

TRADITIONAL GAMES AND GAME TOOLS

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Abstract: Folk games and game tools are integral parts of a nation's cultural heritage, passed down through generations, reflecting the traditions, values, and history of the community. These games are not only forms of recreation but also serve as platforms for physical activity, intellectual development, social interaction, and community bonding. Folk games often involve simple rules and minimal equipment, yet they engage players in strategic thinking, teamwork, and physical coordination.

Key words: popular games, children, cultural and educational significance, Asian countries, sport games, healthy lifestyle, social skills

²⁹Traditional folk games are an important part of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage. These games are often held during national holidays and events. For example, wrestling is a type of folk wrestling that has developed over centuries and was included in UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list in 2018. Another popular game is "Oq terakmi, ko'k terak" (White Poplar or Blue Poplar), a children's game. Folk games help children and adults spend their free time meaningfully, improve physical health, and strengthen social connections. These games are recognized as significant societal traditions across Uzbekistan and are passed down from generation to generation.

Folk games are games that have historically emerged in different cultures and are cherished by societies.³⁰ They often hold social, cultural, and educational significance. In Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries, folk games are rich and diverse. Below are some examples of these games and the tools used in them:

1. Qatlam Game (Square Game)

This game is typically played on the ground, where a square or other shapes are drawn, and children play within these boundaries. Usually, paper or wooden pieces are used in the game.

Tools: Paper, stones, or wooden pieces, rope.

2. Kumush (Silver Game)

In this game, two teams participate.

²⁹ Jovliev.B.D (1998). Games and Play in the Creative Arts. Routledge.

³⁰ Mansurova.K.L (1999). Play and Culture: A Study in the Anthropology of Play. John Wiley & Sons.

Each team keeps its kumush, which refers to small metal or stone disks, and tries to capture the opponent's kumush.

Tools: Kumush (metal or stone disks).

3. Rope Tugging

This game is played between two teams, each pulling on one end of a rope. It becomes a test of strength and physical endurance.

Tools: Rope (wide and strong).

4. Five Stones

Children scatter five small stones or red pebbles on the ground and try to gather them in a specific order. The game tests agility and speed, and each player uses their own techniques to collect the stones.

Tools: Five small stones or wooden pieces.

5. Shashka (Checkers-like Game)

This game is played on a special shashka board by multiple players. Each player moves pieces, trying to capture the opponent's pieces.

Tools: Shashka board, shashka pieces (specially prepared pieces).

6. Star Game

In this game, children follow specific rules while playing on a shape resembling a star drawn on the ground.

Tools: Star-shaped patterns drawn on the ground.

7. ³¹Pottery Games (Pottery Competitions)

Many games and competitions involve children and adults engaging with pottery (the process of making pottery). For example, games are played using pieces made from pottery.

Tools: Pottery items, stones, or other crafted pieces.

These folk games traditionally help develop both physical fitness and social skills. They are typically played among children and adolescents, fostering connections, cooperation, and interest within the community.

Uzbek folk games have a long history and have been an essential part of national culture since ancient times. ³²Sources provide information about games dating back to the 16th-17th centuries. Games like "Qoyilmon" and "Ko'pkari" are examples that reflect the traditions and customs of the Uzbek people. Folk games hold special significance during festivals, weddings, and national events, playing an important role in educating the

³¹ Madiyorov.M.N (2001). "Traditional Games and Play in Contemporary Society." Journal of Folklore

³² Anderson, K. P. (2014). "Folk Games and Children's Play: An Introduction". Journal of Playwork Practice, 1(3), 10-22.

younger generation.³³ Most of these games require physical movement, strength, and agility, and they help strengthen solidarity among the people.

Below some examples for Uzbek traditional games:

1. Tag (Various cultures): A simple outdoor game where one player (the "it") tries to tag others, making them "it."

2. Hide and Seek (Various cultures): One person counts while others hide, and then the seeker tries to find them.

3. Marbles (Global): A game where players shoot small glass balls into a designated target or try to knock other marbles out of a ring.

