Traditional games and sports of South Asia

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Sports
Kabaddi- It is one of the most popular sports in India played by the people in villages as well as in small towns. Kabaddi is an Indian game which requires both power and skill for its play. It is a simple and inexpensive game and doesn’t require any playing equipment. Regular Kabaddi tournaments are held throughout the country and abroad.
Read more: https://spkabaddi.wordpress.com/2016/09/28/international-kabaddi-rules/
Dangal (transl. Wrestling competition) is a 2016 Indian Hindi-language biographical sports drama film.

Loosely based on the Phogat family, the film stars Khan as Mahavir Singh Phogat, a former wrestler, who decides to fulfil his dream of winning a gold medal for his country by training his daughters for the Commonwealth Games despite the existing social stigmas. His daughters Geeta Phogat and Babita Kumari became India's first world-class female wrestlers.

Trailer of the movie below (Source: Youtube):

The game of Kushti has also inspired many movies in bollywood.

Dangal has had a political impact to spread the message of women empowerment in India.
Mallakhamb - Mallakhamb is a traditional Indian sport in which a gymnast performs poses and feats while hanging from a vertical wooden pole or rope. It is also used as a form of exercise to get high level of fitness by the Pehalwan or Indian Wrestlers. This is the one of the beautiful Indian sports.
GAMES
Kancha/Marbles

One of the exciting childhood games played in India was Kancha. Other names of the game include Golli, Marbles, Goti, and Lakhoti. It began during the Harappan age. The game involves the use of round glass marbles or kanchas. Several people can participate in this game. The objective is to collect the maximum number of marbles by striking the chosen kancha with another one. The winner gets to take home all the marbles of the other players.

Source: By: Mobarak, Yasser Alaa, Kancha Game, Von Ngari Gompê Monastery, Manali, Himachal Pradesh, India, May 5, 2017– Yasser Alaa Mobarak via Flickr
Lattoo (Yo-Yo)
The Lewis Chessmen, found on Scotland's Outer Hebrides in 1831, date to roughly the 12th century A.D. (Public domain)
Khido-khundi

- In old India, sports such as khido-khundi, tug-of-war, wrestling, kotla-chapaki, skipping rope, hide-&-seek etc., were an integral part of the rural culture. In addition to these, animal fights, bull races and other rural games were seen as a form of entertainment.

- Hockey lovers will be well aware of the fact that khido-khundi of rural India has evolved into Hockey of the modern times which is now played on Astroturf. In old times, there were no set rules for this game, through this game was widely played to keep the mind and body fit and as a means of passing time.

- Despite Hockey being an advanced form of khido-khundi, it is somewhat different from the latter. Khido, the ball as it was called in those times, wasn't made from PU, PVC, plastic materials, rubber or leather, but by tying and rounding of old, worn and spare cloth material (similar to what some people do with rubber bands to make rubber-band ball). It was strengthened by using rope and leafy materials towards the outer surface. Khundi or the stick, which we now call a hockey stick, was made of wood from a number of trees (it mentions tahli, beri, jand and kikkar trees) or other commonly found trees, which were light and swift to play with.

- Historians have found that the above mentioned game was popular in 17th Century, rural Punjab. Young and old alike have been playing this sport, but it was especially popular among children between 6 and 13. The sport taught discipline, obedience, self-confidence, unity, sacrifice, support and tolerance.

List of some other popular traditional games and sports:

- **Kokla Chhapaki (ਕੋਕਲਾ ਛਪਾਕੀ)** - This game is popular even today amongst children and is also called Kokla Chapaki. Both boys and girls play it. Children sit in a circle and the child who has the cloth in his hand goes around the circle-singing: it is a kind of a warning for the children sitting in a circle not to look back. The cloth is then dropped at the back of a child. If it is discovered before the child who had placed it there had completed the round, the child who discovered the cloth would run after him and try to touch him with it till he sits in the place vacated by the one who had discovered the cloth.

  The song sung during the game is: *Kokla Chapaki Jumeraat aayi aye, jera agge pichhey wekhey, ohdi shamat aayi aye*  
  Meaning: *Kokla Chapaki, it is Thursday. " Whoever looks here and there shall be punished.*

- **Rassakashi (ਰਸਾਕਸ਼ੀ)** - Tug of war with two teams: Men generally played this game but women also participate in the game. A line is drawn between the two teams, each having one end of the rope in its hands.

- **Lukan Miti (ਲੁਕਣ ਮੀਟੀ)** (hide and seek) - This is also played by both boys and girls and continues to this day. Two teams can also play this. One has to hide, the other has to seek but before doing so a call is given.

- **Vallamkali** - The snake boat race, known as Vallamkali in Kerala. It is an interesting traditional game held on the occasion of Onam. It is a famous water sport and one of the main attraction held in Kerala. Boat Race is truly a feast to the eyes of the visitors, who come from far off places to see it.

- **Jallikattu** - Jallikattu is one of the oldest living ancient sports seen in the modern era. The ancient sport of Jallikattu pits crowds of brave young men against angry bulls. It is similar to the Spanish running of the bulls but a traditional part of Pongal celebrations in Tamil Nadu.
Camel Race- Camel racing in Pushkar is one of the major attractions for tourists in Rajasthan. Camels are an important part of desert life. These camels are decorated beautifully at the time of race. Pushkar is one of the oldest living cities in India, and it is gaining popularity as one of the biggest annual camel fairs. It was really a good experience to watch the camel race in Pushkar.

Archery- Archery is one of the most ancient sports originated in India. This is the favorite pastime or sports of the people of Manipur. It's an everyday activity of the state dwellers. During every festival, archery matches are held.

Martial Arts/Gatka- Martial art is a part of India’s ancient culture. Kalarippayattu is one of the oldest forms of Indian martial art. This famous art is from Kerla. Indian martial art is a gift to the modern world and mother of all other Asian martial arts.

Hide and Seek/Chhupam Chhpai- The origin of this game is unknown. It is commonly played all over the world under different names. The players hide in a previously decided marked area. The ‘denner’ has to shut his eyes and announce numbers loudly while the other players get time to hide. Then, the denner has to find the hidden players. Any number of people can play this game.

Gilli Danda/Lippa- Gilli Danda is an older version of modern-day baseball and cricket. Its fame once matched that of cricket in India. All it requires is two unevenly sized sticks. The smaller stick is called the Gilli and the longer one which is used to strike the Gilli is called the Danda. The objective is to flip the Gilli into the air with the Danda. While the Gilli is in the air, the player must hit it with the Danda as far as possible. The player also needs to run to touch a pre-decided point before the opponent can lay his hands on the Gilli. It can be played by many people at the same time.

Stapoo/Nondi/Hopscotch- This hopping game, also called Stapoo, is a popular outdoor game. In Tamil Nadu, it goes by the name Nondi. The game involves drawing a grid on the ground and numbering it. Players take turns and throw an object, usually a small stone, onto the numbered blocks. They have to hop across the blocks to pick up the object jumping on one/two legs to finish the lap, taking care not to step on the border lines. It is a group game.
Further Readings (Compiled by Sarbjit Randhawa):

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