



# INDEGENIOUS FOLK GAME CHENNEMANE AND ITS SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was to know the nature, scope, historical development, structure, cultural values and contribution of chennemane in Dakshina Kannada District. The study was also conducted by administering questionnaire and interview containing the area of knowledge, interest, performance and experience of life regarding chennemane. Two hundred fifty people, fifty each from five Taluks of Dakshina Kannada District were approached to gather opinions. The interview method was also used to collect the experience of the field experts in folklore. The analyses were carried out separately for analyse chennemane in details like origin, development, playing types, socio cultural values and the contribution of chennemane are given.

## Introduction

Chenne is the popular Indoor game of Tuluvas. The game gives valuable information's about the cultural and social life of the traditional people. It is not only limited to the Tulunadu. But it also played in foreign countries, like Africa, Philippines and in Asian region it is very popular. In India several states Chennemane Ata is played.

Board games found in Ancient Sumeria, in royal tombs at Ur (2500 BC), Mesopotamia made during this period seem to be some sort of race game, trade games, (2011).

Chenne is the popular Indoor game of Tuluvas. The game gives valuable information's about the cultural and social life of the traditional people. It is not only limited to the Tulunadu. But it also played in foreign countries, like Africa, Philippines and in Asian region it is very popular. In India, several states, Chennemane Ata is played and in Tamilnadu it is very closely related with culture and life of the people, Ekkaru, (1986).

As per the opinion of Claus (1987) the antiquity and distribution of the Mangala group of games and their similarity to the ancient Tulu game chenne, clearly suggests that the game concept originally evolved in Africa –Mediterranean region was brought to Tulunadu by early Tulu immigrants, Claus, (1987). In Tamilnadu it is very closely related with culture and life of the people, Ekkaru, (1986).

Recreation is the main aspect of human life. Folk people work like anything and in free time they playing chennemaneata. It contributes a lot to the folk people to reduce mental stress, physical hazard, and prepare them for the next day agricultural activities, Gowda, (2001).

## Methodology

Tools and techniques are very essential to facilitate the research work. The tools used in the study were pen, paper sheet for writing, drawing the figure.

The techniques used in the present study were observation, questionnaire, interview to analyse the technique and get clear mental picture of the game.

Interview method is used for collecting detailed information about the

game. To obtain detailed and complete data, interview schedules were framed. The interview was taken with the resource persons. The required data was obtained from the resource persons through personal interview with the help of an interview schedule, which contained both precoded and open-ended questions.

The scholar used Cluster sampling method to collect the information from the five Taluks of the Tulunadu, namely Sullia, Puttur, Belthangadi, Bantwal and Mangalore. The scholar has collected fifty samples from each Taluks

## Meaning of Chennemane

The siripardana mention about the chenne and gives the word meaning of chenne. As per this the word chenne is derived from the Pali word that means to 'relish', but the game and the cult evidently has been imported by the Tulu immigrants. Folklorist Peter cloves concluded that many of the elements found in Tulunadu were imported along with the game as sort of historical baggage. The earliest representation of the game as Egypt would suggest that the game originated in the Middle East and traveled along trade routes even before Christ, (www.mangalorea :2009).

The word chenne is a peculiar word in Tulu language. It is not used in daily routine. But the word is associated with the names of the folk people as chenna, chenni, china, chennu, chennamma, chennappa, chinnappa etc. In Kannada the word chenne- means beautiful and attraction, 'Claus,' (1987).

As the clause opinion the word chenne is originated from the Dravidian cult and means beautiful. In Tulu chennemane-ata is called as 'chennedagobbu'. Mane is a wooden instrument which is used to sit while having food. The shape of the mane is one and the same. So it is called as chennemane.

However this ancient game is not unique or original to Tulunadu. It is played widely in parts of the world and there are some two hundred or more versions with as many names in the game. The original name of the game is Manqala (Mancala).

## Origin and development

Mangala game have been considered to have originated somewhere in central Africa 5000 B.C, according to the evidence gathered by National Geographic sponsored archaeological diggings. The word Mangala is derived from the Arabian root 'naqala' that means to move. A variant of the game played in Turkey is known as 'Mangala' for the sake of curiosity, it is also called Kalah in parts of Africa. It means that it has shades of resemblance to the Tulu word Kala (field).

