CHAPTER : 7
RECREATION AND GAMES

7.1. Folk Recreation and Games:

Human being, specially the child and the youths, means lovers of games. There is no exception to the Koch children and youths in this regard. Like other children and youths of the Universe, the Koch children and youths are also like to play different games, they make hue and cry, sing songs and play dances in the rest time. These games are also considered as a part of their folk culture as well as literature. The Koches have a variety of folk games. The information gathered from filed study about the different types of Koch Galoni (i.e. games) are discussed below\(^1\).

1. **Koina Galoni**: In this game, the children make dolls- bride and bridegroom, parents, etc. with clay and let them to dry in the sunlight. After the dolls dried up, they make different types of traditional colourful dress in Kaya Gandhi (mini hand loom)

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\(^1\) Collected through Field Study.
and wear up the dolls. Then the children arrange marriages of the dolls and enjoy it.

2. **Nok-Nok Galoni:** In this game the small children prepares models of homes on the village road and/or on the yard by making a number of squares with sand. Then they name the squares like bedroom, drawing room, kitchen, store room, shed, etc. They also collect varieties of under immature fruits, flowers, leaves, etc. The girls cook food and other house coarse and the boys perform the cultivation works. Some of the boys establish market and do marketing. In this way they enjoy the whole day by taking food, wine, meat, etc.

3. **Pakka-Kacha Galoni:** This game takes place between two groups with equal number of players. Here, specific number of quad equal to the number of players of a team is made by drawing lines on the ground. One player is placed in each of the quad for restraining the entry of the *kacha* player of the opposite group. If in the process of tactful entry of the opposition player the restrainer touches him then the opposite group loss the game and the second (restrainers) group starts
to play. In this way the game continues. The model of the game is given below:

\[
\text{Entry of the Kacha}
\]

\[
\text{Players}
\]

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 Exit of the Pakka Players
4. Lau-Lau Jali Galoni: There is no fixed number of players in this game. Only a few players can form a group and one or more players can take part in the opposite group. In this game, the first player from the majority group sits on a long wooden post (which should be strong and hard) and holds the post very tightly with both hands. And rest of the players should hold the waist of one another.

Now, the player from the opposition who comes to pluck lau (gourd) will ask the first party: Lau lau jali hau goto charek jali? (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).

The first party answers: Elache kiring kayjok (i.e. we have just planted the seed).

The second party asks again: Lau lau jali hau goto charek jali? (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).

The first party answers: Elache gaja dungjok (i.e. the seed have just turned into seedling).

The second party again asks: Lau lau jali hau goto charek jali? (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).
The first party answers: *Elache Iowa bowaijok* (i.e. the seedling has turned into small plant just now).

The second party again asks: *Lau lau jali hau gota charek jali?* (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).

The first party answers: *Elache par Kuchi lauto* (i.e. the plant is now flowering).

The second party asks again: *Lau lau jali hau gota charek jali?* (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).

The first party answers: *Elache jolabhor parto thaito* (i.e. the flowers have started to turn into fruits now).

The second party again asks: *Lau lau jali hau gota charek jali?* (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).

The first party answers: *Elache parpokto* (i.e. the laus are now ripening).

The second party will again ask: *Lau lau jali hau gota charek jali?* (i.e. Lau lau jali give a few seeds).

The first party answers: *Ela mungjok* (i.e. the laus have now ripened)
Then the second party will beat on the back of each player (the lau) to check whether the laus, i.e. gourds have ripened. If he (the opposite party) thinks the laus have ripened, he will try to pluck the last-end player i.e. lau of the first party. In this way if the second party i.e. opposition succeeds to pluck majority or all laus (players), it will win the game and the game will over, otherwise the game will begin again in similar way.

5. Makchok-Makchi Galoni: This game takes place between two groups with equal players. Each group will have one 'Amber' i.e. group leader or captain. In front of each group there is a river. The group leaders or captains have to help each member of their own group to cross the river tactfully through the play. The group or party who cross the river first, will win the game. A sketch of the game is shown below.
6. **Chuw a Galoni:** In this game many players can take part. Here, each player has to pass a test. The test is like this – each player have to spit through the vacant space made by putting together the ends of thumb and forefinger. If in the process the spit fall on or touch any part of the concerned player’s body, the player becomes *chuwa* or foul. Then the foul player chases the other players to impose his or her *chuwa* on them and the non-foul players run away to save themselves from the *chuwa*.

7. **Moyra Galoni:** This game is also called *Moyur-Moyuri* game (Peacock-Peahen game). This game can take place between young boys and girls. The interested players make a circle by holding each others hand. One of the players introduces as peacock and one as peahen and the game begins.

   At first the peacock asks the players, *"Where is my peahen"*?

   The other players in the circle answers, *"She has gone to the river to take water"*. And the players make a hue and cry, hoi-hoi-hoi.

