

Analyzing the Decline and Revival of Tamil Nadu Traditional Games

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Abstract

This study explores the cultural and social significance of traditional games in Tamil Nadu, their historical roots, and the reasons for their decline in modern times. By surveying 500 respondents from rural and urban areas, it examines awareness levels, age-wise participation, and perceptions of the educational and developmental benefits of these games. The results show that traditional games are more familiar in rural areas, while urban respondents show lower awareness. Key reasons for their decline include the popularity of digital games, modern lifestyles, and the absence of these games in school curricula. Despite the challenges, the study highlights the potential of traditional games to promote physical fitness, strategic thinking, and cultural heritage. It advocates for initiatives to preserve and revive these games through education, cultural programs, and policy support to ensure their relevance for future generations.

Keywords: traditional game, awerness, decline

Tamil Nadu's traditional games have a rich and ancient history, deeply rooted in the cultural and social life of its people. Many of these games are believed to date back to the Sangam era (3rd century BCE to 4th century CE), as mentioned in ancient Tamil literature. They were an integral part of everyday life, fostering physical fitness, mental agility, and communal harmony. Archaeological findings from sites like Keezhadi and the Indus Valley Civilization reveal evidence of dice, boards, and other gaming artifacts, indicating the prevalence of such games even in prehistoric times. These games were often influenced by Tamil Nadu's agrarian lifestyle, local festivals, and spiritual traditions. For instance, *Pallanguzhi*, played with seeds, was popular among women and associated with leisure during agricultural breaks. Physical games like *Kabaddi* and *Silambam* served as training exercises,

preparing warriors for battle while building endurance and teamwork. Games like *Aadu Puli Aatam* and *Dayakattai* incorporated strategic and mathematical elements, serving as tools for sharpening cognitive skills. Over the centuries, these games became symbolic of Tamil Nadu's cultural richness and played a pivotal role in bringing communities together during festivals and social gatherings.

Despite their decline in recent decades due to urbanization and the advent of digital entertainment, these traditional games continue to hold a special place in Tamil culture and are being revived as a testament to Tamil Nadu's enduring heritage. Tamil Nadu's traditional games are a vibrant expression of its cultural heritage, embodying the creativity, values, and social fabric of its people. Games like *Pallanguzhi*, *Aadu Puli Aatam*, *Kabaddi*, and *Dayakattai* were once an essential part of daily life, promoting physical fitness, strategic thinking, and community bonding. These games required minimal resources, often using seeds, stones, or boards, making them accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. They were closely tied to local festivals and rituals, fostering a sense of togetherness and cultural pride across generations.

However, the rise of technology, urbanization, and modern lifestyles has led to a decline in the practice of these traditional games. Younger generations are more inclined towards digital and modern sports, causing a disconnect from these cultural treasures. Efforts to revive these games through school programs, cultural festivals, and digital platforms are gaining momentum, aiming to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. Preserving these games is essential not only for cultural continuity but also for fostering intergenerational bonds and maintaining Tamil Nadu's unique identity in a rapidly changing world.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyze the factors contributing to the decline of traditional games in Tamil Nadu and to explore strategies and initiatives for their revival, with a focus on understanding their cultural, social, and recreational significance in contemporary society.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To assess the level of awareness of traditional games among respondents from rural and urban areas.

2. To analyze the age-wise distribution of respondents and its influence on awareness of traditional games.
3. To identify the reasons contributing to the decline of traditional games.
4. To evaluate perceptions of the educational and developmental value of traditional games among respondents.
5. To explore the relationship between awareness levels and opinions on the benefits of traditional games.

Significance of the Study:

- The findings of this study will promote awareness and understanding of traditional games, especially in Tamil Nadu.
- This study will help highlight the differences in awareness and participation in traditional games between rural and urban areas.
- The study will identify key factors contributing to the decline of traditional games, which can inform efforts to preserve and revive them.
- The results may encourage educational institutions to incorporate traditional games into their curriculum for cultural and developmental benefits.
- This study will serve as a resource for policymakers and tourism promoters to enhance the visibility of traditional games and their role in cultural heritage and tourism.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant association between the awareness of traditional games and the respondents' residential background (rural vs. urban).
2. There is a significant relationship between the decline of traditional games and the popularity of digital games.
3. The perception of the educational and developmental value of traditional games differs significantly among respondents based on their awareness levels.

