

## A Look at Native and Local Games of North Khorasan Province

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Introducing and assessing native games of North Khorasan province could be a reliable source for everyone interested in such games so they can enjoy these cost-effective, joyful, and healthy entertainments everywhere from their educational environments to their homes, and at any time their workout classes to their spare time or various ceremonies. Contrary to many modern entertainments such as video games that can have many social side effects, native games not only help to nurture body and soul, they also reduce social damages.

**Methodology:** this study is a descriptive-field research and was done using the information obtained from experienced sources in various cities and rural districts who were identified and interviewed first hand.

**Findings:** considering the wide variety of these games regarding their required age, gender, number of players, referees, and coaches, instruments, field, skills, entertainment value, intellectual or physical needs, rewards or punishments, etc. they are accessible for every social groups. Some of these games have formal contests on the state or international scale.

**Conclusions:** many of these games are traditionally male-dominated. But, with some slight modifications as well as preparing suitable environments and dresses, females can also enjoy them. In this article only two native games are fully described; the original project covers many more games and can be used as a comprehensive source for anyone interested in native games of North Khorasan province. Many of these games have the potential to be used as formal contests or educational programs covered by mass media such as TV, magazines, and papers.

**KEYWORDS:** Native Games, North Khorasan Province, Interview

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### INTRODUCTION

#### *Theoretical Basics*

Native games either have their roots in local cultures or imported from other regions in case of cultural compatibility. These games are the most important basis for reviving traditional sport culture and are socially invaluable as they can create a bond between competitors as well as providing people a cost-effective way to spend their spare times due to the fact that most of the games do not require any specific instruments or fields. The fact that many of these games are nearly forgotten due to the arrival of modern entertainments, gives such researches more merit. In this study, in order to make the games more accessible for general audiences, many descriptive photos and figures are included. The results of this research and other similar studies can help boost these games' local and even international reputation and give them the recognition they deserve.

Games included in this project are gathered through traveling around nearly all cities and rural districts of North Khorasan province and identifying and interviewing local experts on the subject first hand. The results are then carefully evaluated and edited regarding their practical approach and ease of access to general audiences. Apart from publishing this comprehensive research, related organizations such as Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Ministry of Education can significantly boost these games' local and international reputation by planning various contests and using mass media to promote them. Similar researches can also be done in other provinces. Moreover, these games can be examined by various physiological, physical education, and psychological experts, so their pros and cons can be understood and subsequently, after required modifications, they can be defined as international standards.

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### Other Similar Researches

Mr. Ali Golestani has previously conducted a similar study which was restricted to the city of Bojnord. Moreover, a book named Native Games of North Khorasan Province has been published by Mrs. Azam Hekmati et al which is not as complete and comprehensive as this project.

### Explaining the Subject

Game in the vocabulary of Persian language means entertainment, occupation, fun, workout, and deception. Biologists argue that human's interest in games is related to his curiosity to discover and understand his surrounding environment. According to psychologists, human's need to play games is in fact corresponds to his need to spend his hidden energy. Sociologists argue that playing games is a way to practice social life. Some experts also believe that a game is a form of art that rooted in cultures and traditions of a society. If we ponder deeply, a game can be a combination of all of these definitions (1). Native games have been integrated in local people's lives and is an inseparable part of them. This fact is even more evident in smaller urban societies as well as rural communities whose cultures has been remained more pure and intact. In these societies, maintaining such games is also much more important. Games are either rooted in the culture of a region, which are called *native games*, or imported from other cultures and in time are adapted to the local people, which are called *local games* (2). Since sports and physical exercising are one of the most important social needs, and in order to achieve a more dynamic and healthy society, native and local games can prove to be an accessible and easy shortcut to such outcomes. Due to their diversity, native games provide entertainment for a wide range of people regardless of their age, region, climate, ethnic, wealth, and available equipment. Symbolic use of these games in various ceremonies instead of western counterparts not only provides much needed publicity, it can also help them to cross national borders and achieve international recognition; like Ganiye or Kabaddi which are internationally renowned and have their own federation.