4. Hopscotch (Global): A game where players hop through a series of numbered squares, often drawn on the ground, without touching the lines.

5.³⁴ Kabaddi (India): A team sport where players take turns running into the opposing team's side, touching opponents, and returning without being tackled.

6. Liar's Dice (Global): A game of bluffing where players roll dice and make bets based on the results of their dice rolls, attempting to deceive others about their rolls.

7. Tug of War (Global): Two teams pull on opposite ends of a rope, with the goal of dragging the other team past a marker.

8. Jacks (Global): A game where players bounce a ball and attempt to pick up small metal objects (jacks) before the ball bounces again.

10. Foursquare (Global): A ball game typically played by four players, who stand in different quadrants and pass a ball to each other according to set rules.

These games are often played outdoors and encourage teamwork, physical coordination, and social engagement, making them timeless forms of recreation.

Traditional sports in Uzbekistan hold significant historical and cultural importance.³⁵ One of the most important is wrestling, which has a history of over 1300 years. Since 1992, wrestling has been regularly held during Uzbekistan's Independence Day celebrations. Another traditional sport is ulak-kopkari, which is particularly popular in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions. Additionally, national sports include alpine skiing and horseback riding. In 2017, 50 new sports facilities were built in Tashkent to support traditional sports. These activities promote a healthy lifestyle among the youth and play a crucial role in preserving national traditions.

Traditional Sports and Games, and Game Equipment are activities that reflect national culture, passed down from generation to generation, and are closely tied to the traditions

³³ Davlatova.H.A (2003). "Traditional Games and Cultural Heritage: Preservation and Continuity". Cultural Heritage Journal, 2(4), 145-162.

³⁴ Perkinson, H. (2007). "Folk Games of Europe: A Comparative Analysis". Journal of European Folklore Studies, 1(1), 45-65

³⁵ Solihonov.I.B (2016). "From Traditional Games to Digital Play: A Historical Perspective". International Journal of , play 5(1), 34-47.

and customs of a people. They help develop physical activity, collaboration, quick thinking, and skill. In Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries, traditional sports games are numerous, and they engage people of all ages in social interaction and recreational activities.

Examples of Traditional Sports:

1. Kokpar (or Kokburu):

Description: This game is popular in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, played on horseback. Teams compete to defeat the opposing team and take a special ball (kokpar) to their opponent's field.

2. Yelkan:

Description: Yelkan is a team sport where two teams play against each other. The goal is to pass a ball or other object into the opponent's territory.

3. Wrestling:

Description: Wrestling is a widely practiced sport in Uzbekistan and Central Asia. In this game, two opponents attempt to throw each other to the ground using physical strength and strategy. One of the most popular forms of wrestling is "Uzbek Wrestling".

4. Tug' (Tug of War):

Description: This game is widespread among both children and adults. It includes contests, balls, and activities that promote physical fitness and teamwork.

Examples of Traditional Game Equipment:

1. Flat Balls:

Description: Simple, flat balls used in many traditional games. These balls are typically flat in shape and are used in various sporting activities.

2. Whip:

Description: The whip is one of the many traditional game tools. It is typically used to deliver a powerful strike or to direct an object with force.

3. Tracking Devices:

Description: These are used in traditional sports games to measure distance and monitor performance.

Traditional sports and game equipment not only foster physical development but also preserve the historical and cultural heritage of a nation. They play a crucial role in strengthening physical and mental health, as well as promoting unity within a community.

Traditional games for children have been an important part of cultural heritage passed down through generations for centuries. In Central Asia, games like "Chirik-chirik" and "Ulak-kopkari" are popular among children. In "Chirik-chirik," children are divided into two groups, guarding safety zones and developing strategies to enter the opponent's territory. "Ulak-kopkari," usually held in rural communities, primarily requires physical

strength. These games not only promote physical activity but also develop teamwork and strategic thinking. Participating in these games helps enhance children's health and social skills.

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