Methodology:

The study included 500 respondents, chosen randomly to ensure fair and unbiased results. A structured questionnaire was used to collect information. It contained simple questions to understand awareness, opinions, and reasons for the decline of traditional games. Basic statistical methods like percentages and frequencies were used to summarize the data. The survey focused on understanding the respondents' awareness, age, and reasons for the decline of traditional games and their views on the educational value of these games.

Data Discussion**Table No:01****Respondents of Awareness statics**

s.no	Respondents	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Rural	320	64
2	Urban	180	36
Total		500	100

Table No: 01 shows the number of respondents aware of traditional games, divided into rural and urban areas. Out of 500 respondents, 320 (64%) are from rural areas, while 180 (36%) are from urban areas. This shows that more people in rural areas are aware of traditional games compared to those in urban areas. The difference suggests that traditional games are more familiar in rural areas, and there may be a need to increase awareness in urban areas.

Table No :02**Age Wise Classification of the Respondents**

S.No	Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 20 Yrs	77	15.4
2	21 Yrs to 30 Yrs	184	36.8
3	31 Yrs to 40 Yrs	128	25.6
4	41 Yrs to 50 Yrs	111	22.2
Total		500	100

The table shows the age distribution of 500 respondents. The largest group is between 21 and 30 years old, with 184 respondents (36.8%). The second-largest group is between 31 and 40 years old, with 128 respondents (25.6%), followed by those aged 41 to 50 years with 111 respondents (22.2%). The smallest group is up to 20 years old, consisting of 77 respondents (15.4%). This indicates that most respondents are in the 21 to 30 age range.

Table No : 03
Awareness of Traditional Games

s.no	Respondents	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Respondents Aware	333	66.6
2	Respondents Unaware	167	33.4
Total		500	100

This table 3 shows the number of respondents who are aware or unaware of traditional games. Out of 500 respondents, 333 (66.6%) are aware of traditional games, while 167 (33.4%) are unaware. This indicates that a majority of the respondents have knowledge of traditional games, but a significant portion is still unaware.

Table No : 04
Reasons for Decline

s.no	Reason for Decline	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Lack of Awareness	43	8.6
2	Modern Lifestyle	98	19.6
3	Absence in School Curriculum	59	11.8
4	Popularity of Digital Games	277	55.4
5	Lack of Open Space	23	4.6
Total		500	100

This table 4 presents the reasons for the decline of traditional games based on responses from 500 individuals. The most common reason, with 277 respondents (55.4%), is the popularity of digital games, showing that people are more engaged with modern technology. The second-largest reason is modern lifestyle, with 98 respondents (19.6%), suggesting that changes in daily living may have affected participation in traditional games. Other reasons include absence in the school curriculum (59 respondents, 11.8%), lack of awareness (43

respondents, 8.6%), and lack of open space (23 respondents, 4.6%). This data highlights the key factors contributing to the decline of traditional games.

Table No: 05

Parents' Perception of Educational and Developmental Value of Traditional Games

s.no	Statement	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Traditional games have academic relevance	32	6.4
2	Traditional games contribute to career skills	88	17.6
3	Traditional games are culturally relevant and valuable	98	19.6
4	Traditional games are as beneficial as modern sports	85	17
5	Traditional games teach teamwork and strategy	98	19.6
6	Traditional games have a structured format to teach values	99	19.8
Total		500	100

This table shows how many respondents believe in the positive aspects of traditional games. Out of 500 respondents, 99 (19.8%) believe that traditional games have a structured format to teach values, making it the most agreed-upon statement. Next, 98 respondents (19.6%) think traditional games teach teamwork and strategy, and 98 respondents also see them as culturally relevant and valuable. 88 respondents (17.6%) believe that traditional games contribute to career skills, while 85 respondents (17%) think they are as beneficial as modern sports. The least agreement is for the statement that traditional games have academic relevance, with only 32 respondents (6.4%).

Conclusion

The study highlights the rich cultural and historical significance of traditional games in Tamil Nadu, emphasizing their role in fostering physical fitness, cognitive skills, and community bonding. Despite their decline due to urbanization, modern lifestyles, and the popularity of digital entertainment, these games remain a vital part of Tamil Nadu's heritage.

The findings reveal that awareness is higher among rural respondents compared to urban ones, and younger generations are less engaged with these games. Factors such as digital games, lack of curriculum inclusion, and modern living habits were identified as key reasons for the decline. However, the study underscores the importance of preserving these games through awareness initiatives, educational integration, and cultural promotion to maintain their relevance and bridge the gap between tradition and modernity.