THE TRADITIONAL GAMES OF THE AKAMBA OF KENYA

KITHUKA RAPHAEL MUNYAO

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university or for any other award.

Signed ---------------------------------   Date ----------------------------

Kithuka Raphael Munyao

I56/13057/05

We confirm that the work presented in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

Signed -------------------------------   Date --------------------------

Dr. Mwangi Peter Wanderi

Department of Physical and Health Education

Kenyatta University

Signed -------------------------------   Date ----------------------------

Dr. Andanje Mwisukha

Department of Recreation Management and Exercise Science

Kenyatta University

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my brothers led by Onesmus Kithuka who struggled to provide me with the best educational opportunities amidst difficulties. Their foresight and investment in my education have made me reach this far. At the same time, special dedication is made to my wife, Naomi Munyiva Munyao, and children Brenda Mumbua Munyao and Sally Mumo Munyao. I am always grateful to them for their sacrifice.

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ACRONYMNS

IOC   - International Olympic Committee

MINEPS   - Ministers and Senior Officials in Charge of Physical Education and

                 Sports

PE   - Physical Education

S. A.   - South Africa

TAFISA   - Trim and Fitness –International Sports for All Association

UN   - United Nations

UNESCO   - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

Traditional games have been recognized as a significant part of nations' cultural heritage. Today, in circumstances of global integration, people's future mostly depends on preservation of their cultural variety. Most of the traditional games and sports, expressions of indigenous cultures and ways of life contributing to the common identity of humanity are under the threat of waning. Additionally, those that are surviving are threatened by imminent disappearance and extinction under the combined effect of globalization and harmonization of the rich diversity of world sport heritage. Prior to this study, research on traditional games within Eastern Kenya, particularly of the Akamba, as it is with many parts of the world, had to a great extent been ad hoc, and influenced by theoretical traditions and practices. It is this trepidation and, informed by global research trends, that this research was undertaken to identify, describe and document the traditional games of the Akamba on the basis of the rules that governed them, facilities and equipment used, their significance to the individuals and the community as well as the socio-cultural settings within which they were performed. Twenty three (23) traditional games were identified through qualitative design tool of interviews. Respondents of seventy (70) years and above were purposively identified and interviewed. They were sampled through the non-probability, purposive, sequential sampling method. All the information collected was examined, compared and classified in accordance with specific standards advocated by Clarke and Clarke (1984). For comparison and analyses purposes, these games were classified using Cheska's (1987) scheme with three games falling under games of physical challenge; fourteen games under games of physical skill and strategy; one game under group interaction; one game under rhythm and singing games; one game under games of imagination; one game under mental games category and two games under games of environmental context. Games were performed within the community's family homesteads with the peers and significant others playing a major role in teaching them. Games were crucial in instilling desired skills, attitudes and values, improving fitness and health, fostering social cohesion, as sources of fun, recreation and relaxation, maintenance of ethnic and group identity as well as the medium through which the community values, traditions and culture were reinforced and preserved. Arising from these findings, it is recommended that all possible efforts need to be made to document, revive and popularize these games through the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology, Ministry of Gender and Sports as well as universities and research organizations. Measures should be taken that involve education, incorporating them in texts and academic curriculum, popularizing them through modern technological advancements as well as creating forums for mass participation. Improving health through these games would significantly reduce health-care cost and increase production as well as giving people an opportunity to practice their cultural activities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is widely believed and acknowledged that culture defines and lays foundation for any given society (Oke, 1984). Man is a product of culture as societies have used different cultural elements to address different problems for their survival. According to Schein (1985), culture is the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group's problems of survival on its external environment and problems of internal integration. Schein further points out that, these basic assumptions and beliefs are not to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably hence considered valid and, therefore, have to be taught to new members as the proper way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1985). These learned products of group experience are therefore to be found only where there is a definable group with significant history.

Culture as a set of practices and behavior which a person acquires through the process of socialization is different in different groups depending on class, caste, ethnicity and gender (Hofstede, 1984). Individuals in these different social and cultural settings acquire different values while being socialized. Therefore, in order to understand how and why some individuals in certain environments behave in particular ways, it is important to understand in which social and cultural settings they were raised and socialized. The socialization towards such identity is facilitated by purposively designed peculiar elements of culture such as customs, games, dance and music (Adamson, 1987).

No community or race has ever existed without distinctive cultural elements peculiar to it. Coombs (1985) asserts that the culture of any society, in a broad anthropological sense, includes the features that account for its distinctive identity, cohesiveness and continuity. Societies have thus been identified through their cultural expressions. Consequently, every society has made efforts to preserve its cultural heritage by not only keeping it alive but by transmitting it from one generation to the next. However, Bude (1985) highlights the societies' claim over the years about aspects of their culture having been either lost or mutilated and distorted, and their survival in that respect put in jeopardy.

Owing to the very indispensable significance of culture, the nineties were declared the Decade of Culture by UNESCO (UNESCO, 1983). Unfortunately, the key dilemma as Bude (1985) puts it, has been defining and explaining what culture entails as it is seen by many to contain unknown qualities. Bude (1985) therefore suggests breaking culture into its different elements for clarity, hence the proposed study. Among the key cultural elements as pointed out by Bude (1985) include games, dance, folk music, arts and crafts, folktales, languages, customs and social etiquette. These elements were truly African in origin and were found abundantly among the tribal communities of East Africa and elsewhere in Africa before the arrival of the European colonial system in Kenya (Ndeti, 1972; Achebe, 1977; Cheska, 1987; Kenyatta, 1992 and Wanderi, 2001). However, all these authors concur on the perception created on African cultural elements. Upon the advent of Europeans, coupled with subsequent imposition of their Western culture, Africans were indoctrinated into disregarding their own traditional values which they started perceiving as sinful and un-Godly.

The African cultural elements were thus deceptively portrayed and perceived as archaic while the Western ones were regarded as superior and modern.

According to Adamson (1967), Kenyatta (1992) and Wanderi (2001), one traditional cultural element that was common all over Africa was in the form of games which were intricately embedded in the communities' culture and were part and parcel of everyone's way of life. This is indicative of the fact that games were key and played a pivotal social-cultural role in the society. They were engaged in across all active age groups because of their value which is an aspect this study has established. However, Wanderi (2001) laments on the possible danger of these traditional games getting lost since they are not practiced any more. He thus goes on to direct that, deliberate efforts should be made to research on, write and preserve them as vital elements of African culture.

This is in line with the UNESCO's initiative to protect and promote traditional games to further community spirit, bring people together and install a sense of pride in a society's cultural roots (UNESCO, 2006). Since 1990's, UNESCO has been implementing a pilot project to set up training camps on traditional wrestling sports for the youth of 22 African countries. This is a follow up strategy after the declaration at Punta del Este Uruguay, in 1999 where the international community proposed that a significant action from UNESCO could be initiated within the framework for the promotion and preservation of traditional games and sports. They emphasized on the preservation and the appraisal of traditional and indigenous sports from different regional and national cultural heritages, including the establishment of a World Heritage List of Traditional Games and Sports (UNESCO, 2006). In this regard, two

important proposals were made during the Third International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials in Charge of Physical Education and Sports (MINEPS III). One of them was the publication of a world heritage list of traditional games and sports and the other one was the implementation of an incentive framework for the promotion and the preservation of these sports that should lead to the establishment of an "International Platform" for traditional games and sports. This was prompted by the realization that most of the traditional games and sports, expressions of indigenous cultures and ways of life contributing to the common identity of humanity, have already disappeared and those that are surviving are threatened by imminent disappearance and extinction under the combined effect of globalization and harmonization of the rich diversity of world sport heritage. Towards this end this study has been complimental and analogous.

Key scholars in the area of traditional games have alluded that research on other elements of culture such as arts and crafts, folktales, language, customs and social etiquette have been done and put on records for reference while very little is known about games in many regions (Wanderi, 2001; Pratibha, 2008). For instance, at the Kitui Cultural Museum there are no records on Traditional games. This fact might have been necessitated by the presence of alternative mainstream modern games which have taken dominance. Research and records related to traditional games of Akamba have tended to merge the traditional games with other elements of culture such as rites of passage but have not presented them as an entity on their own (Munene, 1975). There is therefore an urgent need to draw a line between these different cultural elements and give prominence to traditional games as an important aspect of humanity that has guaranteed survival to the community over the years.

The Akamba community occupies a vast region of Eastern Kenya which is administratively placed under Eastern Province of Kenya. According to their traditions, the original Akamba group from Mbooni hills migrated towards the north and settled on a mountain known as Kiima Kimwe, and along the Iveti hills. All these hills encircle the present town of Machakos. They later on spread to other areas of Kangundo, Yatta and Kitui. All the land which these people occupied came to be known as Ukambani (Nzioki, 1982). Ukambani is one of the four of the thirteen regions which form Eastern province. The region borders Nairobi province and Thika districts to the Northwest, Tana River district to the East, Kajiado district to the west, Taita Taveta to the south, Maragwa district to the north and Mbeere and Tharaka districts to the north east as shown on appendix A. Documentary evidence has it that, besides singing and dancing, which were normal pastime for both adults and children of the Akamba community, there were games and other recreational activities such as *Kutindiluka, kwikya ilungusu and kuatha malyungusu* (Maundu & Were,1986). This finding was captured by a way of oral literature among other cultural elements with no much details about these games. Hence this study aimed at determining, describing and documenting on the traditional games of the Akamba for the aforementioned reasons.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research was prompted by lack of documentation and recognition of traditional games that were part and parcel of the African rich culture (Achebe, 1977; Cheska, 1987; Kenyatta, 1992). Wanderi, (2001) points out that, these games have significantly been relegated, receded and almost lost ever since the colonial incursion. This has been because of the fact that there are no written records of the same for

cultural and educational references. This research therefore investigated the traditional games of the Akamba that were engaged in by indigenous people, whose history dates back to the time before the introduction of Western games by the British colonialists. The activities in focus are the ones that were participated in all the way up to the 1960s or even later before adoption of formal western games and sports. Consequently, this study was motivated by the dire need to trace and document these games so as to preserve them on written records as well as making their contribution to the modern society a practical possibility. The study focused on the Akamba community because it is one of the communities whose traditional games had not been researched on and documented and thus the study aimed at filling up this gap.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to document and examine the traditional games of the Akamba of Kenya. The study also did an exploration of their socio-cultural significance, value and possible contribution to the society through the education system and their use in addressing the contemporary social problems.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine and document all the different forms of traditional games of the Akamba of Kenya. In particular, and in line with the conceptual framework, the specific study objectives were to:

a) Find out the traditional games of the Akamba giving details on how they were performed, the equipment and facilities used.

b) Establish the socio-cultural setting within which they were undertaken.

c) Determine the significance of these games to the participants and the community.

d) Determine their relationship to Cheska's (1987) classification of traditional games.

1.5 Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following questions as guided by the conceptual framework.

a) What were the various forms of traditional games that existed among the Akamba and how were they performed?

b) Who were the participants in the traditional games of the Akamba?

c) What kinds of equipment and facilities were used in traditional games of the Akamba?

d) What was the socio-cultural setting within which the Akamba traditional games were undertaken?

e) What was the significance of each of the traditional game to the participants and the community?

f) How do traditional games of the Akamba fit within Cheska's 1987 classification of traditional games?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study provides information on traditional games that will form part of the rich historical heritage and regional resource for reference. This will also form the basis upon which these games could permeate into the masses outside the institutionalized setting. Further, the study has provided information on traditional games as well as anthropological literature that may be used by curriculum planners, teachers and

scholars to broaden the foundations of education. For instance, if its findings are adopted, this may go a long way towards facilitating achievement of a key goal of Education, namely promoting respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied culture (Ministry of Education, 2004). It is regrettable that, the content designed to guide teachers towards realization of this objective in both the Primary Education Syllabus and the Secondary Education Syllabus completely omits traditional games (Ministry of Education, 2002). Moreover, in the Teacher Education Syllabus only ajua and traditional wrestling have featured which are not exhaustively presented (Ministry of Education, 2004). This glaring gap might have been caused by lack of documented traditional games for reference.

Finally, the findings of the study will also be useful to educational policy makers when drawing policies related to culture that will embrace traditional games as part of Kenyan rich and diverse heritage. At the same time, it is hoped that, this study shall trigger an intellectual desire and an inspiration among other researchers to venture into other Kenyan ethnic communities' traditional games before they are fully pushed into oblivion.

1.7 Delimitations

The study was restricted to the traditional games of the Akamba of Kenya. It was delimited to the use of interviews and documentary analyses as tools of data collection.

1.8 Limitations

The study was limited by the fact that, the researcher did not have access to some games being studied and so he relied on verbal presentations by the respondents during the interviews.

