
Indian Youths' Sports Choices Today and Some Historic Notions Why

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From fifty-seven different recreational activities in which 183 Southwest Indian youths choose to participate, those of the highest frequency are sports. In descending order of frequency, the activities in which the youths in the five tribes participate are: basketball, softball, baseball, football, and volleyball and dancing (tie).

Numerous factors may have led to this apparently overwhelming acculturation to team sports participation. The general support and functions of games in North American Indian culture remains relatively similar today to those in earlier periods. Team sports participation by Indian youth appears as evidence of acculturation, but in fact are vehicles which continue to carry Indian values. Sports are the overwhelming favorite activity, followed by amusements, crafts, and games. Recreational activities chosen by females are more diverse in kind and amount than those chosen by males. Game attraction factors (participation, spectatorship, tactics) indicate that it is important to participate on a winning team, to watch teamwork and cooperation more than highly skilled individual effort as a spectator, and to play fair. Finally, there are significant differences between females and males in perceptions of the importance of game participation.