are deeply ingrained in the Indian psyche. Indian sports have made significant contributions to the world of sports and established a lengthy path to success.

Today, games and sports play a crucial role in the whole development of the human personality. Different traditional and adventurous sports are available in India. In India, cricket is currently winning the hearts of sports enthusiasts in West Bengal, but there are several other games that everyone played as a child. Hockey has an excellent record, with eight Olympic gold medals. In India, these regional customary games are particularly well-liked. India is undoubtedly the home of traditional sports and activities. In various regions of the nation, different traditional games are played. Ancient India is where the majority of traditional games have their roots. These appealing games are so well-liked that people are still playing them now. Traditional games used to be quite important, but not anymore. (Dasgupta, 2012) They cannot compete with such techno sports, or so-called modern games, which heavily rely on tools and technologies. The prevalence of these contemporary games is escalating to the point that conventional games may soon be forgotten.

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