1.9 Assumption

The study was based on the assumption that, all the sampled respondents were able to remember all the games they played.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded on the fundamental principle of the role of traditional games in socialization. Socialization is the way humans adjust to their culture, the process through which we become participating members of society (Honeybourne, Hill and Moors, 2004). During socialization, members of a society acquire personalities and decide on the roles they will take on in later life. Games thus are an important vehicle for transmitting the values of the wider society and are used at schools to develop a range of social skills such as cooperation and communication as well as the practical aspects of fitness and motor skills. They allow individuals to express themselves and to experiment with different roles and activities (Pufaa, 1999).

Social psychologists studied the role of play in the socialization process and applied the psychological dynamics to educational practices (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1979). Within this paradigm, Piaget and Chateau followed a developmental rationale based on the cognitive interaction with the environment through the process of assimilation and accommodation as the child develops copying mechanisms from play to real life

behavior (Cohen, 1993; Callois, 2001). Imitating and 'role taking' from significant others develop into the internalization of the generalized others who are represented by the team within the game or competition where it serves the role of preparing the players for life in the society (Calhoun, 1987). Within this framework, educationists utilized the teaching of games and analysis of game behaviour for educational purposes in order to prepare children to become productive members of a given society and acquire attitudes, knowledge and skills for that role (Cohen, 1993; Pufaa, 1999). Values such as honesty, fairness, sharing, kindness and compassion are often required and negotiated through game rules (Calhoun, 1987; Pufaa, 1999).

In conjunction with that, Ayandele (1987) in his Article to UNESCO entitled; *The Cultural Umbilicus* has exhibited the fact that every culture has a dignity and value and every people have the right and the duty to develop their culture. He further alludes to the fact that every culture influences every other in their rich variety and diversity and all cultures form part the common heritage of mankind. Ayandele's assertion indicates that cultures form a part of the common heritage of mankind so that when we refer to the "African culture", it should be known that it contributes to the common heritage of mankind. In this regard, it is important to understand that Traditional games were a key element that characterized the African culture as with many other communities of the world and any attempt towards their preservation remains a noteworthy endevour. Juxtaposed to this conceptual framework is what was pointed out by Harris (1980), saying that play spirit is essential to cultural and technological development. This is because through play people often experiment with restructuring activities by changing their goals as well as the means by which they may be achieved. This is a common phenomenon throughout the play world.

Indeed, the new game's movement in the 1960s seemed to be an attempt to create play situations in which cooperation replaced competition as the main objective, and winning and losing became meaningless (Cohen, 1993). This capacity to recreate situations without real consequences has also been a rationale for the success of play therapy in children. As noted by Terr (1999), play can be utilized as a means by which individuals can experiment and find a way out of situations in which they appear to be "stuck" because of fears derived from previous trauma. Marano (1999) has also argued that even for psychologically buoyant individuals this experimental quality of play provides individuals with a relief from stress and a means through which they can become reinvigorated, optimistic and creative. Seemingly, such qualities would provide necessary ingredients for becoming more effective in one's work life.

The same message on play is conveyed by Simon (1991) who argues against the idea of talking about play as if it were something that exists and can be understood only in relation to the "non-serious" parts of our lives. Consequently, Simon (1991) asserts that play is itself a fundamental phenomenon of existence, and is as original and basic in itself as death, work and domination. Many observers throughout the ages have acknowledged the universality of play, and its importance to human existence (Calhoun, 1987). Hence, it may be more appropriate to understand and appreciate play, if this is at all possible, not in terms of what it contributes to society in a material sense, but what it contributes to the quality of life. Seemingly, by placing play on a continuum with work we tend to see it as an opposite. Perhaps by juxtaposing it with other life phenomenon such as love or beauty, we would tend to see it in more qualitative rather than in materialistic terms.

Wideman (2001) appears to be in support of such a view in discussing the meaning of inner city playground basketball to the African American community as he equates such "play" with art by asserting that;

> The art in our styles of playing hoop is as eloquent as our styles of playing music. Art is speech in as many forms as we can invent to communicate what we experience, how we feel about being alive. Art's a medium for expressing what's crucial and worthy of being preserved, passed on (p. 230).

Wideman goes on to equate playground hoop as a cultural equivalent of African-American music and dance. Wideman (2001) perceptively points out that, what appears to the unsophisticated eye as play in the form of a game actually has many more levels of meaning to the knowledgeable observer.

Consequently, it appears that the essential property of play reflects an individual's state of mind more than anything else. In all probability, this state is related to the freedom to enter activities which are rule governed, challenging, and intrinsically interesting to participants. Freedom to experiment with means and ends also seems to reflect a playful disposition.

Simon (1991), indicated that play is not a superfluous part of life, but an inherent property, just as is love, beauty, knowledge, and art. In a more recent analysis that attempts to bring the ideal in line with the reality, Roberts (1995) points out that the meaning of play is subject to the culture in which it is instantiated. He argues that because free time is more of a premium in present day society, we wish to maximize every spare minute. Consequently, playing is done to achieve some recognizable results to justify the expenditure of time. The focus is not on the play, but on the benefits play can provide hence, consciously play for them.

In line with the above framework which indicates play to have been part and parcel of the very existence of humanity, figure 1.1 below serves as the key guide depicting key factors that have to be reflected upon if traditional games have to be revived and make impact in the society. These include establishing their usefulness in the society, identifying the threatening factors and establishing the revival mechanisms.
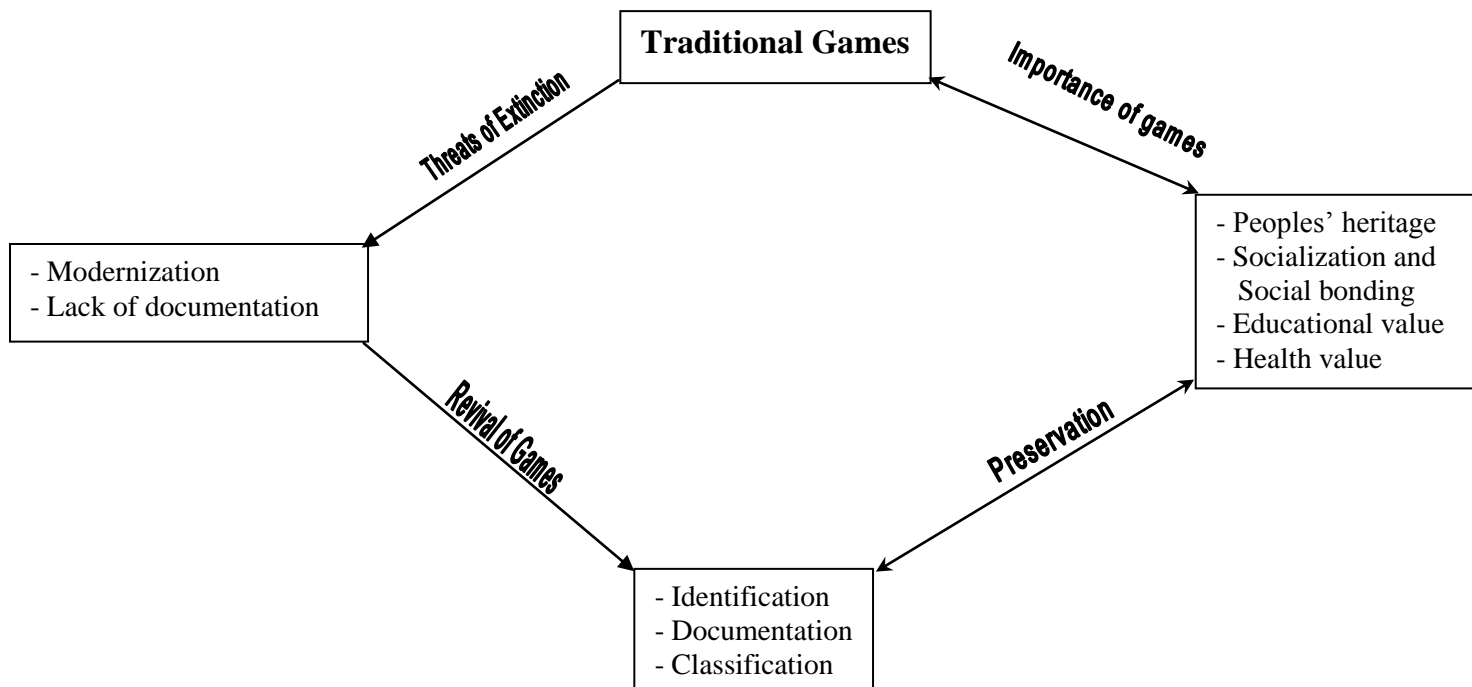
Figure 1.1 Traditional Games: Threats of Extinction, Revival Mechanisms and their Values once preserved (Adapted from Avedon & Sutton-Smith, (1979) and Honeybourne et al, (2004)).

1.11 Operational Definitions of Terms

Akamba: Bantu ethnic group who live in the semi-arid Eastern Province of Kenya stretching South East from Nairobi to Tsavo and North East up to Embu, Kenya. The land they occupy is called *Ukambani*.

Cheska's classification of traditional games: A Scheme of classifying traditional games advanced by Alice Cheska in 1987 comprising of seven different categories of

games. These are games of physical challenge, games involving physical skill and strategy, group interaction, rhythm and singing games, games of imagination, mental games and games of environmental context.

Cultural elements: Unique aspects of Akamba community's way of life, comprising of inherited artifacts, ideas, dances, language, games and so on.

Ethnic communities: Groups of people characterized by a common dialect and cultural tradition.

Games: Activities carried out for enjoyment or competition with particular outcomes governed by rules.

Traditional games: All indigenous recreational physical activities with local and cultural dimensions representing time dimension of being preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next among the Akamba community. They were characterized by organized play that follows a certain structure and flow according to agreed-upon rules that reflect a socio-cultural dimension of reasoning and behaviour as belonging or created locally by the Akamba of Kenya.

Modern games: Sporting activities/games of the present or recent times that are of non-African origin.

Play: Physically exerting activities participated in for amusement.

Sport: Physical activities that an individual does for pleasure or success. Sports may be competitive or not and may involve trained individuals participating at varying levels of skills

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of related literature under the following sub-headings: concepts of culture, play, games, sports and their relationships; classification of traditional games; traditional games and related studies; historical and cultural perspectives of traditional games in Kenya; traditional games within the formal sector and summary.

2.2 Concepts of Culture, Play, Games, Sports and their Relationships

When a group of people behave in a similar manner and the behavior pattern is well established in the society, which could be called culture (Rameshwor, 2005). Culture is therefore, the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization. These assumptions and beliefs are learned responses to a group's problems of survival on its external environment and problems of internal integration. They are not to be taken for granted because they solve those problems repeatedly and reliably. Culture in its sense is a learned product of group experience and is therefore to be found only where there is a definable group with significant history.

Schein (1995) concurs with the same view by declaring that, culture is the hallmark of a people's consciousness and is the pillar upon which a community bases its own political aspirations, economic development and social identity. Schein (1995) concedes culture as a pattern of basic assumption - invented, discovered and developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered

valid. Culture is, therefore, to be taught to new members as the proper way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1995).

According to Hofstede (1984), culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of the people from another. This mental programming starts within the family, continues within the neighborhood, at school, society and the community throughout their life time which contributes to the overall socialization process of the people.

According to the sport philosopher Bill Harper, "Play is voluntary, spontaneous, light and one of the traditional sources of pure pleasure for humans" (Lumpkin, 1990). Bill Harper believes that the motivation for play is purely intrinsic in nature, and that participating in an activity for reasons other than to amuse oneself detracts from its playful nature. Hence, for Harper, playing squash to become more physically fit, learning tennis to gain social acceptance, or running around a track to earn an award are not playful motives. Furthermore, Harper believes that participants must have control over the activity, if it is to maintain its playful nature. Therefore, whenever the participants have less control than the organizers about how they play, who they play, when they play, then it is not really play. From Harper's perspective, it seems, play is fragile and not something that can be easily legislated or regulated. Moreover, as one moves toward the athletic end of the continuum, control of the activity typically shifts from the participants to organizers who may be coaches, administrators and/or owners.

Such an idea has been inferred by others such as Honeybourne (2004) who outlined four characteristics of play as;

i. Play must be freely undertaken. If constrained it is less playful.

ii. Play is non- instrumental. It is an end in itself- you do not play for an outcome.

iii. Play generally has its own set of rules and regulations. It is very informal and any rules will be agreed by the participants and may well change during the activity.

iv. Play activities involve uncertainty. Play is opening ended and has no limits.

As noted by Honeybourne (2003), freedom to chose and control an activity is apparent in what is characterized as play. Furthermore, there is intense intrinsic interest in the activity itself and the useful ends may or may not be an unforeseen by-product of involvement. While a utilitarian motive may have been a prime motivation for engaging in the playful behavior initially, fascination with the task becomes the primary reward for continuing. Here, as in true play, behavior is reinforced by the intrinsic rewards generated by the behavior itself.