   The peacock will again ask, *"Where is my peahen"*?
The peahen replies from away, "Ki-hi-ou" and immediately enters the circle.

Then the peacock enters the circle and tries to catch the peahen although the other players try to save the peahen by preventing the entry of the peacock into the circle. As soon as the peacock enters the circle, the peahen immediately comes out of the circle and runs away. The peacock also runs after the peahen and if somehow he can catch or touch the peahen, the game ends, and starts a fresh again with a pair of new peacock and peahen.

The above types of games are still alive among the Koch community with their own dialects, culture and tradition.
7.2. Traditional Games & Game Songs:

Play is a form of expressive behavior common among all human beings and manifested overtly in all cultures. Like art, language and religion, play is a complex phenomenon that can not be defined succinctly.

No extensive note is found in the journals. Historical books about games are common in the Koch village. An extensive field study is needed to find out the games played by the Koches during the seasons of the year. As the Koches practice with the production of crops. Religious belief has also influenced their daily life and, the games related with religious festivals are common among them but only a few. The Koch women mostly pass their time weaving clothes by handloom during their leisure. Among children a few games like Bhai Bhai, Haba Daba, Dabeng Mata song or game are played².

1. Bhai Bhai Game:

This game is started just after the preparation of the lunch. All the children sit in circle tying their hands with one

² Collected through Field Study.
another. Questions and answers are asked through rhymes. As soon as the rhyme is over, every body unties their hands and sits in adverse position keeping back to each other. They tie their hands as done before. With the end of the rhyme, one by one untie the hands. The rhyme is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
Bhairay \ Bhai & \quad Bhairay \ Bhai \\
Ata \ Bhai & \quad ki \ Bhai \\
Ninio \ Masu \ beai & \quad Tor \ garu \ kat \\
Karobai & \quad Akakhat \\
Ata \ ghas \ chai & \quad ki \ ghah \ khay \\
Naldima & \quad Nalidima \\
Besing \ derung & \quad kat \ hagay
\end{align*}
\]

The game is ceased with a rhyme as given below:

\[
\begin{align*}
Bhairay & \quad Bhai \\
Ata \ Bhai \\
Nim \ Masu \ beai \\
Karabay \\
Ata \ ghas \ chay \\
Naldima
\end{align*}
\]
2. Haba Daba Game:

This game is paled either during rainy day or after dinner. A traditional lamp is lighted if played after dinner. Small children like this game very much. All the children sit together and they lay their hands on the floor. One of the players starts a rhyme with a rhythm and stroke on the first of one after another, the player on whose first the rhyme finishes he or she is declared as a rat. Thus the game goes until all the players are covered.

The rhyme used in the game below:

\[(1)\]

\[Habadaba\quad Halpa\ Anna\]

\[Batal\ kappa\]

\[Mama\ hal\ Ghama\ ai\]

\[Satik\ Kusum\ phol\]

\[Shayam\ sundar\ bori\ ai\]

\[Endoor.\]
3. Dabeng Mata Song or Game:

This game is held during spring season. In the evening, a Madguri plant is planted in the centre of the courtyard. All the leaves of the plant are bound with a few cooked rice. A chaki (traditional lamp) is placed just under the plant. The boys and girls stay at a feet distance and play bamboo sticks making the sound like the Dabeng insects. When the insect (Dabeng) fall on the leaves, a rhyme is sung as below:

\[ Fai \text{ dabeng fai} \]
\[ Wareng \text{ rang Chingkuk} \]
\[ Wareng \text{ dabeng fai} \]
\[ Fai \text{ ................. !} \]

From above discussion and from the summaries of the social folk custom, it is revealed that most of the important
juncture of social pertinence is associated with one or the other folk-culture. It is quite likely that a further in-depth and through study of their folk culture may well establish their claim of sharing the characters of folk culture from other parts of the world and will also help in understanding their world view.

Though it is not possible to draw a clear cut distinction between tribe and a caste for the purpose of the present project, we can take the operational definition of a tribe as a community having its social structure independent of the larger Indian society and, according to this definition, the Koches of Garo Hills can very well be considered as a tribe, though neither in Meghalaya nor in any other part of North-east India. Constitutionally the Koches are regarded as "Scheduled Tribe". In this form a community like the Koches is found in the Nagaon district where they are known to the neighbouring Lalungs as Dehan and Cachar also where they are known Dheyan (Tunga, 1978). The communities had not been ethnographically studied thoroughly. However, among both of the communities they have the brief that they are related to the great Koch rulers of Eastern India, Naranarayan Chilarai.
It is for the historian to establish the fact that a band of people from the Koch Kingdom entered Garo Hills through in North-Eastern corner from Kamrup and spread all around the borders till they reach the North-Western most corner.