## METHODOLOGY

Statistical population of this research was people of all cities and rural districts of North Khorasan province. The related information was obtained through a file from government office of North Khorasan. Sampling method was as following: after traveling to cities and capitals of rural districts of North Khorasan, and after inquiring local people, local experts on the subject of native games were identified. Then, the experts were visited in their homes and interviewed first hand. The interviews were either inscribed on paper or recorded using cell phone and later were put to paper. After fully editing the written notes, several students played the games so practical photos can also be added to the texts. This research is a descriptive-field study. We tried to introduce and present games with the easiest methods and with as few equipment needed as it was possible. It should mention that due to cultural variety of this province, some of its games are similar to the games played in other regions. In these cases, the most popular names and pronunciation were used.

This project lasted nearly one year which was mostly due to delayed travels because of unfavorable climate changes, and identifying experts and veterans as well as finding suitable interview times.

Cities and rural districts according to the obtained file, which was updated up to 1392, were: Esfarayen, Safiabad, Bojnord, Hesar-e Garmkhan, Jajrom, Shogan, Sankhvast, Raz, Gholaman, Yeke Saud Payin, Shirvan, Lujali, Faruj, Titkanloo, Garmeh, Daraq, Ivar, Ashkhaneh, Qazi, Pish Qaleh and Abbas Abad villages, Chahar Borj, Iraj, Zarq Abad, Parkanlu, Bam, Khosh Manzar, Baba-Aman, Badranlu, Gifan-e Bala, Amir Abad, Tabar, Darband, Tangeh-ye Torkaman, Baghleq, Rastegan, Hesarcheh, Ziarat, Zoeram, Honameh, Golian, Tukur, Kouseh, Yenge Ghale, Ali Mohammad, Yengi Ghale, Maivan, Cheri, Hesar Andef, Asghar Abad, Robat Ghare Bil, Garmab, Eslam Abad Kurd, Keshanak, Atrek, and Khartoot.

### Findings

In this research 99 games were recorded. They can be categorized as following:

1. Choukkeh wrestling which is internationally renowned.
2. Dal-Plan, Tanab Keshi (Rope Pulling), and Haft Sang (Lagori) which have national contests.
3. Qurneh which has state-wide contests.

4. Games which have not been played formally: Horse Racing (2 methods), Dastmal-Dastmal, Apeshtarang, Ajour-Bazi, Ay Tarag Goon Tarag, Az In Nemitsari (You Won't Be Scared From This), Az Sare-No Ghezel Khanom (Begin Again Lady Ghezel), Alak Mashhadi, Osololi, Ishak-Meni, Bala Bolandi, Baleshtak, Bojol Bazi (3 methods), Begir-va-Dar ro (Take It and Run!), Peshtarang, Palakhmoon Bazi, Pooz Charb Keren, Taghordem, Tabar Bazi, Tap-Pakoo, Tokhme-Morghe Gandide (Fetid Egg), Takhyah Ghoydeh, Tasmeh Tasmeh, Tip Tapan, Tiro Kaman Bazi (Archery), Tileh Bazi (Marbles) (3 methods), Chavgerdoonak, CheriChap, Chelli, Chombe Bazi, Cho Chelak,