One of the most prominent authorities on play as noted by Honeybourne (2003) was Johan Huizinga who published a classic work on the subject entitled *"Homo Ludens"* in 1955. In it play was characterized by being engaged in an activity on a purely voluntary basis, which had time and space properties different than in normal life, a rule structure which after being accepted was absolutely binding, and a unique consciousness typified by feelings of tension, joy, and total involvement. Here, we see

the criterion of voluntary involvement. Hence, according to Huizinga, and consistent with Honeybourne's ideas, an activity itself can only be characterized as play when coercion or participation to gain what Wenz (1985) calls "exchange value" (i.e., fame, fortune, and motivation for self-improvement) is absent. This means that the inspiration for playing is found in the psychological rewards inherent in the activity itself, and not from its "exchange value." Such rewards might include, but are not limited to, such things as fun, excitement, challenge, and the myriad sensations associated with mental and physical exertion. Huizinga also notes that play normally has a rule structure which is freely accepted, but absolutely binding. Acceptance of the rules of the play world typically suspends the rules of normal living for the duration of the activity.

Game on the other hand according to Loy (in Vossen, 2004) is any form of playful competition whose outcome is determined by physical skill, strategy, or chance employed singly or in combination. It is probably true that we could add effort to those factors which might determine outcome in games, since one may often overcome skill or strategy deficiencies by being persistent.

Vossen (2004) further points out that, the critical property of game is rules. These define what may or may not be done to achieve the desired outcome. Rules also give an activity structure by specifying the spatial and temporal constraints under which opponents strive. Game rules are normally separate from those of everyday living. For example, they might restrict our movement patterns, such as in baseball where we must stay within the base path, or in chess, we can only move in accordance with the way pieces are permitted to advance and retreat. Furthermore, unlike in normal living,

when the game ends, or a player quits, the rules no longer limit the individual's behavior. Taken together then, games are artificially created situations, defined by rules which are freely accepted, absolutely binding, and conceived in such a way as to make the attainment of ends deliberately inefficient where luck often determines outcome (Vossen, 2004). Individuals or teams then can strive to achieve a desired outcome by developing and utilizing skills, strategy, and/or endurance to overcome rule dictated limitations to action (Callois, 2001). Competitive games are appealing to many individuals because of the equality of conditions created and enforced throughout a contest to insure that outcome is determined by these factors, rather than by some prior inequality that may have existed in normal everyday living (Suits, 1988). According to Simon (1991), in sport, unlike in many daily activities, it does not normally matter whether one is rich, a member of a particular racial group, or socially privileged. The intent of the rules and standards of enforcement ensure that a better performance will prevail.

Sport on the other hand is defined as those structured activities whose outcome is primarily a function of physical prowess, speed, strength and endurance. It is any game that requires the use of physical skill and prowess (Vossen, 2004). Sport is defined as institutionalized competitive activities that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Coakley, in Kevin et al, 2000). Being institutionalized implies that a standardized set of behaviour recurs in different situations, rules are standardized, officials regulate the activity, rationalized activities involve strategies, training schedules and technological advances and skills are formally learned. Physical exertion implies skills, prowess,

exertion, balance, coordination, accuracy, strength and endurance. Intrinsic factors imply self satisfaction, fun, enjoyment, own choice and play spirit while extrinsic factors imply money, medals, fame, obligation or praise.

Huizinga (1964) identified four characteristics of sport namely;

1) Dexterity which involves an element of skill

2) Strategy which involves aspect of planning or tactic

3) Chance implying that sporting outcomes are usually unpredictable based on luck, injury, weather and so on.

4) Exultation or the "feel good" factor as well as the intrinsic elements of fun and enjoyment.

In a nutshell, culture, play, games and sport are closely interrelated. Games serve various crucial functions in a culture. As suggested by Sutton-Smith (in Burnnet, 2001), the nature of games often reflects what a society values. For example, in hunting cultures, games of physical skill predominate. In cultures where religion is perceived to be an important factor in overcoming survival uncertainties, games of chance are prominent. In societies characterized by advanced technology and large industrial-military complexes, games of strategy come to the fore. Many subjective accounts of the relationship between participation in games and real life behaviors seem to support the notion that games can provide opportunities to develop the skills, and internalize the values that a society holds dear. The statement that "the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," incorrectly attributed to the Duke of Wellington, is one example of the perceived relationship between a society's games and its character (Underwood, 1981). The inference being made is that, game playing

experiences instill in youth valued qualities such as competitiveness, discipline, loyalty, leadership, follower ship and perseverance which may be subsequently used in important, non-game situations.

Huizinga (in Honeybourne et al, 2004) suggests that our ability to play has formed the basis for all human cultures and civilization. He urges that, humans have always played and many inventions and discoveries have been a product of play. Our children learn about life through play and adults use play to relax and escape from the seriousness of everyday life (Honeybourne et al, 2004). He thus concludes that, play is the base from which games and sport begins and all games and sport have their origin in play, where as children individuals first play, then move on to more sophisticated games and eventually to sport.

The above annotations are in harmony with integrated Guttmann's (1978) and Callois's (2001) categorization in that, there seems to be a progression from a self-structured activity done for it own sake (play) and an activity directed by rules (games), to an activity that is an instrumental event and is essentially officiated or judged (sport) (Suits, 1973; Schwartzman, 1983). The variability and spontaneous character of play activities that Callois (2001) referred to as *Paidia* (tumultuous exuberance) represents one end of the continuum that moves to more organized forms of competitive rivalry (contests), from rule-bound games to activities with an increase in the structuring or *Ludus* (Callois, 2001). Games possess structured content for description and analysis that in its institutionalized form as sport, adheres to universal laws and the quest for excellence and external rewards (Harris & Park, 1983). Cheska (1987) places 'games' as fluctuating between the activity roles of play and sport in

which play stresses more the participant's expressiveness and sport stresses the participant's instrumentality or the achievement of some goal. This play-sport continuum (figure 2.1), as adapted from Guttmann (1978) and integrated with Callois' (2001) categorization serves as a heuristic tool to distinguish between the structural aspects and semantic qualifications of these phenomena.
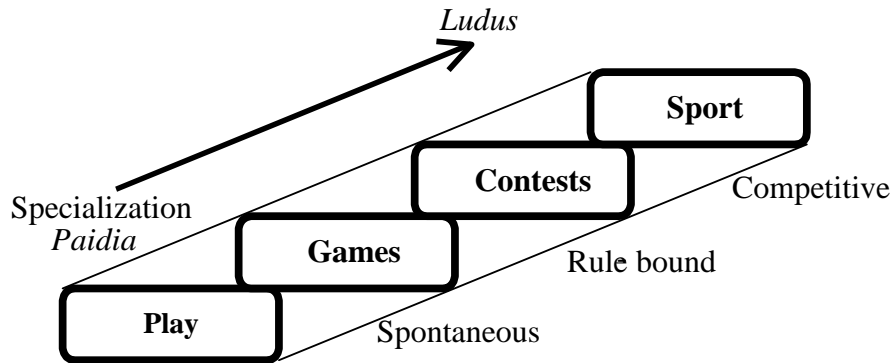
Figure 2.1 Play-Sport Continuum (Adapted from Guttmann, (1978) and Callois, (2001)

Despite the distinct characteristics of the different play-related phenomena, the boundaries become less clear in real-life settings. At the conceptual level, the practice of play meets certain observable criteria but on the attitudinal level, an activity may thus be considered as being 'play', 'game' or 'sport' where the intension of the player and context of the activity, predominantly determine the categorization of the activity (Harris & Park, 1983; Meier, 1988; Sands, 2002).

Due to the focus on indigenous games, play behaviour in this study is viewed as an integral part of these games in which it finds individual and cultural expression and meaning. In this scheme (Guttmann, 1978 and Callois, 2001), play may range from that which is spontaneous as typically found in the traditional games where few rules may exist, to the more highly structured rule intensive types found in the more formal

modern games. It is on this strength that the title attracted the word game as the catchy word owing to its inclusive nature of all the playing and sporting behaviors. These games were identified from insider's perspective as indigenous meaning that they were created locally or belonged to the Akamba and have a traditional perspective as having been passed on between generations. Another criteria for the identification of these games, is that of requiring structure and rules. In this sense, spontaneous play such as mud sliding or playing with dolls, or games that demonstrate no clear organization or rules were excluded from this research hence the term games becoming the most appropriate. This exposition clarifies the concepts of games, play and sport, terms that are used interchangeably hence giving the basis for this study. It also confirms the fact that games are culture based as Robert (1995) puts it that games or play is subject to the culture in which it is instantiated.

2. 3 Classifications of Traditional Games

Callois (2001) proposed four broad categories for the classification of games, namely competitive games (*Agôn*), games of chance (*Alea*), simulation games (*Mimicry*) and games that are based on the pursuit of vertigo (*Ilinx*). Within each of these categories, he placed the games along a continuum from *Paidia* (spontaneous play) to *Ludus*, representing an increase of elements of discipline, rules, skill, problem solving, conventionality and institutionalisation (Harris & Park, 1983).

Classification parameters for cross-cultural analysis have been developed through anthropological frameworks, which aim at documenting, classifying, analysing and explaining the cultural dimensions of traditional games (Opie & Opie, 1959; Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1979). Redl et al. (1979) developed 30 such categories to represent

the dimensions of games. Within a broad anthropological paradigm, Cheska (1987) developed a typology of games based on their structural characteristics which deductively informed several South African based studies, which set out to contribute to the preservation of ludodiversity (Goslin & Goslin, 2002), to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by classifying games according to the basic idea of the game (De Jongh, 1984) or movement content (Saayman & Van Niekerk, 1996).

In search of a cross-cultural model for the classification of traditional games, other researchers (Van der Merwe & Bressan, 1995) applied the seven-category classification system of Cheska for the categorization of the traditional games of the Xhosa of South Africa, by utilizing documented sources. Classification of traditional games is important in that; i) It facilitates easy reference, comprehension and utilization of the games by anyone interested in using that information ii) Enhances comparative analyses of that information that is facilitates comparison of these games in different regions of the world. Other classifications include Wanderi's (1999) classification of the traditional games of the people of Mount Kenya into two broad categories of warfare skill related games and non- warfare skills related games.

2.4 Traditional Games and Related Studies

Burnett and Hollander (2002) allude to the fact that an understanding of play-related behaviour and games as subject worthy of scholarly investigation, dates back to more than a century. In terms of cultural analysis and classification, they set the scene for folklorists and other social scientists (Blanchard, 1995). Ethnological insights and the ideology of cultural relativism also drew from interpretive models such as the account by Geetz (1983) of the Balinese Cockfight where symbolic messages about a social

life provided rich descriptions and cultural relativist interpretations. It paved the way for ethno- scientific investigations and the construction of 'cognitive domains' by members of a certain culture (Geetz, 1983).

Traditional games are played throughout the world, by individuals and groups of all ages, with formal or informal rules, and at homes, schools, work, and a variety of community settings. The games play a critical role in fostering and maintaining ethnic and group identity (Oke et al, 1984).The same sediment has been expressed by (2005) in his study of traditional games in the Nordic countries. Eichberg acknowledges that in some regions of the North, traditional sports and games are today regarded as a particular cultural heritage and as an element of regional identity. He gave a case of the Swedish island of Gotland where *Varpa Park* and other games are halfway transformed into national sports. Others are in Iceland where *glima* wrestling became in the early twentieth century a part of youth movement and national resurrection. In parts of Norway, *skotthyll* is a regional sport. In Greenland, *Inuit* games and competitions are arranged, similar to 'Eskimo Olympics' in Canada (Eichberg, 2004).

In the name of 'sports culture' and 'cultural identity' a festival on traditional sports and games of the world was held in Bonn in 1992 (Eichberg, 2005). This was organized by the German Sport Federation together with *Trim and Fitness – International Sport for All Association* (TAFISA) and sponsored by Volkswagen and Lufthansa. There was an outstanding reflection of traditional games as a cultural identity with presentation of a broad panorama from Danish village games to Brazilian fighting dance *capoeira,* and from Chinese martial arts *wushu* to Flenish

pub games. Records have it that the festival became a success and was repeated later in 1996 in Bangkok, and again in Hanover in 2000 in connection with the World's Exposition.

In Basque country, Catalonia and on the Canary Islands, folk sports became active factors in the marking of regional identity (Norgaard, 2005). In August 1992 the Olympic Games of Barcelona were supplied or contrasted by a festival of Spanish folk sports, showing 40 activities of force, goal throwing, traditional wrestling and ball game *Pelota*. This happened in the context of Catalan nationalism, which expressed itself not only by a war of flags around the Olympics, but also by the Catalan traditional dance *Sardana* and the folk acrobatic gymnastics *castells de xiquets*, building human towers, which were included into the Olympic ceremony (Eichberg, 2005).