The game is for two players. They are played on a board with fourteen pits, which are scooped out of the ground. The playing pieces could be stones, seeds or shells in rare cases precious stones, germ or pearls. The Vijayanagara Empire gives evidences about chenne mane. In Anebondi village, children often play without a board, but instead they create their own playing area by scooping out holes in the ground and collecting stones or seeds (whatever in close at hand), Each time they want play near the Tungabhadra river, the game is played with smooth pebbles and in agricultural area, with seeds. Commonly used seeds are tamarind, kemiri and even corn kernels.

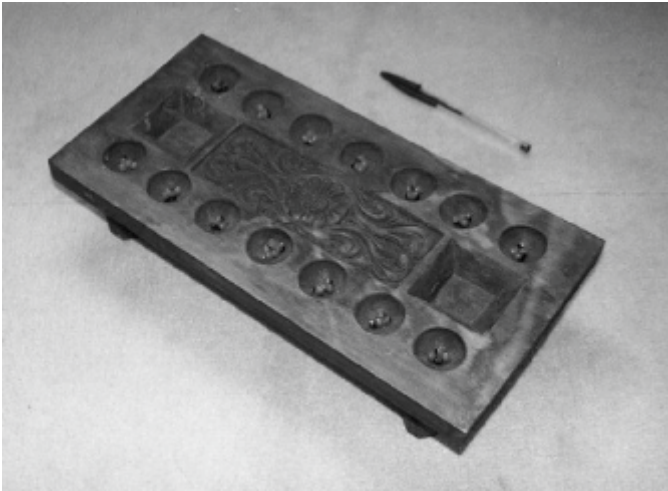
Based on other version of the game there is a preliminary distribution of counters (beans, nuts, seeds, stones etc) in the boards, depressions. Players move alternatively in a series of laps. A lap involves each player in turn selecting of all the counter sign a depression and lifting there and placing counts in each depression in a prescribed direction and manner. What happens there is dependent upon the version of the same being played.

### Materials used

The chennemane game is played with materials which are naturally available in the society. The required materials are manjottikai (seeds) and a mane (wooden board).

**Manjottikai (seeds):** The game is played using large seeds of local trees like that of ponge (pongar) or coral tree or 'manjotti Kai'. It is popular called 'chennedakai' or 'Bithu' in local language. Naturally the game used the manjottikai which is available in plenty. Fifty six seeds are needed to play the game.

**Mane (Board):** 'Mane' the Tulu word used to represent the wooden board is in rectangular shape. The Tuluvas used this 'mane' for sitting purpose while having food. The design of the board (mane) varies from place to place. There is no uniform measurement for the instrument (mane).



The board has fourteen curved holes spread equally to either side. And at either end of the board there is a curved hole little bigger than earlier holes. The carpenter designs different types chennemanes is Tulunadu. And in some board they design the cobras figure, because the game related to the Nagabramha (deity of Tuluvas).

### Analytical study

Chennemane is a traditional game of the coastal District (Tulunadu). It is played throughout the District in different types (methods). As per the opinion of the Ekkaru, (2000) There are twenty seven types of chennemane game exist and 'Claus' (1987) mentioned about eight types of chennemane. The following types of chennemane Ata or gobbu is observed in the land, Chenneyata, Joduperga, Arasata-I, Kodillkatta, Buleperga, Arasata-II, Mantriyata, Ajjinakar, Katari, Mata, Ekkadi, Seethayata or Sooleyata, Kompalachenne, Anchil-Bachil, ArateMukve and ErateKatte.

**Chenneata:** This method is the very popular in rural Tulunadu and played by all people. The game is played between two individuals. They sit either side of the board, facing each other. One of the players picks up the seeds of the hole (box) of his side and start to drop one each in clockwise Ekkaru (2000). After that he picks-up next hole seeds and drops it in each hole. But in some area it is distributed in anti clockwise. So the process continues in the game. In the process of dropping, suppose he gets empty box after dropping the last seed of his hand, the player has to stop the game. And it is popularly called in Tulu is 'Jeppe' (sleeping) Ekkaru, (2000).

The second player starts the game by picking-up any hole (box) seeds except the jeppe (the last seed dropped hole (box) of first player). In a sequence of the distribution sometimes the box (hole) has three

seeds; it is called in local language as 'Murthe Kai'. Anybody got chance to drop seed to murtekaihole, it is the bonus seeds for him to pick up. The process is called in Tulu as 'vanas' (food) or 'BuleApina' (BeleBeleyuvundu). So the process continued up to end. After the completion of the first round match the players count the seeds.

