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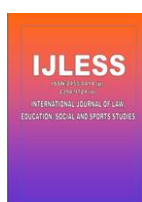


SOCIALISATION THROUGH SPORTS AND GAMES
A Study among the Chenchu's of Nagarkurnool District, Telangana

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the roles and games in the socialisation of the children among the Chenchu's of Nagarkurnool district, Telangana. Socialisation refers to the process through which humans develop culturally patterned understandings, values, emotional orientations and behaviours.

Sports and games are regarded as a positive driver, it provides avenues for development. Sport may be utilized to achieve positive social outcomes. Sport transforms women and men by endowing them with strength, endurance, vivacity and courage, Sport teaches life skills. Sport remains the best part of school life. With sport, young people learn to, to overcome defeat, manage victory, to become team players and to be reliable and gain the other team members' confidence, respect for opponents and the rules, and to know their limits and themselves better.

Keywords: Chenchu, Socialisation, Sports & Games, Ethnic Identity, Environment

1. Introduction

When one talks about socialisation and sport, there are multiple dimensions. The research on socialisation and sport has been carried out in three main areas

- i. Socialisation into sport
- ii. Socialisation out of the sport
- iii. Socialisation through sport

Socialisation refers to the process through which humans develop culturally patterned understandings, values, emotional orientations and behaviours. According to Merriam Webster, socialisation is the process by which a human being beginning at infancy acquires the habits, beliefs, and accumulated knowledge of society through education and training for adult status. In simple terms, it is the process of learning to adapt to societies rules, restrictions, and the norms.

1.2 Socialisation through Sport

Sports provide children in general more opportunities to develop both socially and physically, physical activities performed with other children allow them to develop social skills through interaction. Sports and games have psychosocial connotations, concerning individual attitude, belief, opinion, attitude, tradition, mood and feelings, behaviours, motivation, perception. But also, with one's structured collective as a conscious organisation, reality and shared objectives, management structures, relationships and intra-group tasks, etc. Through playing games and sports, the child can gain

confidence and can try new forms of relations and cooperation so that he could highlight his potential, qualities, emotions and feelings. Play is an integral part of human nature. From a very young age, a child starts playing. From the first social smiles to peekaboo's, all are to connect. A child's first playmate is a mother. A child starts learning and getting socialised by indulging in various games. As the child grows, he learns to engage with multiple stakeholders through playing. Games and sports form a create avenue for social connection.

2. Methodology

The Objective of the study was, to understand the role of sports and games in the socialisation process.

For the purpose of study and data collection, methods of observation, semi structured interviews, In-depth interview were used.

Interviews from people across different age groups and genders to understand their perceptions of sports and games, and to understand role of games in socialisation were carried out. Observation was used to see what kind of games and sports are played and how. What are the different dynamics involved with respect to gender and age are keenly observed for the purpose of the study?

3. Role of Sports and Games in Socialisation among Chenchu's

Chenchu, as a tribe, comes under the category of a particularly vulnerable tribal group in the state of Telangana. There are differences amongst Chenchu's that live in the interiors of the Nallamala (forests dwellers), and those who live in multi-ethnic villages and are more or less integrated.

3.1 Sports, Games and Gender

Sports and games form one of the best ways to socialise the younger generations into their gender roles. Certain games are played only by girls and other only by boys, this sets the boundaries and socialises the young accordingly. Traditionally Chenchu society is said to be more or less egalitarian, but the situation is not quite the same anymore. But the traces of it can be found in the ways the young boys and girls play together. For most of the games, there are no gender barriers, except for a few. Girls play along with their brothers and cousins. Few games they play together are,

- Chow
- Jilla gona
- Gotilaata
- Ceri penta
- Dipp
- Lolothu Mappa



Figure 1.1: Chenchu girls and boys playing together. Picture from the village Padmanapalli

Chenchu's a hunting-gathering community, where traditionally women are engaged in collecting and men in hunting. While playing, it is common for boys to play with Bows, Arrows and Darts for boys and not for girls.

When it comes to hunting and the sport of archery its only Chenchu's who are still forest dwellers are very much active. Chenchu's of multi-ethnic villages due to changes in their ecology and environment, both social and physical seldom practice hunting.

Archery is a complex sport and requires an enormous amount of practice and mastery to hit the target with accuracy. But for a Chenchu kid who is socialised by playing with the bows and arrows day in and day out, it is relatively an interesting and comfortable sport.

Chenchu boys from a very young age help their brothers by collecting the raw material (like gum, certain kinds of fibres (*teegalu*), bird feathers, sticks, bamboo, etc.) needed for making bows and arrows from the forest. In return, the elder brothers would make them darts and small bows and arrows, with which they play and learn to aim. As the boy grows up, the bow made for him also changes. As they grow older, the boys learn to make the bow and arrow by working closely with their elder brothers and the cycle repeats. Every Chenchu man has their bow and arrows in the regions they still practice hunting, which they make themselves.