Contrary to the 'functionalist' assumptions, traditional games and sports have a role to play in the real world of sports under 'mass sport participation'. The concept of mass sports participation or Sports- for- All was since the late 1960s launched as a concept for mass involvement in sports by European ministers and sport organizations (Eichberg, 2005). Folk games festivals have recently expanded in connection with Sport- for -All. The existing competitive sport model was regarded as too narrow for social development and should be supplemented by sports for health and fitness, for culture and social integration. Though the concept downgraded the principle of competition, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) joined this strategy, trying to control the development. Among the activities, which were proposed for the

healthy and socially integrating Sport- for- All were ethnic games, traditional sports and folk games that soon received special attention.

Krasilnikov (2006) carried out a study on traditional games of Siberian indigenous population. He alluded to the fact that more than 200 traditional games and competitions have been published in two monographs, two manuals and methodical recommendations in earlier studies by Krasilnikov among other researchers. However, there is the following scientific contradiction of research: on the one hand, in the theory and practice of physical training of Siberian region, ideas of contemporary pedagogy of sports are realized. On the other hand, people of northern regions within many centuries have saved invaluable experience of effective use of traditional games and competitions which are close to them in contemporary educational process. Unfortunately such games and competitions are not applied in contemporary physical training of Siberian indigenous populations (Krasilnikov, 2006). Krasilnikov alludes that such situation undoubtedly leads to oblivion of national physical training sources of these people. Krasilnikov points out that, a problem of studying out a centuries-old experience, substantiation of the concept of formation and an effective use of traditional games and competitions in original physical training of Siberian indigenous population is arising.

The general goal according to Krasilnikov (2006) has been to work out the concept of an effective use of historically formed systems of traditional games and competitions in original physical training of Siberian indigenous population. As the researcher puts it, indigenous population of Siberia has used the traditional games and competitions in which the emphasis is done for its role and functions (educational, teaching, influence

on physical development, and also applied value of physical exercises for a life of people) as the means of physical development of the person. In the Siberian community the origin and formation of physical exercise starts with experience of people and necessity of movement or game for an ultimate goal to instill values for the future life. This was facilitated by the parents and significant others. For instance, the shaman and the leader of a tribe (the elder and wiser men) formed the general direction of all activity of a clan, a community, family or concrete person. Worship for the god formed the fear, and through it creation of uniform discipline and obedience of all members of a tribe or a clan. Getting food, struggle against elements, protection against attacks of hostile nationalities, illnesses and hunger, various epidemics were the common episodes of Siberian everyday life. So, successful ability to live and struggle with adversities were possible only in conditions of strict discipline, submission to the elders, and the collective help of each concrete person.

At the same time, traditional games and competitions always were the main means, forms and methods of training and education. Krasilnikov (2006) indicated that, according to research, traditional games and competitions accompanied the indigenous population of Siberia during all life (from birth to death). In education of boys the father taught, and the mother taught the girls. The father made for sons hunting and fishing equipment (bow, arrows, skis, boats and etc). Parents arranged with children games and the competitions connected with hunting activity for boys and housekeeping for girls. Boys started to take on hunting, fishing, to involve pasturing of deers as livestock while girls started to join in economic activities. Except for industrial purposes, traditional games and competitions promoted

development of the vital physical qualities, training to impellent skills, and also education of moral, collectivism and spirituality.

Pratibha (2008) on traditional games of India asserts that, Indians 'eat' cricket, 'sleep' cricket and 'talk' cricket which he says has got nothing wrong but at the same time Indians must not forget their traditional games, which have almost become extinct in the context of expensive games like cricket and football. Pratibha (2008) alludes to an observation that in India and from small or large cities, most groups of young stars playing in public parks or play grounds all over the place are seen most of the time playing India's favorite game, cricket or football. The youngsters are not aware of Indian traditional games as kabbadi, khokho, gulli-danda, pole malkham or sattapu that have been researched on and compiled. Pratibha advocates learning of all these traditional Indian games along with the so-called modern games like cricket. Pratibha observes that, traditional games of India are inexpensive and require minimum of resources. A stretch of leveled land is basically all that is required, other than the players. However, the Indian traditional games require a lot of stamina, strength and alertness. In short, to play them one must be physically and mentally sound (Pratibha, 2008). Playing these games, one can grow stronger physically and mentally. At the same time, these games promote good human traits. For instance, *Kabbadi* places emphasis on developing qualities like self-defense, discipline and teamwork; *pole malkham* teaches the art of balancing and self-control. In addition to that, these games are highly enjoyable, full of thrill and excitement. Different states of India have their own games like *dhopkhel* in Assam, *gella-chutt* in Tripura, *kang shanaba* in Manipur and *kirip* in Nicobar.

Pratibha notes that, Hockey is the only ancient game that has managed to survive today and gain the status of national game. It was born in Asia but it is not a game native to India. The British introduced the game in India and developed modern hockey. *Kabbadi* is another game, which has retained its position to some extend. The All India *Kabbadi* Federation was established in 1950. *Kabbadi* is included in the list of the Asian games too. Various international tournaments are being held for promoting the game globally. A *Kabbadi* World Cup is being organized since 2004. It has attracted a lot of attention in European countries. Organizations like the England *Kabbadi* Association and the Iran *Kabbadi* Federation have come into being. But the sad side of the story is the scenario prevailing in urban India. These games are being confined to rural India. Tournaments and competitions for games like *kabbadi* and *khokho* are arranged at this level, though not on a scale similar to hockey, football or cricket. It is a matter of concern that in urban India they are almost absent. Under the influence of the West and urbanization, many of the traditional attributes have already been lost but saving theses ancient games for posterity is not difficult (Pratibha, 2008).

Pratibha (2008) further recommends and advises that, what is needed is a little bit of effort by first of all, valuing these games and making efforts to promote them. They have to be popularized amongst the youth. Encouragement should be given right from the school level. Government and the media must come forward to promote these games in the same way as cricket. Competitions could be organized in the neighbourhood. He observed the depleting health condition of the youth, and advised that, these games could be really useful in their physical development. Instead of watching the television or computer screens, playing the violence-laden video and

computer games they must be motivated to take to healthier outdoor games. It will promote both physical and mental health. Good moral values will accrue by way of bonus. He laments that, by blindly following the West Indian culture have been left behind -so much so it scares when one tries to visualize what the future holds for the youth. The pace at which westernizing is taking roots is really undesirable. Pratibha (2008) sees nothing wrong with picking up from the west anything and everything that is useful but at the same time he is absolutely against forgetting one's own traditions and culture in the name of westernization and modernization.

Galligan et al (2000) on the same vein have a different perception in that, the increasing globalization of sport and the glowing level of professionalization have in turn brought greater exposure of some ethnic games and activities. He gives an example of the sport of *Kabbadi* that is now televised to Asian communities around the world. This is as a result of both its popularity within a specific cultural group and the group's increasing mobility. This mobility has broadened the games exposure and may well subsequently enhance its popularity amongst other cultural groups. Galligan goes further to point out that Beach Volleyball, a derivative of the more well-known indoor game, is specifically associated with the beach sub-cultures of Australia and the West Coast of the USA. Its inclusion in the Olympic Games reflects this glowing popularity. It forces us to recognize that all sports at some time in the past were infact 'ethnic' games until their appeal broadened into mainstream adoption.

In Africa, traditional games provide a window for African values (Honeybourne, 2004). Although there is a cultural diversity in Africa, African people do share some general values and have faced similar struggles in life (Bude, 1985). With the

partition of Africa at the Berlin conference of 1866, the native cultures of Africa came into contact with European cultures. Sutton-Smith (1972) observed that, as was the case with the Maoris of New Zealand, the loss of the customs and cultural traditions of the submerged culture began to occur. The meeting of the two cultures resulted in the eradication of the unique pastimes of African natives but that the games that both cultures shared stayed intact. According to Sutton- Smith (1972), nineteenth century African-European cultural conflict involved the gradual submergence of many African cultures. This occurred through the repressive attitudes of missionaries, the general outlook of Europeans, and the policies enacted by the government officials which did not favour Africans' way of life.

Participation in indigenous games emphasizes physical development, skill training and maintenance, reinforcement of the community values and interaction between communities. Many anthropologists ascribe to the fact that, man's successful evolutional history has been greatly facilitated by his physical fitness acquired through games of various kinds (Adams, 1991). This was common in Africa and in many other races of the world. Hirth (1991) indicates evidence of this by observing that;

> Historical sources bear witness to play behaviour and types of games documented since pre-historic times. Rock paintings and engravings represent sporting activities, scenes of combat and a wide spectrum of play manifestations from early civilizations in the African continent. Historical evidence informed early academic interest of social historians and anthropologists who traced patterns of diffusion and acculturation over different continents and historical periods. Generalizations were made by anthropologists and historians with the intent of reconstructing games, tracing game origins and offering explanations on cultural contact between members from different geographical areas. The functionalistic and structural approaches provided the framework for analyses, construction as well as for cross-cultural game typologies and comparisons (p. 12).

The ancient Egyptian writings, scriptures, and frescoes (wall paintings, made on a wet plaster) that depicted women involvement in gymnastics, swimming, horseback riding, dances and jogging are clear evidence of the above assertion (Wanderi, 2001). Burnett & Hollander (2002) conducted a study on South African indigenous games which led to identification and documentation of traditional games that were part and parcel of South Africa people's culture. A total of 536 indigenous games were identified and collected. Cheska (1987) classification of games was used to classify these games.

Wanderi (2001) conducted a study to establish the traditional games of the people of Mount Kenya region (Kikuyu, Embu and Meru). The findings revealed presence of many different forms of traditional Games within the region for all age groups and both genders. The games served a multi-purpose role in each community. For children among the Mount Kenya ethnic groups, play was greatly valued. Unplayfulness was perceived as a sign of laziness. Although they had no playing arena, children summoned one another at homes for games. Through play imitations, children learned communal ways of life right from an early stage of their lives. They were guided by adult folk. Games were perceived as a means to children and youth's education, a means to their development as well as a means to maintenance of strong bodies, indispensable qualities aimed at producing strong mothers for females and strong warriors for males. Mature, uncircumcised boys had more physical activities than anyone else in the ethnic group especially as they approached circumcision. At this age among the Meru, they moved into communal living shelters (*gaaru ya nding'uri*) and lived on their own, hence, had more time to play. Aspirants for circumcision in every village organized themselves into bands under a leader and participated

numerously in their unique war-like simulated activities referred to as m*umburo* among Kikuyu, *ngiro* among Embu and *kiigumi* among the Meru.

Wanderi (2001) classified the traditional games of Mount Kenya according to Cheska's (1987) scheme, and further recommended the formalization, adoption and promotion of traditional games for their great instrumentality through various educational and social fora. He gives examples of various countries around the world including developed nations that are on record for exemplary preservation and development of their traditional games such as the Chinese traditional games and the Scottish Highland games which have been developed and promoted to international standards. The study by Wanderi (2001) captured all the aspects that this study has addressed and the study forms a good point of comparison.

2.5 Historical and Cultural Perspectives of Traditional Games in Kenya

As in many other parts of the world, British (and European) influences shaped many areas of life in Kenya, including education. Missionary schools formed the backbone of early education. As elsewhere, games, drill and physical training was largely an extension of the Arnoldian philosophies which had been very influential in Britain, the 'mother country'. Colonization by Britain not only brought British sports into the country, but also left an administrative framework in place once independence had been granted in 1963.The imposition of an alien culture upon indigenous one had considerable drawbacks and ancient infrastructures, although much subdued, have never really disappeared. Much of the country's current difficulties, both cultural and economic, centre upon the resistance of the 'old' to the 'new', even though the old

colonial masters are now gone. Until the 1960s, Kenya's sporting policies reflected the needs of the colonizers rather than its indigenous population.

Prior to Europeans colonization of Kenya, traditional games were deep rooted in every ethnic community (Galligan, 2000). After the arrival of the Europeans, these games were transformed into living museum or adopted the values of modern sport. The games were influenced greatly by the wave of modernization both in the formal and the informal settings. The decline in Kenyan traditional games overlapped with the emergency of modern sports. This period of overlap extended from the end of the nineteenth century to the mid- 1960s (Bale, 1996). The Europeans brought their sports with them but initially they were practiced by the Western settler communities themselves and were socially distanced from indigenous Africans. They had abhorrence for Africans sports. Sport was often interpreted by the white population as big game hunting and safari rather than football and athletics (Bale, 1996).

As early as 1900 a number of facilities were established in various regions in Kenya. For instance, East African Turf club in Nairobi, golf club in Nairobi in 1902 and in 1908 in Kisumu. Cricket, Lawn tennis, polo and yachting were practiced and competed in as early as 1907 (Bale, 1996). At Muthaiga country club in Nairobi there existed a golf course, squash courts and croquet lawns. By 1931, Nairobi had a race course, a polo ground, two golf courses and many facilities for cricket.