In the second round the players fill holes (boxes) with their own seeds four each. If the holes become empty it is called as pothu (burned or fire). In the same manner game continues. Suppose, out of the seven holes (boxes) if four boxes became pothu (burns) the player is defeated. The defeated player is called as 'Gattamitharuni' (migration or leaving the area).

**Buleperga (Perga):** Bulepergoata and chenneata is same in some aspects. But it little bit varies in method of playing. In this, two players play in the fourteen boxes (holes) by sitting facing each other. It is also played in clockwise or anticlockwise manner and player starts from any holes (boxes). Here also one can reap the 'Murthe Kai' by dropping the seed.

**JoduPerga:** The jodupergaata's rules and regulations are (equal) same to bulepergaata. But the special aspect of the game, is while getting perga (bonus seeds), the opposite side hole's (box) seeds also get. It is popularly called as 'Joduperga' (Double bonus).

The game has continued as perga, here the opposite box seeds getting is a bonus. It has only changed technique and tactics of the game.

**Arasata-1:** Arasata is one of the important types of game in chennemane. It shows the political view of the society. The game is played by three members (Arasu, (King), Chief Minister (Manthri) paik (soldier) as per the opinion of the people of the Tulunadu Claus (1978). The mane (board) divided in three members middle six holes (boxes) seeds played by the king. The four holes (boxes) are to Manthri and other side four boxes to the Soldier. In this type of game the king has three (chances) attempts. But it is depends upon the method he selects (any number of attempt out of three attempts). The manthri has two attempts and soldier has one attempt.

King has to start the game first by lifting (pick-up) his own box (hole) seeds. After completion of every attempt of king, both players (mantri and soldiers) have to give one seed to king as 'bule' (rent). It is only for three attempts. King continues the game up to last six seeds in his box. Then the Mantri plays for two attempts, followed by soldier for his single attempt. He plays up to last two seeds. So the process continues same as 'Buleperga'. In the game the king has three boxes, mantri's two and soldier's one box become empty means he lost the game. The defeated player will be punished. He has to keep board on his head in prone position and go for walk. But in case of mantri and soldier it is Gatta-mitharuni (migration). King in every round at least three boxes should fill with four seeds. The 'Bule' of the particular player's box should not be taken (lift) by the other player but the player can play the game by using the seeds.

**Arasata-2:** Arasata-2 also is played by three players' king and two Mantris left and right. King plays middle six boxes (holes) seeds and Mantris plays four box seeds of either side. First three round games is to king, fourth and fifth games are to right hand and left hand Mantris respectively. Then once again sixth round match has to be played by the king.

King may start the game be clockwise or anticlockwise. The first 'bule' of the first game is to king, then at the end of the third round game of king the both Mantris have to give four seeds each to king as 'Ellankil' (gift). In the same forth game king and left hand Mantri, have to give 'Ellankil' to the right hand Mantri. And fifth game king and right hand Mantri have to give 'Ellankil' to left hand Manthri. But the player plays very carefully and avoids 'bule' to the other players.

The game has more facilities to the king. By these facilities the king should not make his box (hole) empty. If so means he has 'lose the teeth' or defeated.

**Manthriyata:** Manthriyata is the special game of the chenneyata. It is played by four members, in a board, Manthri (minister) pradanaManthri (Prime Minister), Soldier (Paiku) and Arasu (King). This game is a little different from the Arasata. Here Manthripradani and paiku have more facilities than the king. But out of fourteen boxes (holes) only two boxes have been played by the king then twelve boxes are shared by other three members equally.

The process involved in this. A game is same as Arasata. In the game situation, manthripradani and paiku give 'geni' (rent) to king and the king has more round game than the others. But he has only two boxes. It is very difficult for him to win the match, for that he has to concentrate more on the game.

This method of game requires a lot of concentration and intelligence. Manthriyata gives more importance to the other three members than the king. So they get more opportunities to win the match. That is why it is called as 'Manthriyata'.

**Mata:** The game process is same as Arasata. Here also two members play this game. The middle six boxes (three each side) are Mata's property, On one side four boxes are to one player and other side four boxes are to the other players. The game is continued as Arasata.

While playing the Mata is getting controlled by one player. Afterwards the other player should not touch that property. Then the player who collected seeds should keep in the name of Mata. Before that they keep it in outside box.