Chookha Toto, Chorlan, Chaharpa, Haji Haji, Halghe Eshay, Kherkheri, Halghe Ghashang, Kharposhtak, Dooz-Dooz Bazi (2, 4, 9, or 12 variations), Raha Raha, Zanjireh, Zoo Bazi, Zir-Farshi, Sang Cheleh-Cheleh Pa, Sang-e-Dagh (Hot Stone), Whistling (without hands), Sikham Be Divar, Sim Sam Samira, Shah-o-Vazir (King and Vizier), Ghayem-Bashak, Ghorogh Toteh, Gharagerdem, Gharagez, Gholagh Chami, Ghonghah Bazi, Ghamaroo, Kachah Bazi, Turkmen Wrestling, Kolah Bazi, Kolah Pet Peti, Komaj Komaj, Kom Rabanden, Kibidi, Ki Bood Ki Bood Man Naboodam, Kim Lardah Kim, Gerdome, Gorgam-o-Galeh Mibaram, Goor Daghe Sange Daghe, Gooy Bazi, Gooy Rahi, Lal Lal, Lapar Lapar, Ley Ley Bazi, Morghanah Bazi, Mazalagh Bazi (Spinning), Mohreh Bazi (Beads), Noghte Dar Markaz (Point in The Middle), Noon Noon, Verde Tootet, Vasati, Harang Harang, Yar Yar, Yas Yas, and Ye Ghol Do Ghol.

Due to lack of space in this article, two games which seems to be rather new and thrilling and have the potential to gain international recognition, are selected and presented.

#### **A. Qurneh**

*Number of participants:*

A referee and two equal teams of at least 5 (normally 7).

*Gender and age group:*

This game can be played by both male and female teenagers, young adults, and Middle Ages.

*Needed skills:*

Speed, power, and concentration

*Equipment:*

1. One smooth wooden stick with a diameter of 3 cm and length of about 1 m.
2. A *haft-sang* ball (similar to tennis balls) (preferably seven layer leather wash)

*Field conditions:*

1. Being plain and flat.
2. Can be covered by asphalt, concrete, parquetry, soil, grass, etc.
3. Dimensions should be about 100x50 m<sup>2</sup>.
4. In one of shorter sides, there should be a wall or at least a big column, barrel, or stone in the middle. This point is called marker point. On the opposite side of this point (at the other end of the field), a line is drawn which indicates the starting line. At the final 2 meters of this line and along the field's length, a 10 meter line is drawn which is called the starting line.

A football field is almost perfect for this game as the half-way line can be the starting line and one of the goals can act as the marker point.

*Rules:*

1. One team is randomly selected as *Team A* who will have the ball (toop-dar or owner of the ball). *Team B* will have the stick (choob-dar or owner of the stick).
2. One player from Team B (Saeid for example) carries the stick while his other teammates stand in a line behind him (they keep a safe distance so the movement of the stick cannot harm them).
3. A player from Team A (Ali for example) stands opposite Saeid with a 3 meters distance. His teammates scatter throughout the field between starting line and marker line.
4. After referee's whistle, Ali throws the ball at Saeid with an angle of 45°. Saeid should try to hit the ball with the stick before it hits the ground.
5. If Saeid can successfully hit the ball, he should immediately put the stick on the ground and along with all of his teammates run toward marker point and after touching it, return to starting line. Meanwhile, Team A players who are scattered throughout the field should grab the ball and passing it along so they can hit the running B players.