The formal layout of the new sports in terms of facilities and the games structure contrasted with informal natural African cultural locale. They were also segregated spaces with facilities strictly reserved primarily for the recreational sporting pastimes

of the white settlers' community. Settlers attended the festivities and various Western sports were played in an atmosphere of informality, fun and recklessness (Bale, 1996). The African population was expected to simply observe the action while 'waiting' on visitors for whom the meeting was organized. It represented gathering of old friends. The central focus was horse racing but also cricket, tennis and golf were part and parcel of these events. Right in the interior of the country on the other hand, the indigenous communities informally had their traditional games but on a low tone as compared to the newly introduced exciting European sports.

The white man's games were perceived as superior as the indigenous games were regarded archaic and evil. The destabilization of the Kenyan communities by the European activities through the introduction of formal education, slavery (with some Kenyans being taken captive to work in the colonial masters farms) and introduction of Western sports adversely affected the Kenyan sporting genre. The negative perception created about the African cultural elements in general led to low practice of indigenous sports and adoption of the new culture sports like soccer. The formation of the Kenya National Sports Council (K.N.S.C) besides other Sports federations such as the Kenya Amateur Athletics Association (currently Athletics Kenya) saw the first sports national governing bureaucracy. Other federations for all the other formal games were established and affiliated to the Kenya National Sports Council and also the international bodies. This marked formal replacement of indigenous games of the ethnic Kenyan society by the modern sports. This constituted the beginning of the modernization and the globalization of Kenyan sports. No major attempts have been made to salvage and promote the indigenous games like the 'modern' games by the way of forming formal bodies to oversee that. Formalization, adoption and affiliation

of the ajua (the traditional board game) Association of Kenya which is affiliated to the

K.N.S.C is a good example of how traditional games can become sports of both

national and international status (Bale, 1996). This game has been integrated into a

Western value system without having changed its style and organization. However,

the game is in decline because is not well supported.

2.6 Traditional Games Within the Formal Sector

In the formal sector, traditional games have not received much attention. Many of the

basic components of culture depend on the educative process for their existence, just

as the educative process becomes meaningless without the substance of culture

(Bajah, 1987). Anthropologists as well as the curriculum developers are in agreement

that the school is a proper vehicle for maintaining cultural survival. It is in the light of

this that the Kenya school curricular as it is with other countries emphasize cultural

heritage through what is practiced in schools. However, there has been a gap. For

instance, in most subjects, centrally to what was recommended in education

commissions and related official documents, a little emphasis has been given to the

study of cultural elements such as games. A good example is demonstrated in the

research administered in 1975 to assess pupil's knowledge of their traditional aspects

(Sifuna, 1986). The results showed that pupils have little or no knowledge about their

own ethnic organizations and games, although in some groups, traditional aspects like

marriage or initiation ceremonies are still practiced (Sifuna, 1986). This was largely

because the school has not drawn their attention to the existence of such practices.

According to Sifuna, between 1973 and 1975 some attempts were made to revive the

primary school syllabus in a number of subjects. For instance in the history syllabus it

was suggested that pupils study African Indigenous Education, local customs,

ceremonies, festivals and culture which included the learning of traditional songs and the making and playing of traditional musical instruments.

Sifuna (1986) further adds that in 1978, the Primary School Education curriculum was designed suitable to all the geographical regions of the country. In light of the national goals of education the project formulated objectives for Primary education in Kenya. The objective geared towards appreciation of one's own and other people's cultural heritage, development of aesthetic values and making use of one's leisure time came into being. The project suggested inclusion of Physical Education as one of the areas of study under creative arts. However, the subject matter lacked traditional games as part of the content to be included. This clearly indicates that there is a gap in fully accommodating traditional games in the formal sector so as to realize the Educational objective stated. This study will go along way in making this a practical possibility.

Were and Maundu (1986) captured some traditional games in Kitui District of Kenya in their study of the Akamba culture. They pointed out the following to be among the traditional games of the Akamba within that district; *Kuutha, Kutwaa Ndia, Misigi, Kwikya Kisakwa, Kuatha ngu na kisyi, Kukunya mikuni and Kumbulana*. Other documentary evidence that have mentioned traditional games of Akamba generally among other cultural elements include, Muthiani (1973), Munene (1975), Nzioki (1982) and Kimilu (1988). All this information has been compiled together with other elements of culture e.g. traditional dances, rites of passage etc. These documents have captured these games as a way of oral literature among other elements of the Akamba culture. The information has not been verified through research. However, the documents were useful in giving background information about the Akamba as

well as confirming some of the names of the games as given then and was given during this study. Were & Maundu (1986) recommended that since the social and cultural transformation taking place today in the country is rapid, there should be a more consciousness of the need to maintain a balance between the currents of contemporary culture and the traditional way of life and its characteristics cultural aspects. The duality of traditional and contemporary African music and other performing arts should parade the whole of our social and cultural life. There should be no complete discarding of the pre-industrial way of life and its artistic expressions. They pointed out that, things of value inherited from the past need to be identified, and we should find the means of preserving and promoting them. This study has gone a long way in fulfilling this recommendation.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

It is evident from the above reflections that, traditional games played a very pivotal role in every part of the world and in every community as far as their survival to this very age is concerned. This has been brought out clearly in studies by Burnnet and Hollander (2002), Eichberg (2005) and Wanderi (2001). Eichberg's study has only captured the significance aspect of these games while Burnnet and Hollander's as well as Wanderi's studies have gone further and addressed social- cultural settings. The latter have also classified them using Cheska's scheme. Wanderi's study went further and classified the games into two broad categories namely warfare skill- related games and non- warfare skills related games in addition to making a comparison of traditional games and modern games. The current study reflected on three aspects as explained in chapter one in the objectives namely; identifying the games, determining their significance and determining their relationship to Cheska's (1987) scheme of

classification. These studies have been directional and provided the framework within which this study revolved around. These studies have also raised concern on the need to develop revival mechanisms which are in line with the conceptual framework of this study.

Pratibha's account on traditional games of India raises concerns over the threats to their survival and advises on ways of reviving and utilizing them in addressing the society's social problems. This study is response towards such a call. The fact that traditional sports have been embraced and popularized in many countries of the world makes it necessary to address the question of the lukewarm attention given to the traditional games in Kenya. This is particularly critical in the face of the fact that some of the traditional Games have been getting extinct. This background motivated this study. As indicated, the contributions of traditional games were and are multi dimensional and varied. Their very existence and inclusion was a matter of necessity as opposed to choice. As part of a very essential aspect of humanity with significance that traditional games have played in the society all over the world as indicated in the mentioned studies, the need for their identification from every race of humanity remains a noble endevour and undebatable. Were & Maundu (1986) focused on sketchy traditional games of the people of Kitui district but not the entire Akamba community. At the same time, their games compilation and analysis did not depict the structures and aspects of ethno-scientific knowledge establishments as it is with this study. Further, this study has focused on Kenya's entire Akamba community.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the procedures that were used in carrying out the study. It covers the research design, location of the study, target population, sampling methods, data collection instruments, pilot study, procedure for data collection and data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Research Design

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey. The study aimed at collecting information from respondents regarding the traditional games of the Akamba. Descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. It describes such things as possible behaviour, attitudes, values and characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It is most suitable for historical description of a phenomenon of a similar nature as the Akamba traditional games. The researcher used primary source of information which was obtained using interviews.

3.3 The Location of the Study

The study covered the entire Akamba community of Kenya within the four districts which they occupied during data collection. These four districts broadly constitute the *Kambaland* or *Ukambani* (Nzioki, 1982). This includes; Machakos, Makueni, Kitui and Mwingi districts (Appendix A). The choice was necessitated by the fact that it is among the Kenyan communities without research and documentation of their traditional games.

3.4 Target Population

In an effort to obtain valid and reliable information, persons aged 70 years and over were purposively accessed for interviews. These have been found to yield reliable and valid information by other researchers (Wanderi, 2001, -2009). Wanderi further adds that these are persons who either participated in these traditional games or saw them as they were done by others, and were therefore, well acquainted with the games. This was confirmed during this study.

3.5 Sampling Method

The sample was purposefully identified through local administrative offices and heads of primary schools in those regions. The heads of the schools were first made to understand the objectives of the study and the kind of respondents that the investigator was looking for so as to direct the researcher to them. Upon identifying the respondents, sequential sampling was used. According to Krathwohl (1993), sequential sampling allows a researcher to start with a small sample and then continue sampling until some criterion of adequacy is met. Typically, in sequential sampling, an initial sample is taken, and the data are analyzed to see if the needed statistical precision has been obtained or whether a larger sample is needed. In case of the latter, additional cases are obtained until the desired precision is reached. Sequential sampling may be used with field samples where the situation is stable enough to allow one return to the field and gather more samples. The study itself must not have caused an increased awareness of the topic, which might itself lead to changes and thereby bias the results. The criterion of adequacy in this study was the point at which any successive interviews in an area availed no additional new information. In other words, using this approach, a point was reached when all subsequent respondents in

the area repeatedly gave the same information. At this point, a criterion of adequacy was confirmed to have been achieved for that area and the exercise would be terminated to proceed to another data collection area. In this case, the termination of data collection exercise was determined by the achievement of this criterion of adequacy irrespective of both the sample and population size. This method has been effectively used by other researchers doing similar studies (Wanderi, 2009). The study was procedurally conducted as per the divisions in each district. A total of three hundred and ninety nine (417) respondents were interviewed across Ukambani region with distribution as indicated in Appendix C.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

An interview guide (Appendix B) was used to collect data. According to Bernard (1988) and Casley and Kumar (1988), verbal and non- verbal behaviour is well examined through the use of qualitative procedures which necessitated the use of interview to collect data in this study because issues relating to games are verbal and non-verbal. The interview questions were based on the objectives of this study. This was designed by the researcher but ratified by the supervisors who are experts in the field of traditional games. Interviews were conducted with Akamba members aged seventy years and above spread throughout the region. Interviews were conducted in the local kikamba language by the researcher who is also a native of the ethnic community. All interviews were undertaken informally in the respondents' homesteads on a face to face basis. The interviews were conversational and interactive. The informal discussion atmosphere created during interviewing was intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about the research

issues. The responds were recorded in kikamba language awaiting translation and interpretation with an expert to safeguard distortion of information.

3.7 Pilot Test to the Instruments

A pilot study was conducted in Machakos district. Machakos District is viewed as the epitome of Akamba culture, and indeed all the other districts of Ukambani (Makueni, Kitui and Mwingi) sprang from it (Ndeti, 1972). Ten (10) persons of at least seventy (70) years in age who were not included in the main study were identified for interviewing. This was made to capture at least the ten divisions in the district. The purpose of this pilot study was to determine whether the research instruments were adequate and appropriate for the desired process. The pre-test was done and additional modifications made.

3.8 Procedure for Data Collection

Permission to carry out research was sought from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the District Officers (Appendix D). The procedure used in the interviews was adopted from Clarke and Clarke (1984). The interviewing was conducted as follows:

a) The interviewer first introduced himself as a researcher from Kenyatta University on a study to find out the traditional games that were played by the Akamba of Kenya.

b) The interviewees were then requested to mention all games which were in existence and performed by the Akamba for girls and boys.

c) Going through the list of games obtained in (b) above, the interviewees were then requested to give the details of each of them. The interviewer guided

them as they elaborated on each game, taking one after the other. The details given for each game captured under the subheadings below:

i)   how it was performed?

ii)   when it was performed?

iii)   the number of participants?

iv)   the facilities and equipment used

v)   the significance of that game to the individual participants

vi)   the significance of that game to the entire community.

This approach was preferred for it safeguarded against omission of any game or other important information and enhanced the recording, analyses and compilation of the collected information. This was also confirmed by other researchers. The information coming from the primary source was collected in the subjects' contextual setting, and is in line with other researchers' guidelines as alluded to by Roberts (1995) in conceptual framework that, the meaning of play is subject to the culture in which it is instantiated. The responses were recorded in Kikamba language with interpretation and translation done with an English language specialist who is a Kamba to ensure meanings are not distorted. Besides that, before the interviewees started giving the information, they were made to understand the concept of games that were being referred to as per the definition in section 1.12 and within the criterion specified in the literature review. Where two or several interviewees were found together, they were allowed to share their experiences and compare notes for harmonization of the information.

3.9 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The researcher acquired permission from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the District/ Education officers to collect data. Informed consent was also obtained from the respondents and it was further ensured that all the interviewees participated voluntarily.

3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation

All the information collected was examined, compared and classified in accordance with specific standards advocated by Clarke and Clarke (1984). The standards that were employed were based on the research questions and objectives as well as the guidelines as have been used by other researchers who have done similar research. Clarke and Clarke (1984) indicate that the following guidelines serve as an exposition of the required critical examination of descriptive data:

i) Though a single source may provide the correct information, other reliable and independent sources are required to prove the reality and objectivity of this information.

ii) A similar predominant fact or information taken from a number of independent respondents or interviewees would be accepted on the bases of its congruency.

iii) If subjects or interviewees contradict each other on a certain point, additional independent sources are necessary to resolve that contradiction. All the information given was carefully examined in order to resolve any contradictions.