**Kathari Ata:** The boxes are recognized as Kathari. As per the Kattchenne four side boxes are called as 'Katta'. Other things remain same as Kattayata.

The game starts with first box. Here also the players have to re-arrange the boxes in original manner. Then the game ends and player will win the match.

**Seetheyata or Sooleyata:** Seetheyata is played between (two) the players. It is played in two methods. The first method is played with ten seeds. Out of seven boxes, three boxes are empty one box has two seeds and three boxes have one each seed.

The game should start from the first box. When the game progresses, the player has to rearrange the seeds in the original (as the beginning position) manner. If he succeeds, he becomes the winner.

The second method is very popular. It is played with fifty six (56) seeds. The boxes are (holes) filled with seven, six, five, four, three, two and one seeds. Seventh and fourteenth boxes should have one seed.

**Opinion of the people towards folk games**

Public opinion about folk games was obtained to know the people's attitude on folk games and their sports, cultural aspects and their interest towards folk games. The data had been analysed in the following section. The query was asked to the public regarding playing of folk games in their childhood and the opinions are presented in table 3.

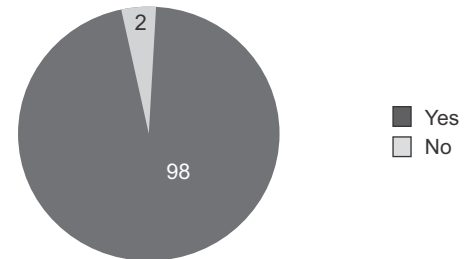
**Table 1: PARTICIPATION IN FOLK GAMES DURING CHILDHOOD**

Sl No	Respons	Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	250	100
2	No	-	-
	Total	250	100

As per the Table-1 all 250 respodants had played folk games in their early age, it proves that every human being in the Tulunadu play folk games in one or the other.The physical acivities of folk people starts from the birth of the individual and continues along with the life of the individual.

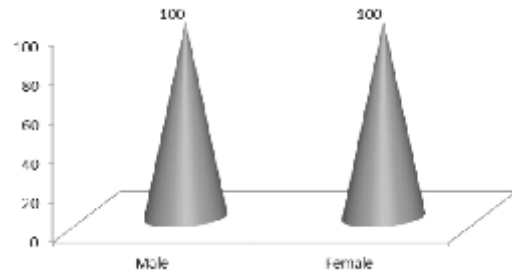
As per the opinion of 250 respodants, all people in Tulunadu involve and participate in folk games with intrest. The importance given by the people to folk games is depicted in graph-1.

**Graph1: Importance of Folk Games**



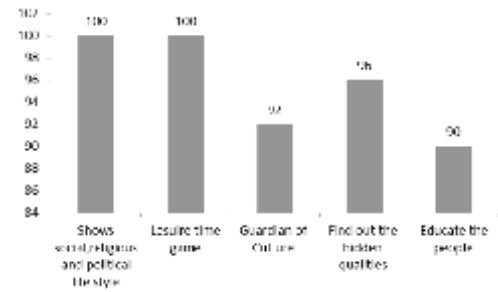
Above Graph states that ninety eight percent of the respodants agreed folk games are very important in society at present and two percent have not supported the above veiw. Folk games are very important aspect of the human life. It is agreed by the folk scholars and the people.

**Graph 2: Sex Wise participation**



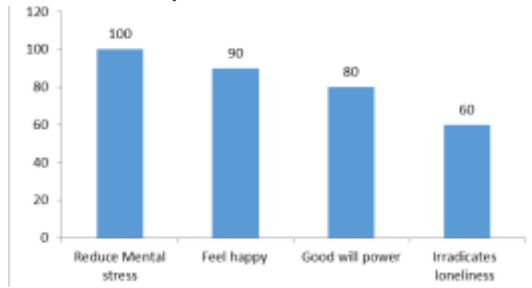
The above graphs shows that out of 250 respodants, 130 of them are male respodants and remaining 120 of them are female respodants. They expressed their opionion with regard to the participation of rural people in folk game. As per their expression, majority of the rural people will involve in one or the other types of folkgames irrespectively.

**Graph-3 shows Benefits from the folk games**



Graph-3 gives the opinion of the folk people towards the various benefits of the folk games.Hundred percent of the respodants agreed that it shows the social, religious, political life and it keep the folk people physically fit.Ninety two percent of them strongly said that they are the guardian of culture.Among the respodant ninety six percent of respodants assumed that folk games find out the hidden qualities and 92 percent have said folk games are to educate the people.

