

# Experiential and Play-Based Learning through Bharatiya Toys and Indigenous Games in the Light of NEP 2020

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**Abstract:** *The NEP 2020 highlights the importance of experiential learning, play-based pedagogy, and incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems into education. In early and school education, play and hands-on activities are vital for fostering creativity, problem-solving skills, and conceptual understanding. Traditional Indian toys and indigenous games have long contributed to children's cognitive, physical, and social development. However, many of these traditional resources have been gradually phased out from classrooms due to the rise of digital entertainment and standardized teaching methods. This paper explores the potential of Bharatiya toys and indigenous games as effective tools for experiential and play-based learning in schools. It emphasises how these culturally rooted resources can support holistic development, increase classroom engagement, and align with NEP 2020's pedagogical vision. Using a qualitative, conceptual approach, the study examines policy documents, educational literature, and examples of traditional games and toys used for learning. The findings indicate that incorporating Bharatiya toys and indigenous games can foster meaningful learning, CULTURAL awareness, and active student participation. It also discusses implications for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers in advancing experiential learning through indigenous knowledge systems.*

**Keywords:** Experiential Learning, Play-Based Learning, Bharatiya Toys, Indigenous Games, Indian Knowledge Systems

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is increasingly shifting towards learner-centred pedagogies that focus on experiential and participatory learning. Traditional classroom methods, mainly lectures and rote memorisation, often restrict student engagement and creativity. In response, modern educational reforms stress innovative teaching strategies that encourage active learning and meaningful experiences. The NEP 2020 in India strongly supports experiential and play-based Early childhood and foundational education emphasise the importance of learning through exploration, play, and real-life activities. Play-based learning enhances not only cognitive skills but also emotional, social, and physical development. India's cultural history features a rich collection of toys and games that have supported childhood growth. Traditional Bharatiya toys, crafted from clay, wood, cloth, and natural materials, served as both entertainment and educational tools. Indigenous games like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Gilli-Danda, Pachisi, and traditional board games helped children develop strategic thinking, coordination, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. However, modernisation and digital dependence have led to the decline of many of these traditional toys and games in educational settings. Revitalising these culturally significant resources can bridge traditional knowledge with modern education. Integrating Bharatiya toys and indigenous games with NEP 2020 can enrich experiential learning and promote cultural awareness and national pride. Including these resources can make learning more engaging and meaningful. This study explores how Bharatiya toys and indigenous games support experiential and play-based learning in schools and their relevance to the implementation of NEP 2020.



### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the role of Bharatiya toys in promoting experiential and play-based learning.
- To explore the educational value of indigenous games in classroom teaching.
- To analyse the relevance of Bharatiya toys and indigenous games in the implementation of NEP 2020.
- To suggest strategies for integrating indigenous toys and games into teaching–learning practices.

### II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Play-based learning is widely acknowledged as an effective method in early childhood and school education. Research indicates that children acquire knowledge more effectively through hands-on activities and interactive experiences. Educational philosophers and psychologists emphasise the importance of play in learning, with studies showing it nurtures creativity, imagination, and problem-solving skills. Experiential learning enables students to explore concepts directly using materials and activities. Studies on indigenous games reveal that they develop cognitive and physical abilities, often involving strategy, cooperation, and decision-making, thereby supporting social and emotional growth. Recent reforms in India, such as NEP 2020, focus on integrating Indian cultural heritage into education by incorporating traditional arts, crafts, and practices. Bharatiya toys and indigenous games serve to connect traditional knowledge with modern learning. Research on experiential learning confirms that activity-based methods increase engagement and improve knowledge retention. Incorporating indigenous games and traditional toys into classrooms provides meaningful, culturally relevant learning experiences.

### CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR EXPERIENTIAL PLAY-BASED LEARNING

Below is a **simple conceptual framework** showing how Bharatiya toys and indigenous games support experiential learning in classrooms.



**Explanation of the Model:** Bharatiya toys and indigenous games act as learning resources rooted in Indian culture. These resources create **play-based learning activities** in the classroom. Students engage in **hands-on experience, interaction, and reflection**. This process leads to **experiential learning**. Experiential learning promotes **cognitive, social, and physical development**. Ultimately, this contributes to **holistic development**, which aligns with the educational goals of **NEP 2020**.



### THEMATIC DISCUSSION

- Bharatiya Toys as Learning Resources:** Traditional Bharatiya toys are deeply connected with Indian culture, craftsmanship, and community life. These toys are often made from eco-friendly materials such as wood, clay, bamboo, and cloth. They reflect local traditions, stories, and cultural values. Educationally, such toys can be used to teach concepts related to mathematics, science, language, and social studies. For example:
  - **Wooden puzzles** help develop logical thinking and spatial understanding.
  - **Clay toys** encourage creativity and artistic expression.
  - **Traditional dolls and figurines** help children learn about culture, traditions, and storytelling. Using such toys in classrooms can make learning interactive and enjoyable while also promoting environmental awareness and appreciation for indigenous craftsmanship.
- Indigenous Games and Experiential Learning:** Indigenous games have long been crucial to children's physical and social growth. Traditional games like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Lagori, Gilli-Danda, and Pachisi promote strategic thinking, teamwork, and coordination. Educationally, these games foster experiential learning through active participation and observation. They help cultivate vital life skills including cooperation, leadership, decision-making, and resilience. Moreover, indigenous games enhance social interaction and community involvement, contributing to a well-rounded education.
- Alignment with NEP 2020:** NEP 2020 emphasises key educational principles aligned with experiential and play-based learning. It advocates for activity-driven, discovery-oriented education and integrates cultural heritage into the curriculum. Using Bharatiya toys and indigenous games supports these aims by providing hands-on experiences and connecting learning to local cultural contexts. These approaches also promote holistic development, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth. Integrating traditional toys and games into classroom instruction can enhance the effective implementation of NEP 2020.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM DESIGNERS

Incorporating Bharatiya toys and indigenous games into classroom lessons demands careful planning and support from educators and curriculum designers. Teachers can enhance engagement by including traditional games and toys in activities; for instance, using board games to teach mathematical concepts or traditional dolls and figurines for storytelling. Teacher training programs should also focus on experiential learning methods and culturally relevant resources, helping educators see how indigenous knowledge can enrich their teaching. Curriculum developers should create learning materials and activity guides that seamlessly integrate traditional games and toys into educational practices.

### FINDINGS

1. Bharatiya toys can serve as effective tools for experiential learning in classrooms.
2. Indigenous games promote cognitive, social, and physical development among students.
3. Integrating traditional toys and games makes learning more engaging and interactive.
4. The use of indigenous learning resources supports the cultural and educational objectives of NEP 2020.
5. Experiential and play-based learning approaches contribute to holistic development.

### II. CONCLUSION

This study emphasises the educational value of Bharatiya toys and traditional games in fostering experiential and play-based learning. These culturally significant resources provide rich opportunities to develop engaging and meaningful classroom experiences. Including these toys and games in teaching can boost students' creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, this approach aligns with NEP 2020's focus on experiential learning and integrating Indian cultural heritage into education. By reintroducing and using Bharatiya toys and indigenous games,



educators can build a more comprehensive and culturally meaningful learning environment that benefits both students and the wider community.

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