So many games were collected during this study but on subjecting them to the above three guidelines only twenty three (23) stood the test and the rest were discarded.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the findings of the study. It presents information on the games of the Akamba of Kenya. The games are directly presented within Cheska's (1987) classification. Individual games are discussed giving their values to the participants and the community. Interpretations are made with comparison to other studies captured in the literature review. Socio- cultural settings and significance of the games generally are also presented.

In line with the objectives of this study and guided by the research questions, twenty three games of the Akamba were identified, described, classified within the Cheska's (1987) scheme and presented as follows;

4.2 Games of Physical Challenge

As per Cheska's (1987) scheme, three games that can be categorized as games of physical challenge were cited by the respondents. These are games of intense activity where the results were determined by the physical mighty. These games were also characterized by physically controlled responses, actions, strength and bravery as explained below.

4.2.1 *Kuselana Vinya* **(Tug-of- War)**

This game of physical challenge was cited by a total of twenty nine (29) respondents across Ukambani. The respondents' views were in agreement on the description of the game, participants, facilities, equipment and its significance. The participants in the game were young men and boys who formed two teams that participated in the

contest. Each team had the same number of players who were of the same size. The number per team depended on the available boys. The contest was in form of the modern tug-of war in which the teams competed by pulling a rope and the team that lost was that whose first member on the rope crossed the centre line drawn on the ground. The team that won many pulls became the winner of the competition. A minimum of two pull with a third pull in case of a 1-1 tie led to a win. However, the teams would agree on the number of pulls for a win. Before pulling all the pulling members were to be steady and motionless after which the chosen non participating boy would command for a start. There were pulling trials before the main contest to gauge the members of a team which also acted as a warm-up. A team would be disqualified on the basis of a member sitting, getting any form of support or going beyond restriction lines drawn about four metres apart and running parallel within where the team were to operate. Teams were to observe silence s as to get instructions from the commander/ official. This game was significant for leisure and training of young men on endurance when fighting or doing hard jobs.

4.2.2 *Ngindano* (Wrestling)

This game was described by 27 respondents across Ukambani who were in agreement in all aspects of the game. It was played specifically by young boys during the summer season in the rivers and in the grazing fields on flat surface covered by grass or sand. The competitors were paired as per their size and height. The spectators were to make a circle with the competitors getting inside the circle. This was to make sure that no competitor escaped. The object of the game was to determine who was the strongest among the competitors with winning done by tumbling the opponent. The winner was determined by counting the number of times that one had fallen down.

Competitors were not allowed to attack their opponents without notifying them, use any weapon or intend to injure their opponents. Spectators were not allowed to assist any competitor. If any of the rules above were broken, one was punished by being beaten by the viewers/spectators. The overall champion was the one who fell many people many times and was given the title *Ngumbau* meaning a hero. The game was very significant in facilitating physical training and a sense of competition and achievement. It was also used to determine the strongest men who would be relied upon for defence of the community.

4.2.3 *Kusemba* (Racing games)

Thirty respondents cited these games that were played by boys and girls. Each gender competed on their own. The respondents who were interviewed concurred about the racing activities with different distances and variations as decided by the participants. They contended that races among children were a daily phenomenon. These races were quite spontaneously participated in at various places such as along road passages, sloppy grounds where participants either competed downhill or uphill or in the homesteads. Different features such as trees, houses or shrubs were used to mark the running course. Races of various distances, including modern relays format where they would use sticks as batons were common among children. The winner was determined by speed and one's endurance in running the set distance. The races were very critical in contributing to the physical fitness of the participants, particularly development of speed and endurance as well as enhancement of socialization and recreation.

4.3 Games Involving Physical Skill and Strategy

The second category of traditional games as per Cheska's (1987) scheme that was cited by the respondents across Ukambani is the games involving physical skill and strategy. These are games whose outcome depended on rational choices and decision-making skills of the players. These games are as presented:

4.3.1 *Ndia* (Spearing a rolling hoop)

This game was highlighted by thirty one respondents across Ukambani. The game was played by boys using a rounded wheel and a stick with a sharp end called *musenge* (javelin). It was played by two teams of four or six players each. Every player was supposed to have his *musenge* (javelin). One team was to roll the wheel on the ground while the other was to throw the Javelin through the rolling wheel. If a member of the javelin-throwing team missed, he became a *'mbiki,'* that is, 'got married' to the team rolling the wheel by joining it. To save '*mbiki' (kwovola*), a team member would step/land where he was standing and time the wheel. After missing, one would join the *mbiki* (married one) until the entire time was eliminated, after which, the team would clap hands and say '*uulu nitwamuula',* meaning we have married all of you. After that, teams changed roles/sides. In some areas they would identify a fast runner to run for the *mbiki* ie 'married' one. The game was so significant for enjoyment and training for accuracy, team spirit, shooting and rolling skills.

4.3.2 *Kukunya Mukuni* (Javelin)

This game was mentioned and described by twenty six respondents. It was played mainly by boys using a long stick called m*ukuni* similar to javelin but with a padded

tail. Each player had a unique one. It was performed on a flat surface/ground with a runway that had a scratch line indicating the throwing point just like the modern Javelin. It was played by a maximum of 8 and a minimum of two players. A competitor was not supposed to step on the line when throwing the *mukuni*. Only one player was to throw at a time. Each approached from a distance, ran and released the *mukuni* before stepping on the line. After the *mukuni* landed the players were to wait for the rest to take their turns. The winner was identified by checking the *mukuni* that was thrown the longest distance. There were no trials. Only first attempt was considered but players were free to make many attempts. The game was significant in promoting unity among the youths, unifying different clans, and relaxation and instilling throwing skills that were necessary for hunting and defence.

4.3.3 *Malingi* (Trapping a rolling hoop)

This game was cited by twenty seven respondents across Ukambani. It was played by young boys using a wooden hoop and a string tied to two pegs at both ends on a flat ground measuring approximately 50metres by 10metres. It was played by two players as follows;

Player 'A' stands at one end of the field with the hoop.

Player 'B' stands at the other end of the marked area

Player 'A' releases the hoop to roll on the ground towards player 'B'

Player 'B' throws the string tied to pegs to stop it by inter-twinning round it.

Player 'B' wins a score if he stops the hoop using the string (*malingi*).

Player 'A' was not allowed to follow the hoop.

Player 'B' stands about 4metres away from the hoop's path and should not come near it. This game promoted co-operation among the youth as the two players worked hand in hand, instilled skills as rolling the hoop and throwing the pegged string.

4.3.4 *Kola* (Tossing game) Version I

This game was cited by thirty respondents. It was played mostly by girls though boys played in very rare occasions. It was played by 2 to 5 participants using a small hole dug on the ground about 3 inches deep. Small sized stones of varying numbers 6, 12 and so on were used. A special round stone known as *mutongi* was used. Each player was given position according to the number. The small stones were then put in the hole with players seated round the hole. Each player had his/her own special stone round in shape known as *mutongi.* Player one was allowed to start the game using either hand. The player begun by throwing the *mutongi* in the air and then using the same hand scoop stones out of the hole. She/he would throw up the *mutongi* for a second time in the air and then using the same hand direct the stones back into the hole, leaving only one stone outside the hole. After successfully doing that she/he would earn one point. The winner was determined by comparing the number of stones each player had earned/ scooped.

4.3.4 Kola (Tossing game) Version II

In this game, 12 or more stones are placed in a small hole. The player had to throw a heavier and bigger stone at least three times the size of the smaller stones (*kwikya)* and catch (*kukwata*) it while removing the stones from the hole. The sequence is throw, remove, and catch. The object of the game was to get all the stones back into the hole, first in ones, then twos, then threes and so on. Participating members agreed

on the version to use depending on how well they were polished on timing and coordination as well as the challenge needed with version b being more technical. The purpose of the kola games was to enhance relaxation, socialization and acquisition of skills like timing, throwing and catching.

4.3.5 *Kukuthana* (Bow-and-arrows)

This game was described by twenty two respondents in the study. It was played by boys using bows and arrows. It was played by a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 2 players. A starting line was marked on the ground on a flat ground. Players were supposed to start throwing behind the line in turns. One was permitted to throw the arrow (*yangi)* while lying on the ground, sitting or standing with only one player at a time. The arrow which covered the longest distance made the owner emerge the winner. A mark was put at the point where the arrow landed. The game was so significant in training young men how to shoot in preparation and practice during clan disputes or war. It also helped in hunting and constructive use of leisure time.

4.3.6 *Lisu* (Dodging the ball)

Thirty respondents cited this game. It was played mostly by girls. In this game there were two teams, and each was allowed a chance to build pottery pieces, which would vary in size from big to small, into a pyramid (*kwaka*). Each team member of the "building side" got a chance to build while each team member of the opposing side would be given a chance to distract the builder by throwing a ball at him/her. If the builder was hit by the ball, she or he had to stop building and another team member will continue. The other team had to retrieve their ball and then try to hit the next builder. The winner was the player who managed to build a complete or the highest pyramid. The game was significant in training for accuracy in hitting a target, timing,

body coordination and agility which were very useful skills when performing domestic chores as well as looking after livestock and farming.

4.3.7 *Kima* (Hanging the stick) Version 1

According to the thirty respondents who demonstrated knowledge of this game, the game was played by boys using a straight stick that was stuck on the ground called *nyae.* This was used as a coin toss to determine the player whose stick *(kima)* would be shot by the rest. They shot using a hooked stick called *kima.* The game was played on a flat ground/surface. The game was played by a team of about 7 boys. A straight stick, *"nyae",* was aimed at by all and if one missed the *nyae,* his hooked stick (*kima)* was the one to be shot/aimed at by the rest of the group with him standing aside. This was one who was termed as the looser. During the tossing, they shot the stick (*nyae*) while in a line in turns. After the looser was determined, he stood aside as the rest lined up to start the game.

The players shot in a special way such that the stick hanged on the chosen target which could be a tree branch or another straight stick. This required a lot of accuracy and timing. The game continued with boys aiming at the *kima* in turns until another one missed and would stand aside as the rest continued aiming at his stick. The game continued until it was time to break for home with the last looser providing his *kima* to start the game the following day. *kima* was significant in cultivating fitness, socializing and training for accuracy and timing.

4.3.7 *Kima* (Hanging the stick) Version II

This alternative *kima* game was mentioned and described by twenty respondents. It was a common game in Makueni district. It was played by boys while grazing using a hooked peg on a flat ground. It was played by two players each having a hooked stick *(kima).* Players practiced on accuracy in aiming at objects using the hooked sticks. Player 'A' was shown an object to aim at using the hooked stick. It was done in a special manner in which the hooked stick could hang on the object. When the aiming was successful, player 'A' was still shown another object to aim at until the time he missed the target, a point where he then gave player 'B' a chance to aim at the object. The game was significant in cultivating fitness, socializing and training for accuracy and timing.

4.3.8 *Mbila* (Cone)

This game was cited by thirty five respondents across Ukambani who were in agreement on various aspects of the game. It was played by both boys and girls on a flat ground measuring about 10metres by 5metres using a cone-shaped piece of wood and a whip. The game was played by two players in succession. One player ''A'' stood at the extreme end of the marked area as the second player stood at the centre of the marked area. Player ''A'' places the cone-shaped wood on the ground and then coils a whip from the end around it. While in a bending position, he holds the whip with his hand and forcefully pulls it so fast to set the cone in motion. He then uses the whip made from sisal fibers to strike the wood towards the other end of the marked area. He strikes it to the centre of the field and then player two takes over. When he strikes it successfully to the end, one point is earned.

Another method of scoring is by drawing a line *(kusuma)* the far one reaches and then the opponent would attempt to beat his rival by taking it further. The game was so significant for enjoyment and socialization among the youth. It also taught accuracy and timing.

4.3.9 *Kwikya Maangi* (Long distance shooting)

This game was mentioned and described by thirty respondents. It was specifically performed by boys using bows and arrows. It was practiced/performed by those who were training to shoot to determine who could shoot the furthest. Also it was to determine who had the best arrows and bows, and the sharpest shooter among the competitors. The shooting area was to be free from any person with each person shooting during his turn. The game duration was determined by the time available**.** A player was disqualified if the bow broke or shot the shortest distance. The one who shot the furthest distance was the winner. The game was significant in training boys on how to use bows and arrows for future defense.

4.3.10 *Ngilwa* (High jumps)

The game was cited by thirty respondents across Ukambani. It was specifically played by men. It resembled modern high jump but *ngilwa* was done in a river with sand during dry season. Competitors jumped over the set height. Both spectators and competitor were neither supposed to do the jump if the turn was not theirs, put anything which could injure the competitor when landing, interrupt the jumping competitor by crossing the running zone or get into the landing area. If one had any intention to injure any competitor by setting thorns or stones in the landing area, he was automatically disqualified from participation. Indeed, injured participants were

deterred from further competition. The winner was one who jumped the highest height. The one who cleared the highest height was declared a hero. The activity lasted for as long as agreed depending on the available time. The game of *ngilwa* was significant in preparing participants on how they can escape from their enemies when attacked. It also facilitated competition among the participants.