Graph-4 Recreational factor



Graph-4 opines about recreational factor. As per that hundred percent of respodants state that folk games reduce mental stress. By involving in this games one can feel happy in the life is the opinion of the ninety percent respodants. Eighty percent have opined that it will create good will power and sixty percent have assumed that folk games irradicate the lonliness.

**CULTURAL VALUES OF CHENNEMANE**

Chennemanehas rich cultural values in Tulunadu. They are as follows

- 1) Agriculture and chenne
- 2) Religious Celebrations
- 3) Folk Songs and Chenne
- 4) Ceremonial social Relationship
- 5) Beliefs in Chennemane

**Agriculture and Chenne:** Tuluvas have given predominant place to agriculture and allied activities. There number of agricultural beliefs is present in Tulunadu. The materials used in this game are related to the agriculture. Agriculture and allied activities are the necessity of the human being.

The words used in chennemane are all related to the agriculture for example the words 'bule' and 'buleperga' in Bulepergaata, in chenneata 'Murthe Kai' and 'Buleapina'. In Jodupergaata 'Joduperga' and the word 'kone' (Room) and 'Ellu' (house) represent the bhoomi (earth).

Land or Bhoomi is often used in the chenneata. It says that the person of the land (District) depends more on the agriculture activities. So it is the primary resource of the food. In the game situation the Bhoomi is owned and controlled by the king, the citizens of the king have to give rent and tax from time to time for the use of land and other property. If anybody fails to pay is punishable.

**Religious Celebrations:** The folk game through the culture, celebrations, beliefs, and exhibition make the involvement of folk people in it and gave a new shape to their personality in Tulunadu. Folk games are closely related with religious ceremonies.

As per the siri folk song Sonne daughter of siridose not get maturity, for that ChendannaPergade offer pooja and pray the god (Brhamalingeshwara) for the maturity of her daughter. If so means 'I will build a tank in the temple'. Then the Sonne matured and got married after that she gave birth to two female babies Abbakka-Daraka, Ekkaru (1986). But ChendannaPergade did not offer pooja and not built the tank to Brhamalingeshwara.

But one day god came in as a Brahmin and make Abbakka and Daraka to play chenne-ata. In game Daraka defeated her elder sister Abbaka. Daraka begins to make fun of the elder sister. Abbaka got angry and hit her head by the mane (wooden board). Daraka died, the moment Abbaka got frightened and put her body into the well and she also

jumped into the well and died (Gowda 1990). The game chenne is also played by the seethe (Sita) in Ramayana Epic when sita was in 'AshokaVana' she played the game for the time pass purpose. It says that it is not new to mankind. It was played even in olden days also.

**Social Relationship:** For some extent chennemaneata gives social relations in the society. The game was played between sisters (SiriPardhana or folk song) and game fixes some parameter to play the game. Chenneata played between sisters was led to death. Then the game playing between co-sisters brothers and children is strictly prohibited. And the game should not be played between husband and wife.

The skin relatives should live for a long time together. If they play the game means it will cause for the rivalry and divorce. That is why the folk thinkers or players fix the restriction to play the game. So the game protects or helps to maintain good relationship in the society and family.

**Folk Songs and Chenneata:** As per the opinion of the respondents folk games are the guardian of culture and religion. It also controls over the customs and traditions of the people from time to time. The siripardana (folk song) explain about the game. The game played between Abbaka and Daraga, the daughters of Sonne.

At present also the mock play of the chenne is observed by the Abbakka-Daraga role performer in SiriJathreBantwalTaluk. They perform all the situations played by them in mock play.

In the epic game was ended with great tragedy. So that purpose at present the game has fixed some of the restrictions in the method of playing. The Siripardana explain about the restrictions of the chenne. So that folk songs are the nurse of folk culture in the society.

**Belief in Chennemane:** Chenne-ata is not the game of all season. It is played only in one month, which is in the month 'Ati', (July 16-August - 15). Then the board will be washed and kept safely.

Naturally the month has heavy rain and the agriculturists become free after planting the seeds. They do not have any other recreational activities. In Tulunadu many games are played but in different seasons. But the chennemane is only played in a particular season. And it has so many beliefs in the method of playing. They are as follows:

- Played only in manson season or in Ati month (July-16 August-15).
- First day of the Ati it has taken down andtakes back last day of the month.
- Co-sisters and husband and wife should not play this game.
- Same mother's children also should not play.
- Evening after cows get into the cowshed playing of this is prohibited.
- The players do not tell lies.

