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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### TRADITIONAL GAMES AND SPORTS OF SPECIAL HILLY TRIBE CALLED TOTO COMMUNITY

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#### ABSTRACT

Traditional games and sports can form the backbone of a community which are the part of intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies. They are also an efficient means to convey values of solidarity, diversity, inclusiveness and culture which form an integral part of national and development strategies. Moreover, they reflect on different cultural expressions, and create a bridge between cultures for a better mutual comprehension. Most of the traditional games and sports, expressions of indigenous cultures and ways of life contributing to the common identity of humanity, have already disappeared and those that are surviving are threatened of imminent disappearance and extinction under the combined effect of globalization and harmonization of the rich diversity of world sport heritage. Among many communities under schedule tribe in India like Santal, Munda, Lodha, Lepcha etc; Toto Community is one of them, live in Totopara- a tiny Himalayan hamlet is situated in the Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal, India. The village is situated at the foothills of Bhutan-Himalayas along the Indo-Bhutan border in Indian Territory, the geographical location is on the Latitude 89° 20' and Longitude 26° 5'. They also have some distinctive features like others. Between the third and the fifth decades of nineteenth century they had to pass through a critical time, besides this with the death of their elderly people, their cultural heritage and traditional games and sports also have disappeared almost. But still now some traditional games and sports of their own are remained, namely- karam puja, gella chutt, tir-dhonuh khela(archery), rope playing, mallya youddha(wrestling), lota khela, stone throwing, dun-ggully, beja khela etc. But these traditional games and sports of Toto Community are less practiced by them, presently and these are almost disappeared.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Traditional games and sports are nothing but can form the backbone of a community which are the part of intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies. They are also an efficient means to convey values of solidarity, diversity, inclusiveness and culture which form an integral part of national and development strategies. These will all enhance our end-goal of sport for peace and development all awareness. Moreover, traditional games and sports reflect on different cultural expressions, and create a bridge between cultures for a better mutual comprehension. Most of the traditional games and sports, expressions of indigenous cultures and ways of life contributing to the common identity of humanity, have already disappeared and those that are surviving are threatened of imminent disappearance and extinction under the combined effect of globalization and harmonization of the rich diversity of world sport heritage. Traditional Games and Sports then become an added value in terms of cultural comprehension and mutual tolerance both within the community of nations and between them, and therefore contribute to the edification of a culture of Peace. India is the country which is having the variety in every way, as the country is having the largest concentration of tribal people from all over the world except Africa.

India has the wide and rich Eco- system which gives the variety of tribes to grow and survive in the country. The north eastern part of the country is completely unexplored. The valley of north east India is having the green vegetation, majestic beauty of mountains, rich variety of flora and fauna. The tangible and intangible heritage of India known for its diversity. Diversity of languages, costumes, religions, rituals, flora and fauna, climate, food habits, sports and games, art and architecture, music, dances, festivals and pastimes.

#### Toto Community

There are many communities under schedule tribe in India; Toto community is one of them. Totos live in Totopara- a tiny Himalayan hamlet is situated Madarihat Police Station under Alipurduar Sub-Division of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, India. The village is situated at the foothills of Bhutan-Himalayas along the Indo-Bhutan border in Indian Territory the geographical location is on the Latitude 89° 20' and Longitude 26° 5'. Totos have been designated as one of the six underdeveloped tribes of West Bengal. Totos also have some distinctive features like others. They had lost their link with their main ethnic group and emerged as a contact group, in a secluded place of North Bengal, might have lost their separate identity. But as a matter of fact, the Totos not only have retained their separate identity, they also have preserved their traditional games and sports and cultural heritage as well. Between the third and the fifth decades of nineteenth century

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they had to pass through a critical time, while their very existence was in question. The orange civilization which was their principal means of livelihood was destroyed. As a result, they were threatened by poverty and starvation, causing high rates of mortality, besides this with the death of their elderly people, their cultural heritage and traditional games and sports also have disappeared almost. But still now some traditional games and sports of their own are remained.

### Traditional games and sports of Toto community

As earlier said that Toto's traditional games and sports almost have disappeared, but still many of them are seen in their own society. These games and sports we can divide into three types. Such as-

- A. Seasonal
- B. Ritual and
- C. All time played games

#### A. Seasonal games of Toto community

##### 1. Name of the game- Karam puja

- **Equipments:** Madol, kartal etc.
- **Number of participants:** Not mentioned
- **Objectives:** To enjoy
- **Applicability:** Boys only
- **Special features:** It is a seasonal game i.e. in the month of January-February is played.
- **Procedure:** On the occasion of Kakam puja, a contest of song is held between or among the teams of song. A team will sing a song and through that song a message or question is asked to the opponent team. Then, the next team has to give answer throw also singing a song of that question. Then the next team also will sing a song and ask a question throw that song. In the same way the previous team will give the answer of that question. In this way the contest will be continued. Which team will be able to give answer of the question maximum times, will be declared as a winner team and as a prize haria (alcohol) is given.