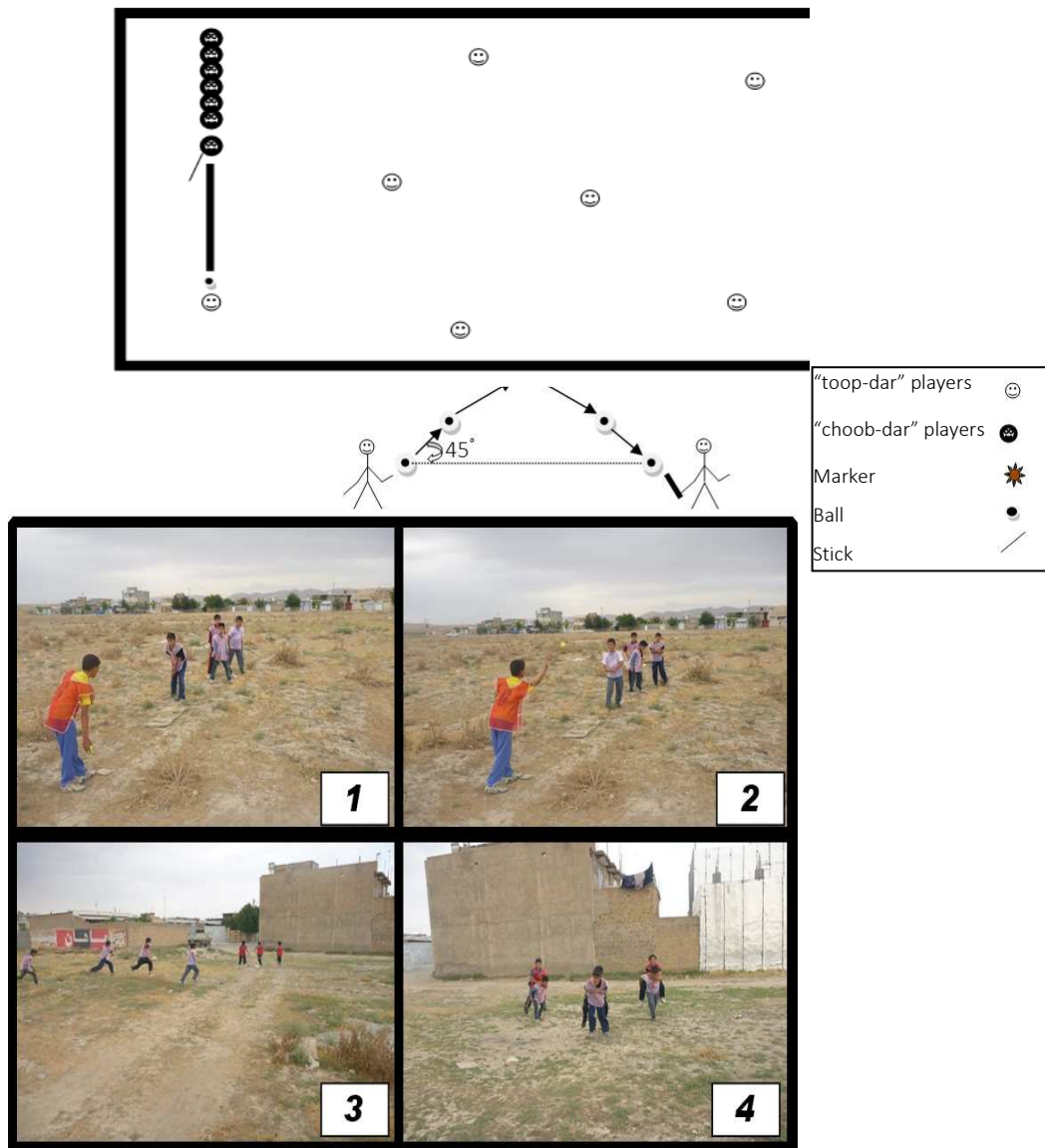
*Note:* moving and running with ball is allowed. Even if the ball moves outside the field, the game is still on. The ball should hit the runners below their waist.

If the ball hit one of "choob-dar" players, referee immediately calls "the ball hits!" and all "choob-dar" players should stand on their ground and carry "toop-dar" players on their backs toward the starting line. This way the game finishes and would repeat again with the teams trading their places. If the ball do not hit any "choob-dar" player and they can reach the starting line unscathed, another "choob-dar" player would take the stick and the game resumes.

6. If Saeid cannot hit the ball, Ali would try it again up to 3 times. If again fails, Saeid have to carry all "toop-dar" players from the starting line to marker line, and again from the marker line to starting line. After this, another "choob-dar" player will take the stick and the play resumes.