**CONTRIBUTION OF CHENNEMANE**

The game is played in rainy season or June to September. In this period agriculture family have little free from their work. After planting first (new) crop to the field, they wait for good yield in 3 to 4 months. In this free time they play such a game for the recreational purpose.

On the other hand the season has heavy rain in the Tulunadu. It is very difficult to play and work in the field. So that people effectively use their time to play chennemaneata by using traditional equipments. The following are the contributions of the chennemaneata.

- \* Develops the intelligent quotient
- \* Reflects some of the features of chess

\* To know political, social and religious life

\* Main recreational game

**Develops the intelligent quotient:** Chennemanata played between two (four) members for a long time. The players sit and play the seeds one after another. The players mentally should be very active, because one have to plan which box seeds have to play first and how much `bule` (bonus seeds) will get. The players keep on thinking about the game and to get the bonus seeds. Even the game is simple to drop the seeds it indirectly sharp one`s mind and the memory power of the individual also increases.

**Reflects some of the features of chess:** For the outlook chennemanata and chess have same features. Chennemanata is also oldest game in Tulunadu. But in olden days chess is not a famous game in Tulunadu. But chennemanata was famous and played by all people in Tulunadu.

Some of the similarities have been observed between chess and chennemanata sitting for a long time and playing, playing silently one after another, facing each other, touch and play or move, played between two Hedge, (2000).

The words are using in this games is also same. The words like Arasuata (king) Manthriyata and paiku (soldier) are also have used in the same manner. In addition that the personal bias is strictly prohibited in both games, it is the common rule of the game, Ekkaru, (2000).

**To know the political, social and religious life:** Chennemanata as a main game of the rainy season gives political, social and religious life picture of the Tuluvas. By playing and knowing chennemanata it helps to adopt their ideologies to the players and others.

The political life of the folk people is narrated in some types of the chenneata. The game like Arasuata, Manthriyata and Mata has give about the political life of the period.

In Arasuata king played a dominant role, he has more property than the other players. The other three co-players have to give rent to the king and he controls all other players. It purely shows the political life of the king which was existed at that period.

Manthriyata is quite differing from Arasuata and other types of chenneata. In this type, Manthri, pradhani and paiku have more powerful and have more facilities than the king. But they have to give rent to the king when they got `bule` (bonu seeds). In this game king has to play very carefully because he has only two boxes.

Another type of chennemanata is `Mata`. In this type Mata is control other co-players. The other players have to give some portion of the prererty to the Mata time to time (Ekkaru, (2000).

The game Ajjata gives more importance to the grandmother. Through the game situation teach lesson to the people to respect the elders of the family (Ekkar-2000).

In addition that the game is strictly prohibited to play between co sisters, husband and wife and children of the same mothers. It is very good idea of folk people to protect the good relationship for life long.

The religious celebrations are also observed in chenneata. The 'siri' pardana and 'Bale jevuManiga' Pardana gives religious awareness to the folk people. So the social values are highly observed in Cheneata, Ekkaru, (2000).

**Main recreational game:** The rainy season it is very difficult to go outside the home. At the season recreational purpose folk people playing chennemanata. In the rainy season (June to September) all most all people playing this game in Tulunadu. For the outlook it is played for recreational purpose. But indirectly it contributes a lot to the individual. It gives happiness; improve memory power and planning ability.

Recreation is the main aspect of human life. Folk people work like anything and in free time they playing chennemanata. It contributes a lot to the folk people to reduce mental stress, physical hazard, and prepare them for the next day agricultural activities, Gowda, (2001).

#### FINDINGS

**Chenne Ata:** Chenne Ata shows that the political supremacy of the ruling party which was existed in society. The rent system for using of the property of the King or landlords shows political, social and economic imbalance of power in the society. Chennemanata is trying to remember the past grand ceremonies, customs and traditions of the society.

The game restricts to play between some husband wife, co-sisters etc, it helps to protect the social relationship for a long time in the society. It contributes to the sports and games through reflecting the same characteristics of the world famous chess. So the game motivates the folk people to participate more number in the modern sports and games.

Finally it conclude that chennemanata is a peculiar game of Tulunadu , it gives gist of folk people`s life experience.

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