Turning attention to another activity of Horse Riding. Chenchu's of the interior villages of Nallamala use horses for navigating through challenging trails in the forest. Horses are introduced and provided to them by the government. Often children love to ride a horse, riding a horse is fun. Riding a horse is considered as a masculine activity. Only boys and men are encouraged to learn to ride a horse and girls, in general, do not learn to ride a horse.

Hence from a very young age, boys are socialised into using bows and arrows, riding horses while women are not encouraged to do so. By using these activities, boys and girls are socialised into their gender roles. Coming to other games such as musical games, girls engage in them way more than boys do.

3.2 Sports, Games and Ethnic Identity

In the multi-ethnic villages, games and sports form a medium of integration for the children, and everyone else as well. Children go to the Anganwadis, later to the school, where avenues are present for interaction through various activities. Children of all the communities play together creating an environment of equality. Only Chenchu children below class three are present in the villages, and everyone from grade 3 to 10 is into residential schools.

In the village, Dhararam sports and games provide an avenue for the integration of Chenchu's into the mainstream. Chenchu's, along with the other communities, participate with great enthusiasm in the sports and games events held during Sankranthi and Dushhera festivals.

Kabaddi and volleyball competitions are held, for Kabaddi a team from each of the communities of Yerukala, Lambada, Chenchu, Golla participate. Chenchu's hold the second position most often while Yerukala comes first. Concerning volleyball, there are only two heterogeneous teams, in which about three Chenchu's are a part. These two teams practice and play volleyball regularly in the village apart from the competitions. These games and tournaments provide Chenchu's avenues to mingle with other communities and uplift their social status by performing well.

In Dhararam Chenchu's also take celebrating Vinayaka Chaviviti in a prestigious way. They have a huge platform build for the pandal. They perform Chenchu aata their traditional folk dance during the festivals.

In the case of Dhararam, sports and games are acting as tools for navigating identity.

For the Chenchu students studying in the Ashrama schools, archery which comes from their traditional way of life creates a sense of identity. A student who was selected for state-level archery competition held by tribal welfare department expressed that, though he can play other games like Kho and Kabaddi well, its archery that gives him utmost joy. He felt so disappointed when he could not participate in the meet, due to lack of archery set.

Chenchu's in the Ashrama school Camp Rayavaram also take pride in their skill of making tops (*nune bongaralu*), and marbles (*gotilu*). Everyone in the school, teachers, students and even non-teaching staff were amazed by the skill of the Chenchu students. Now it is considered their identity. Other Children in the school also have learnt to make *nune bongaralu* from the Chenchu students.

In the village Padmanapally, something unique was noticed which was not found in rest of the villages of Dhararam and Rayavaram. In this village Ashta chemma (*Bara kanta*) a traditional board game is played by older women on a regular basis. This game forms a connect between women of Lambada community and Chenchu community. They often play the game as teams. In this way, the game paves the way for more interaction between the two communities.



Figure 1.2. Ashta chemma board is permanently drawn on the front veranda, Women of the village playing the game

3.3 Sports, Games and the Environment

Environment plays a vital role in determining the kinds of games and sports played by children. While playing games, getting the things ready for the game, from a very young age, these kids are socialised into the environment around. For example, for playing with Bow and Arrow or Gotilata the Children gain a lot of knowledge about the forest, the resources available, where to find them. The use of certain materials and so on. Hence through the game, they learn about their ecology and environment. Thus, sports and games form an essential part in socialising the children in different situations.

The creativity of the Chenchu students can be attributed to their environment and the geographic location. And to the lack of ready availability of readymade items for play. Thus, the environment plays a vital role in what skills does an individual acquire and gets how a person gets socialised.

4. Conclusions

With changing times, the idea of games and sports is fast changing as well. In today's time playing, most probably means a mobile game rather than any physical game. In such times the Chenchu's still are connected to traditional games. Their talent to convert anything that has served its purpose into a play material is extraordinary. Though there are no clear boundaries between the games girls play and boys play, there are a few which are played either by girls or boys. For example, Archery is generally learned by boys, and the musical games are the girl's domain.

In the multi-ethnic villages of Dhararam, Rayavaram the engagement in the playing of games and sports has been decreased compared to the interior villages. But still they provide an avenue for the chenchus to come into mainstream, sports and games create avenues for them to socialise with other caste communities in the village.

In the interior villages of Nallamala sports and games create avenues for the young to get socialised into different gender roles and learn about their ecology and environment. Games also are a channel through when they are trained into their livelihood pattern. through the game, they learn about their ecology and environment. Thus, sports and games form an essential part in socialising the children in different situations.

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