##### 2. Name of the game- Gella – Chutt

- **Equipments:** No equipment is required.
- **Number of participants:** 7 to 8 or many more in each group.
- **Objectives:** To be winner as a whole and make fun.
- **Applicability:** Both, boys and girls.
- **Special features:** It is played in the month of August to February.
- **Procedure:** The number of participants varies from place to place and there is no rigidity as far as the dimensions of the area to be played is concerned. There will be two groups. One group is called the out group, while the other is called the in group. Each group can have 7 to 8 even much more players. The in group selects one player as the king, who takes up his position at a point about 20 to 25 meters away from his team members. All the players of the king's group are confined to a specified marked area which is called *ghar* (house). The members of the out group spill over the entire area to foil the king in his attempts to reach

the *ghar*, without being touched by any member of the out group. When the game begins, players of the in group run one by one, shouting 'kut, kut' or any other word of their choice. The players of the in group attempt to touch out players or make way for the king's safe passage to the *ghar*. The in players are permitted to stay in the king's chamber, and make a human chain from where they can touch out the out players, who are then considered dead. A player declared dead can no longer participate in the game. Thus, the king's defenders keep his foes at bay, while the king himself is involved in finding a way, whereby he can outwit his enemies and reach the *ghar* safely. This very process of leaving his room for the house is *Gella - chutt*, which literally translated means 'the king ran away'. The moment the king ventures out of his room, all the out players rush to touch him, and if any one of them succeeds, the king is declared dead. The two groups then interchange their roles.

##### 3. Name of the game-Tir-Dhonuk khela (archery game)

- **Equipments:** Bow, arrow and banana tree.
- **Number of participants:** Three, four, or five (no rules)
- **Objectives:** Accuracy to a particular point, enjoyment and to be winner.
- **Applicability:** Only for boys.
- **Special features:** It is played except rainy day i.e. June and July month.
- **Procedure:** In this game banana tree is the target which is situated at near about 30 to 40 meters away from the starting line. The participants will get three arrows. They have to shoot the arrows at the target. If each participant can shoot three arrows at the target at a time, he will remain in the game and those who will not be able to make that, they will eliminate from the game. In this way the game will be continued until one is remained for winner of the game. One chance for each participant.

##### 4. Name of the game- Rope playing

- **Equipments:** Rope
- **Number of participants:** 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 in each group, no limit.
- **Objectives:** Display strong and doing enjoy.
- **Applicability:** Both, boys and girls.
- **Special features:** It is played except winter season.
- **Procedure:** There will be two groups and two courts, between two courts there will be a straight line. Four, six eight ten twelve or many more can have in each team. But, equal member should have in each team. One rope of about 25ft to 30ft is required. Each member will hold the rope and then each team will try to pull the rope towards them after giving signal and will try to pull the opponent to their own court. If they can pull them to their own court they will be declared as winner.

##### 5. Name of the game- Mallya Youddha(Wrestling)

- **Equipments:** For marking anything can be used.
- **Number of participants:** Two at a time.
- **Objectives:** Display heroism in the society and to be Winner.

- **Applicability:** Only for boys.
- **Special features:** It is played in the season of summer and autumn.
- **Procedure:** This is an interesting game of Toto community. In this game two participants take part at a time within the arena on the ground wearing lengut (costume). It is played in the presence of many people. The rules is, during wrestling the participants have to throw his opponent on the ground, if anyone of them can do that first than other he will be the winner of the game. But participants can't throw down his opponent by punching on the restricted area i.e. above the neck and on the sexual region.

## B. Ritual games of Toto community

### 1. Name of the game- Lota khela (water-pot)

- **Equipments:** Lota (water-pot or small jar)
- **Number of participants:** Not mentioned
- **Objectives:** To enjoy
- **Applicability:** Both boys and girls.
- **Special features:** It is played on the occasion of marriage ceremony of Toto community.
- **Procedure:** In the next day of marriage Lota khela is played between two team, one team of bridegroom's sight and another team of bride's sight. It is played at river with Lota. At first any team will hide the Lota into the water and afterward another team have to search out that Lota from the water. After that, which team searched out the Lota now that particular team will hide the Lota and in the same way the opposite team will search out it. In this way it will be continued for three to four rounds. Which team will be able to search out maximum times that team will be declared as winner.