4.3.11 *Kuatha Nzuri* (Shooting plants shaped like sisal)

This game was cited by twenty one respondents across Ukambani. It was played by young boys and girls using sharp sticks (*muku)* to shoot some plants (*nzuri*) that are shaped like sisal. The main idea was to determine the best shooter. It was played in the small fields with *nzuri* plants. It was mostly performed by young people while grazing during dry season and harvesting time. The game was violent because after the game they used the plants to shoot each other. Scoring was done by shooting the plants. The winner was the one who shot many plants once. Other rules included shooting during one's turn, no interruption of other shooters and missing twice led to disqualification. Anyone using abusive language or intending to bring violence before the end of the game was disqualified and sent away.

After the end of the game there was violence among competitors that involved the participants shooting at each other using the plants *(nzuri)*. It lasted for as long as agreed depending on the available time. The game hardened the boys equipping them with warlike spirit in preparation for future community defense. It also introduced them to interaction with water in preparation for swimming.

4.3.12 *Mwangi/ Kyuthi* (Marksmanship)

Mwangi/Kyuthi was known by twenty one respondents who were interviewed across Ukambani. It was played by two or more boys using small round shaped stone called *mwangi*/*Kilio* and a bigger one called *ngongi* on a flat surface with a hole 3 inches deep and 4 metres from the throwing line (estimated by making four long strides). Players stood in a straight line behind the 4 metre line to the hole each having his own *kilio.* They would throw their small stones into the hole to determine the playing order with the player whose *kilio* enters the hole first starting to play followed by the rest in that order defending on the nearness of their stones to the hole. A player would then get all the stones from the rest during his turn and then throw them into the hole. Out of the stones outside the hole, he would be shown the stone to aim at using the bigger stone *(ngongi)*. After hitting the shown stone, one scored a point together with stones entering into the hole and would then withdraw such stones from the rest. Winning was determined on the basis of the number of stones (*kilios)* in one possession. The *mwangi/ kyuthi* game helped in counting and arithmetic as well as instilling skills as throwing and aiming at a target.

4.3.13 *Kuutha/ Manda/ Ndalana* (Hopping game) Version I

According to a total of thirty four respondents across Ukambani, *kuutha/ manda/ ndalana* game was played by mainly girls, though in some districts like Kitui it was played by both boys and girls. It was played by two to four players on a rectangle on the ground comprising of eight divisions or a big rectangle drawn on the ground and divided into 8 equal squares, four on each side of the rectangle. A piece of pottery or a flat stone was used in playing the game. After throwing the piece of pottery to the square, a player would begin hopping from one square to another, from the side

opposite the pottery until she/he moved the piece into another square. If he/she is not able to balance himself/herself on one leg while hopping, and falls or stands on both legs one got disqualified. The one who managed to go to the furthest square emerged the winner. The game was significant for socializing as well as instilling skills like balance and accuracy.

4.3.13 *Kuutha/ Manda/ Ndalana* (Hopping game) Version II

A big rectangle was drawn on the ground and divided into 8 sections as shown on figure-4.1. It was started by throwing the pottery or stone (*ngongi)* to the first sector and then each player would begin hopping from one square to another as he/she kicked/ moved the pottery with the hopping foot from the first square through the eighth Square and then exit. One was permitted to rest between areas 3 and 4 indicated as A and B. If one did not balance himself/herself on one leg while hopping, and fell or stood on both legs, stepped on any line or the pottery landed on any line she would be disqualified and stopped at that point to continue later on when the opponent(s) played.

Successful continuous move from square 1 to the last one earned a player a chance to move to the next square and so on to the last square after which one would be considered to have won a set (*ndungu*). After winning a set, they would start afresh with the winner being the player who won more sets.

The game trained on accuracy in throwing, kicking and landing. It enhanced relaxation, coordination, balance and timing.
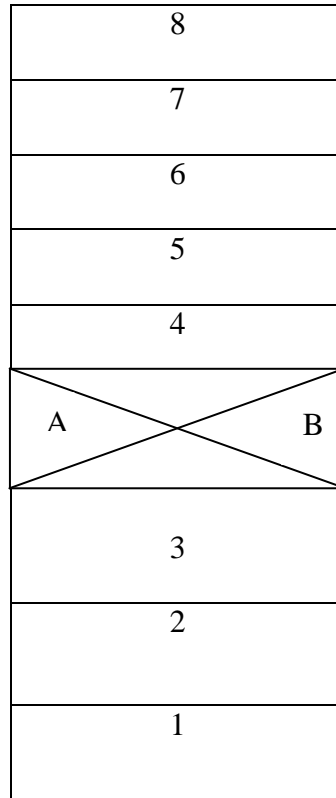
Figure 4.1 *Ndalana* (**Hopping games**) **Version two's field of play**

4.3.14 *Kutwaa ndia* (**Rolling hoop**) **Version I**

This game was described by twenty nine respondents in Ukambani. The game was played by boys. They made simple hoops from flexible twigs which were bent and tied up with a string from end to end. The hoop would either be rolled in a race along the footpaths simply by pushing it by one hand. This was more or less a racing activity requiring relatively very little skill. This version was mainly for racing and competing for speed work as they pushed their hoops in front of them which was in contrast to the following version explained below which has a more complicated skill to accomplish.

4.3.14 *Kutwaa ndia* **(Rolling hoop) Version 11**

This was a more complicated skill than the preceding one. Using the same hoop as in *kutwaa ndia* described above, boys tied a string cord anywhere on its circumference. A short piece of stick was attached to the other end of the cord to be used as the handle. A lot of practice was required for a player to be able to roll this hoop by the string or cord using the piece of stick as the handle and maintain the propulsion. This was quite a scientifically ingenious skill in which kinetics were impressively utilized in its execution. To start off, the hoop is held upright by the left hand for the right handed players while the handle is held by the right hand. The hoop is then given the initial momentum by a slight push to the front using the left hand. The rest of the propulsion is then accomplished using the handle and the cord only. The principle employed resembles the pulley used to rotate the wheels of the foot-propelled sewing machines. After the initial push, the push is allowed to roll until its point of cord attachment goes past the perpendicular line made by the intersection of its diameter with its path of motion. In every rotation, when the attachment reaches the base (ground), the handle is pulled upwards and forwards in a single jerk. This pulls the cord along a slanting line of force. The forward momentum of the hoop, and the pull exerted in a straight line along the cord helps to propel the hoop in its circular motion along its path. Pulling the cord too early before its attachment to the hoop reached the highest point would merely result in a physical drag of the hoop forwards thereby breaking the propulsion. Pulling it at the top would also not be effective for it would result in an upward lift of the hoop along its centre, making it fall on one side. Therefore, the right timing must be made to pull the cord at the lowest point (ground). To ensure an upright position of the hoop during the propulsion by the use of the handle, the cord was alternately pulled from both left and right sides of the hoop.

The '*kutwaa ndia*' was very significant in teaching speed work, hand-eye coordination, timing, balance and was a way of relaxation and socialization.

4.4 Group Interaction Games

These are games involving co-operation and competition, interaction and communication among young children. These types of games are as presented:

4.4.1 *Kumbulana* (Hide and Seek game)

The *Kumbulana* (hide and seek) game was cited by thirty two respondents. According to these respondents, the game was played by young children. There was no equipment and the players used homestead facilities like houses, vegetation and ditches as hiding places. When playing away from the homestead, the areas used included gardens, trees, thickets and bushes. The participating children would divide themselves into two groups of three members per team. They agreed on the group to start by hiding or searching. The searching group members were blindfolded or closed their eyes as the other group went into hiding. At the same time they would count up to fifty after which the hiding group would respond by shouting "*kulu,*" indicating they were ready. The hiding members would change their hiding place to avoid being seen and found. On discovery of ones hide-out they would shout "*mbaii*" (you have been seen) with that member joining that group in search of their teammates. This continued until all were found and at this point, the teams changed roles.

Due to its nature of running and hiding, the game of '*Kumbulana*' cultivated fitness, thereby empowering components as endurance, agility, flexibility and speed. It also

enhanced concentration and decision making as to where to hide or search, when to change and possible/best places for search and hide.

Hide and seek was very important in preparation for real life situations as looking or avoiding an opponent/enemy, searching for lost animals or strategizing during hunting. It was also one of the best activities for socialization and recreation. The game also polished on listening skills and timing. It fostered interaction between different sex groups. The game was very popular and is still very popular up to to date though with some modifications.

4.5 Rhythmic and Singing Games

These games are characterized by rhythmic challenge, singing and dancing. They included the following games:

4.5.1 *Ithaa* (Dance competition)

This game called *ithaa* was started by the ancestors of Kamba community and was cited by thirty one respondents across Ukambani. It was played (performed) by boys and girls who were searching for marriage partners. It was performed using sisal skirts and shorts which were well decorated with red at the top and white or black colour at the bottom. Drums that were made from animal skins were used to create the rhythm. It was performed in cleared and unmarked fields which were specifically made for competitions (*kituto*). They competed by dancing and the best dancer was awarded by being given the fattest meat and a decorated skin put on her/his neck It was performed all year round during occasions that marked birth of a child, initiation and marriage during day time. The soloist led the other people in the dance that was

vigorous (mostly shaking). One was not supposed to cause fear/threaten other participants by abusing or beating but had to obey what the instructor was saying. The best dancer was awarded (crowned) the winner (had more points). If one broke any rule, he/she was taken to the clan elders and beaten as a way of being disciplined and was suspended from the competition for some time. It was performed for at least 5 hours with no resting period.

The '*ithaa*' or dance competition equipped the participants with aesthetic value, coordination as they danced with each other and general fitness. It provided a forum where people would get their future partners, hence, ensuring society's continuity.

4.6 Games of Imagination

These games include role play with the participants imitating or aping the characters attached to animals or other characters being used. These include;

4.6.1 *Ndai/ Mbano* (Riddles/ Story games/ Counting activities)

Twenty five respondents described the *ndai/ mbano* games. The games were done by almost all the members of the family with girls doing it with their mothers in the kitchen and boys doing it with their fathers around the fire place (*thome*).The games kept boys and girls awake until food was ready but most importantly they were loaded with a lot of educational values. The stories were about some animal for instance, lion, hare, hyena, leopard and so on, and people for instance, kings, parents, boys, girls, ogre and so on, who were depicted with different attributes as wisdom, hardworking, laziness, bravery, cunning, and discipline among others with appropriate consequences for each attribute exposed. These also narrated and exposed different roles as executed by different members of the society portrayed as key characters in the stories. Participants were also given riddle and other mental tasks to

solve which sharpened and empowered their thinking ability and capacity. The day's winner was determined by the end of the session and honoured with better or more food.

These games enhanced their memories (recalling), problem solving and enhanced non- formal learning by making the participants acquire desire to associate with positive and successful characters as portrayed in the activities/ stories.

4.7 Mental Games

These are memory and problem-solving games. They also include strategizing to defeat an opponent. They included;

4.7.1 *Kalata* (Board) games

These games were cited by twenty one respondents. The games were popular in Kitui and Mwingi. They spread it to the coastal region during the Akamba barter trade with the coastal people as majority of the respondents indicated. The most common board game is two ranks, with two rows of six holes and two store pits on either side. There are variations to this board; you can have more holes on either side or more rows, to create four rank boards. This is a single lap game. You move one group of seeds at a time. The game is played by two players aged five years and above for a duration of twenty minutes. The board is placed between the two players. Each player controls the row closest to him and the store on the right. To prepare to start the games one filled each hole with three seeds except the stores. For all these games you will need a board with two rows of six pots and a store at each end and up to 60 playing pieces (seeds). In play it is the position of the seeds on the board that determines whether or not one can move them, not the colour of the seed. One can begin by moving any of

the seeds on his/her side of the board, but one cannot start from his/her opponent's side of the board. Always one would pick up all the seeds in the pot he/she is moving from and place one seed in each pot as one goes around the board. Travel round the board to the right, i.e. anticlockwise. Take it in turns to sow the seeds around the board, including ones own store but skipping his/her opponent's. If the last seed that one sows goes into the store, he/she gets another turn. If the last seed one sows ends in an empty pot on ones side of the board, he/she captures that seed and all the seeds in his/her opponent's pot opposite and put all these seeds in his/her store. The game ends when one player clears all the pots on his/her side of the board. All the seeds left on the other side of the board are now theirs to count and so one should not let the other player clear his/her side of the board. The player with the most seeds in his store wins.