*Fouls:*

1. Ali should throw the ball toward Saeid with an angle of  $45^\circ$ ; if he throws it directly ( $0^\circ$ ) or at a negative angle (lower than horizontal angle), or an almost square angle ( $60^\circ$  to  $90^\circ$ ), in a way that the ball could not hit the unmoved stick, this throw is counted as foul and should be repeated. If a thrower fouls 3 times, he would be sent off.
2. If the ball hits upper half of the body (above waist), it would not be counted and the play resumes. If such balls have the potential to harm any “choob-dar” players and prevent the game to carry on, the referee can sent off the culprit and all “choob-dar” players should get carried by the other team’s players from the point that foul has happened to the starting line.
3. If any “toop-dar” player attempts to block a “choob-dar” player, the teams would trade their places.
4. If a “choob-dar” drops his stick while trying to hit the ball, the teams would trade their places.
5. Any pause or hesitation from runners (or all players) while running toward or back from marker point would make the runner team carry the opposite team from the point of the foul to the starting line.
6. If after “choob-dar” player hit the ball, any of his teammates can grab it before it hits the ground, the teams would trade their places.
7. Running in a zigzag pattern if not cause clashes, is allowed.
8. At marker point, hitting the runner team is not allowed. Runners can stand at this place for up to one minute.



**Figure 1:** Qurneh in action: The field, teams' positions and proper way of throwing

## **B. Apeshtarang**

*Number of participants:*

At least 2 players (no upper limit).

*Gender and age group:*

This game can be played by both male and female teenagers and young adults.

*Needed skills:*

Speed and power

*Equipment:*

Shovel, pickax, and stone-less soil such as clay or sand

*Field conditions:*

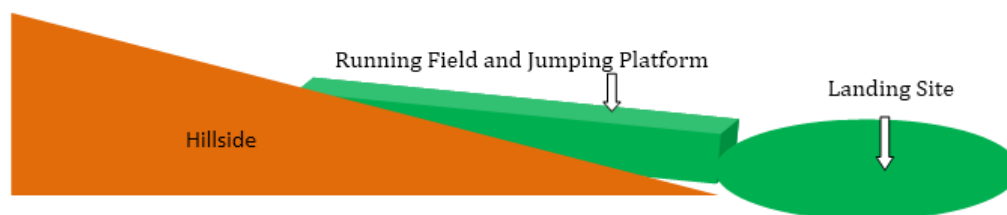
Hillsides with a gradual steep and without any obstructs which are prepared by participants with a fence as is shown in Figure 2. The steep should be suitable for running with (at most 5%), without stones and pebbles, with a length of 30 meters and side length of about 1 meter. Height of jumping position is between 0.5 to 1 meters and landing site should be even, with a soft soil, incompact, and without stones and pebbles. It would be prepared periodically using pickax to get rid of clods. The landing site is about 5 meters long with a length of 2 meters.

*Rules:*

One player would stand with a shovel at the landing site, so he can measure others' jumps (he uses the shovel to mark soil) as well as periodically scraping the soil to prevent it from becoming compact and hard. This person can be change after several rounds so he can also play the game. First player would stand as far as 10 meters from the jumping line and would bend with his hands on his knees and his back to the jumping point. Other players stand behind him in an exact posture and in about one meter intervals. The last player in line is the starting player who after jumping over all players would run toward jumping point and jump over soil and would immediately stands aside. The next player from the end of the line would do the same after about 10 seconds from the first player (the interval between the players' movement should be in a way that when the next player arrives at the jumping point, previous player had finished his jump and had stand aside). This pattern continues up to the last player who would do his jump without any obstructs. After that, the last player from the previous round would become the starting players and once again a line is formed and the game repeats.

The "jumping over each other" phase would act as a warm-up to the jumping player. In each round, the player with the longest jump would declare as the winner.

Note that the distance between the last contact point of the player on the landing site, and the jumping point would count as the jumping length.