After Lota khela boy and bride will go back home keeping the Lota full of water on her head. That time the bridegroom will throw the tir (arrow) towards the way. After arrive to the near of the tir, the bride will pick up that tir with finger of left leg and will hand over her husband. Then again the boy will throw the tir and bride will pick up. This process will be continued up to the home.

## C. All time played games of Toto community

### 1. Name of the game-Stone Throwing

- **Equipments:** Stone only
- **Number of participants:** Three, Four, Five (no rules)
- **Objectives:** For enjoyment and to be winner.
- **Applicable:** Especially for boys, but girls also can take part.
- **Procedure:** In this particular game three-four -five or even more participants can take part. There will be a mark on ground (not required ground all time, everywhere it may be played) as a symbol. Everyone must have a small stone within his grip. Now first participant will throw the stone to a certain distance almost 6FT to 8FT standing on that particular mark. Then the second participant have to throw his stone touching previous participant's stone and that time first participant will pick up his stone leaving second

participant's stone. Afterward it's the third participant's turn and he also has to do same thing, if anyone fails to touch his previous participant's stone, he will eliminate from the game. In this way the game will be continued until one participant will remain after eliminating one by one. Who will remain at the end of the game he will be winner. In this game there is no rule who will first throw, it depends upon them only. One chance for each participant.

### 2. Name of the game- Dun-ggully

- **Equipments:** Bamboo stick
- **Number of participants:** Minimum 3 participants
- **Objectives:** Play and doing enjoy.
- **Applicability:** For boys
- **Procedure:** Minimum 3 participants are required for this game but many more can take part at a time. The dimension or area to be played has not been yet mentioned, it can be played at anywhere. A bamboo stick of about 3ft and small one (ggully) of about 6inches are needed. One chance will get each participant. There will be a lot to decide who will take part first. Now first participant will stand on a marked place with bamboo stick and also ggully, on the other hand the remaining participants will stand one by one in a straight line or zigzag line facing to the 1<sup>st</sup> participant and holding only bamboo stick just forward of the 1<sup>st</sup> participant. Then 1<sup>st</sup> participant will throw the gutty keeping on one end of the stick and then displacing it on the air and finally punching (dun) it in air over the other participants' head. While passing the ggully over their head they have to touch the ggully with stick, if it is so he will be out and next participant will come to take part. But if it is not so then any one of them will throw the ggully towards that particular participant by hand, just at that time he will try to dun it with stick, so that it can go far from him. Where, the ggully is remained from that place the performer will count towards the marked-place in the term i.e. eka, dua, tina, chaira, panja, choil, booil, barankoil, gutkoil. This is a complete one patty. Many patties can be got a performer at a time. After it he will again start to throw and it will be continued until he is being out. Who will get more patties among them to be declared as a winner.

### 3. Name of the game- Beja khela

- **Equipments:** Tir (arrow), Dhonuk (archery), banana tree and prize like cock.
- **Number of participants:** Not mentioned
- **Objectives:** Display heroism in the society and to be winner.
- **Applicability:** For boys only
- **Procedure:** After come back from hunting Beja khela is held within the members who were involved during hunting. There is a prize for winner. A banana tree is placed in a certain distance and from that distance an arrow is to be shoot to that particular banana tree. Only one chance is to be given to every member. Who will be successful to shoot the target, is to be announced as a winner, if there is tie then it will be continued. At last the prize to be hand over to the winner.

### 4. Name of the game- Morog Youddha (cock fight)

- **Equipments:** For marking anything can be used.
- **Number of participants:** Two only at a time
- **Objectives:** Just enjoyment
- **Applicability:** For both boys and girls
- **Procedure:** In this game the players will stand with one leg in a circle and other leg will be hold by the two hands of the individual. The faces of the two players will be each other. After giving signal each player will try to knock their opponent down by hitting with their shoulder. The player who will be able to knock down his or her opponent to be considered as winner

### Conclusion

So, in the above discussion it is very clear to us that like other communities of India, the Toto community have also a distinct tradition and heritage. They have traditional games and sports like-karam puja, gella chutt, tir-dhonuh khela, rope playing, mallya youddha, lota khela, stone throwing, dun-ggully, beja khela, morog youddha etc. Many of them have been modified later and have become popular in India and in so many countries of the world as well. Not only that, some of them have got place in Olympic Games, namely Archery (tir-dhonuk khela), Wretling (mallya youddha), Shot put (stone

throwing) etc. So in this respect their tradition and cultural heritage have a tremendous importance in Indian culture. We should protect and promote these sports to further community spirit, bring peoples together and install a sense of pride in a society's cultural roots and from the government sight also there shall have an emphasize on the preservation and the appraisal of traditional and indigenous sports from different regional and national cultural heritages.

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