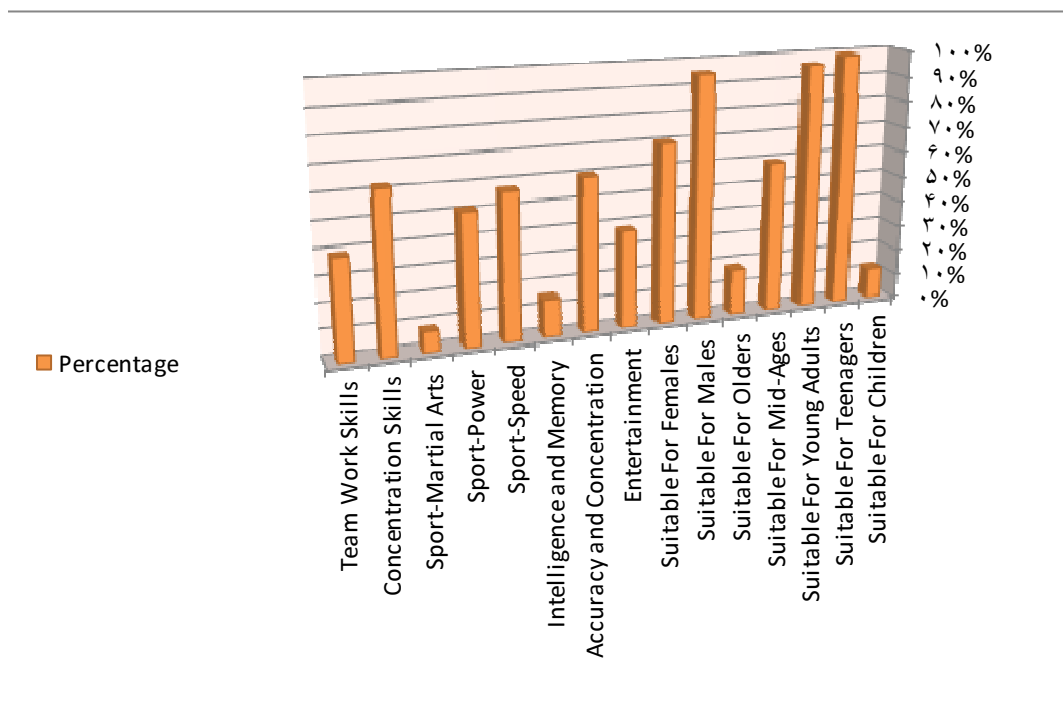
**Figure 2.** Apeshtarang Field Overview

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Overall results of game assessments are summarized in Table 4 as well as a graphical chart. Many of these games due to the lack of suitable conditions were mostly male dominated; but with a suitable field and clothes, women can enjoy these games too. Most of these games deserve a more thorough evaluation and with some slight modifications have the potential to expand over national and international borders. With mass education, possible formal contests organized by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and media coverage with help of Iran Broadcasting organization and other mediums, mass audiences will be introduced into such games and considering their low costs and completely manageable equipment and environment needs, they can prove to be a cost-effective and easy solution to reduce illnesses related to lack of movement and stressful activities. The fact that ignoring such important social issues can impose much higher treatments' cost over families and society; highlights the games' importance even further. We sincerely hope to see our society healthier and more joyful and dynamic.

In the end we should indicate again that all of the games mentioned in this article have been collected in a comprehensive research project of Bojnord's Azad University by the authors and can be used as a practical source for native and local games of North Khorasan Province.

Team Work Skills	Concentration Skills	Sport-Martial Arts	Sport-Power	Sport-Speed	Intelligence and Memory	Accuracy and Concentration	Entertainment	Suitable For Females	Suitable For Males	Suitable For Olders	-Suitable For Mid-Ages	Suitable For Young Adults	Suitable For Teenagers	Suitable For Children	Description
39%	62%	8%	51%	57%	15%	60%	38%	70%	95%	18%	59%	96%	99%	12%	Percentage



**Table 4.** List of North Khorasan's Native and Local Games

#### Appreciations and Acknowledgements

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- 7- Ge, Haj Mehdi Soleimani from Ashkhaneh, Mr. Hassan Mokarami from Qazi, Mr. Rezaee from Pish-Qaleh, Mr. Pir Avar from Badranlu, Mr. Saeedi from Bazkhaneh village, and Haj Moazami from Bojnord