The game was very important in instilling the skill of decision making and strategizing to defeat the opponent. Majority of the respondents concurred that the advisors of the leaders in Ukambani were the best players in *kalata.*

4.8 Games of Environmental Context

These are games that are environmentally-induced and also performed during special events. These include *kusyima* (hunting) and *kuthambia* (swimming).

4.8.1 *Kusyima* (Hunting)

This game was cited by twenty eight respondents in Ukambani. The game was played by boys using bows and arrows in the forest. The competition was held during the dry season. It depended on which animal was to be hunted because some animals would come with seasons. No shouting or making noise was entertained. The instructor was to be obeyed by all the shooters. Before hunting, bows were placed on any part of the

body but not on the soil. Participants were not allowed to apply any perfume or wear anything such as white shirts which would not match with the environment of hunting. Breaking these rules led to disqualification and suspension for some months in the competition. The winner was the one who shot/killed many animals. The best shooter was the hero.

Hunting was very fundamental in training for skills like running, jumping and shooting. It also trained on defense skills, led to a sense of achievement and provided the community with food (meat) through the killed animals.

4.8.2 *Kuthambia* **(Swimming)**

This game was cited by twenty respondents. It was played by both boys and girls in water reservoirs such as dams and ponds (*ndia).* Competitors lined up at one end of the water reservoir being used and wait for the command to start. Interfering or disturbing other competitors led to one's disqualification. The competitor who arrived at the end of the reservoir *(ndia)* first took the first position.

kuthambia promoted unity, socialization and equipped participants with swimming and life saving skills that were very useful in countering environmental emergencies in such situations.

4.9 Discussion of Findings

This Section highlights the attributes of the traditional games of the Akamba within the three objectives of this study. These include; classification, socio-cultural settings and the significance of these games and a summary of the same.

4.9.1 Classification of the Akamba Traditional Games

In line with the conceptual framework, and guided by the objectives of this study, Cheska's scheme (1987) that has been used in similar studies in classifying traditional games in other regions such as Mount Kenya region (Wanderi, 2001) and South Africa (Burnnet and Hollander, 2002) has also been used in classifying the traditional games of the Akamba. The seven categories advanced by Cheska (1987) are accommodative of all the games of the Akamba.

A total of 23 traditional games were identified and collected although a relatively large number of the games seem to be variations of similar games; there were 2 variations of *kima* (hanging the stick)*,* 2 variations of *ndalana* (the hopping game), 2 variations of *kutwaa ndia* (rolling hoop) and 2 variations of k*ola* (the catching game)*.*

Wanderi & Gateru (2004) explained the reason for these local variations of information by pointing out that, it is quite clear and is attributed to the great diversity of African indigenous culture. Overwhelming evidence availed through research on indigenous games very superficially indicate that, cultural elements within any one ethnic group may tremendously vary from one section of the same community to the other. These variations may be basically reflected in every aspect of such a community's cultural elements including their language, indigenous games and so on (Wanderi & Gateru, 2004). Therefore most of the games are found to vary from one area of the same ethnic community to the other. This means that, a community may be regionally subdivided into differing sub-communities with their own distinct sub-cultures. The information on games collected from such a community will similarly be found to differ from each of the community's sub-community to the other. This

therefore explains how and why variations would occur amongst different interviewees in the details they give of the indigenous games from place to place within the same ethnic community as it happened in this study. However, when such variations are so distinct in occurrence and coming from independent sources which support each other, this would then necessitate the presentation of such games in two or more separate versions as they are given by the sources. If not so pronounced or the information lacks congruence and independent support, then the most commonly occurring version was adopted.

With a view to avoiding omissions and duplications of information, the analyzed data was organized and compiled strictly within the framework of the research questions and the objectives of the study. The traditional games of Akamba were also played within socio- cultural context like in hunting, grazing or various social gatherings. From the results it can be deducted that majority of children preferred to play games in which the unexpected chase provides excitement and a challenge. As Wanderi (2001) indicates, the hide-and-seek game required no apparatus, yet they offered children the physical and psychological excitement of 'the chase'. This also applied to the Akamba community as it also applied elsewhere in Africa.

Another category of the most popular games are games of challenge that provided a task in competing and in physical skill such as *ngilwa* and *kola*. Fine motor skills, hand-eye-co-ordination and concentration are required in these games which challenge an opponent in play. Most games fitted within this category involving physical skill and strategy. This confirms Sutton-Smith (1983) assertion that games often reflect what a society values. This justifies the fact that, games as alluded to,

were important in equipping the youth with skills and strategies to be able to counter external forces that threatened the community's survival.

4.9.2 The Socio-Cultural Aspects Within Which the Akamba Games Were Played

Socio-cultural aspects revealed by the participants of these games touched on many aspects of the Akamba community. The respondents in this study indicated that they lived mostly in the rural areas within relatively large family units. As children, they always had family members and/or friends to play with on the farms, home compound and grazing fields. Boys particularly went out hunting and occupied themselves with wrestling, boxing or hunting games which also involved dogs and/or the hunting and gathering of food (birds or insects) and materials (clay, sticks, grass etc.) from their natural environment. They utilized all these collections to construct toys, implements or other play items. Children used to meet in the natural environment while tending their livestock. Under these circumstances they found creative means to make their days interesting and enjoyable. They also resorted to inter-village challenges at times to prove their 'superiority' in certain forms of activity like wrestling. Droughts and other calamities such as famine that affected the community led to substantial migration to different areas resulting in a tribal mix. As children predominantly learnt indigenous games from their peers they played them with other communities. The creativity in indigenous games was to a large extent a domain of children who expressed themselves through these games. These children also used these to discover their environment. They also added cultural heritage of their own accord to these games, a situation established by Burnnet and Hollander (2002) and Geertz (1983).

People are to a large extent, products of their environments and living conditions to which they react (Burnett, 2002). This explains the popularity of water games among children who had access to rivers, lakes, dams and/or swimming ponds and absence of the same among children who did not have these facilities. The majority of the respondents indicated that they played games mainly at their respective homes, on the road paths or in open spaces or grazing fields. Only a few indicated other venues as playing areas.

Traditional games or games that carried specific cultural content and were suitable for larger groups were often structured to be played at special events which carried special meaning to certain groups such as during initiation ceremonies. A number of respondents indicated that they were introduced to traditional games such as *kima* during second initiation for boys to graduate to men. Informal social gatherings and parties were indicated as favourite occasions for playing games like i*thaa* dance. This finding corresponds with the finding by Krasilnikov (2006) that, children seemed to be predominantly responsible for creating, playing and teaching other children indigenous games. Other respondents indicated that they had learnt the games from older children or their peers and significant others, namely parents or family elders who were identified as social agents for teaching and facilitating participation in indigenous games.

The prevailing climatic conditions also impacted on the context in which games were played. Majority of games were played during dry season compared to slightly lesser participation during rain seasons. This is attributed to the fact that, games were used as a means of occupying the youth constructively when they did not have much to do

in form of family duties. With the exception of water games being played mainly during rainy season, there was no other preference expressed for games being played during specific periods. Participants indicated that games were seasonal in the sense that a particular game would be played across the entire community within a given season. Games were however mostly played as a wave. Some children would start playing a game like *lisu,* and others would follow suit. Burnett and Hollander (2002) referred to such a scenario as, 'fads come and go' a common occurrence in popular community games.

Gender patterns of play also emerged. Singing and rhythmic games were more popular among girls who perceived these as being appropriate for them. Although boys often joined in the rhythmic jumping and singing games, they would keep away from such games. Boys on the overall tended to display a liking for more aggressive and rough type of games where physical strength and bravery played a dominant part. This concurs with Smoll and Schutz (1980) findings on the differences in attitudes towards physical activity between boys and girls. They found that girls were more positive towards aesthetic activities such as dance while boys were more positive than girls towards activities that obviously involved physical challenge such as wrestling (n*gindano*). Boys most often dominated the central play areas at the grazing fields with such physically challenging games as wrestling (*ngindano).* Girls were seldom allowed to join in such games, or they would prefer to play elsewhere.

Age also impacted on game preferences and the majority of respondents indicated that they had mostly played imitating games when they were younger. Role-play and imitating adults or chasing games in which scary characters such as monsters, wolves

or mad people were imitated, were played mainly by the younger generation, whereas chasing and challenging games in which co-operation and competition between team members existed, were mostly played by older children from 11 years and above. This could be due to the fact that children were increasingly exposed to team games and were better equipped (physically, psychologically, socially and cognitively) to participate and compete in teams at a certain stage of their development. Different theoretical frameworks including the biological, psychological, social and didactical research paradigms support this conclusion (Calhoun, 1987; Cohen, 1993; Callois, 2001).

4.9.3 Significance of the Akamba Traditional Games

In line with the conceptual framework, and guided by the research questions, the traditional games of the Akamba revealed indispensable significance to an individual and the entire community. For instance, traditional games were fundamental in equipping the participants with a number of important skills, attitudes and behaviours. These skills and attitudes were important for success in work and allowed them to enjoy a fuller, happier family and community life. According to the respondents, participants in these games developed a wide range of skills and attitudes including teamwork, leadership, problem solving, decision making, communication, personal management and administrative skills. These games also built character and personal qualities such as courage, integrity and capacity to commit to a goal or purpose as well as values such as a sense of responsibility to others, respect for others, self discipline, a sense of fair play and fair dealing and honesty. They offered the individuals the opportunity to enhance the values of dedication and commitment. The fact that many skills gained through games were transferable beyond the sporting

context was central to their lives and the community as a whole. These transferable skills helped people to play a more positive role in the community and family life. Calhoun (1987) and Honeybourne (2004) have pointed out to this principle as inevitable in games situations, and having been advanced and exploited in social circles to socialize individuals to fit in the society.

The traditional games were fundamental in cultivating physical development of an individual. Traditional games of Akamba emphasized physical development. This concurs with a study by Krasilnikov (2006) and Burnnet and Hollander (2002). The community survival depended on how well its members were empowered in terms of general fitness and other life skills related to all aspects of a person. The respondents indicated that the games were not for simple entertainment but a necessity for survival. They helped participants learn to acknowledge their emotions, although indirectly. Most of the games demanded that players exercise control and maturity so as to excel, hence developing emotional maturity. Cooperation and competition made players acquire interpersonal relations. During play, they learnt to deal with frustration after a loss, with excitement after a win, with anger after getting a "bad turn," and with anxiety when pride was on the line. By playing traditional games, they developed moral and social character and learnt how to communicate politely with other players. They showed empathy to players who lost, became assertive with those who broke the rules, and learnt to control their temper when others become rowdy. This agrees with the theoretical framework advanced by Calhoun (1987) that values such as honesty, fairness, sharing, kindness and compassion are often required and negotiated through game rules. They brought a sense of self fulfillment through cultivation of confidence, self-actualization and self image, leading to personal and

social adjustment for successful sports participation as well as in a variety of life situations.

Traditional games improved social cohesion. Participants experienced a high degree of interaction with other individuals, on their own, in association with family members and as members of teams. These interactions improved interpersonal relationships, established the basis for trust and built teamwork skills that fostered social cohesion. This brought family and community cohesion. They brought families closer together. They brought people from different neighbourhoods within the community, thereby helping to build wider, stronger feelings of community. These games provided a venue for families to spend time together, to generate lively and to communicate with one another in the spirit of fun. The time spent playing with children was a time well-spent. At the end of the day, what young people remembered were the happy times spent with their parents and siblings. It would not matter to them who won or lost. They cherished those moments of togetherness, treasure and laughter. The closeness and warmth amongst family members were celebrated.

Traditional games stimulated the brain for logical thinking and strategy. Studies have shown that to keep the brain healthy, we need to frequently stimulate it. Through play or doing physical activities, our brain stays fit (Cox, 1998). Players were expected to recall rules, terms and tactics in the games and in given situations.

Traditional games were a valuable educational tool in instilling the societal values to the youth. This concurs with the findings by Cohen (1993), Callois (2001) and Honeybourne (2004). Learning through play was one of the ways of teaching life lessons to participants. It was the main mean, form and method of teaching and

training. They taught participants positive lessons about responsibility, respect, discipline, obedience, sportsmanship and cooperation which impacted positively on the general conduct of the participants. Being characterized by rules and regulations that were binding on the players, all players had to follow them. There was a penalty on their violation. One could never win a match without following the laws of the game. This taught the participants the importance of the laws. It made clear how important it was to follow the rules and regulations. This helped in producing much disciplined community members hence, serving the role of preparing the players for life in society as advocated by Calhoun (1987) and Honeybourne (2004). They taught how to cooperate with one another and achieve success. It was at the playground where team spirit, cooperation and endurance could be taught best; games taught how to ignore individual interests for the sake of greater interests of the team and society. This teaching of sacrifice was of great social and community interest. They taught fair play and faith in equality and justice. They enabled one to take defeat and victory in a cheerful spirit. This is a very important dimension in today's world where peace, equality and justice have been tended to be compromised.

Traditional games played a critical role in fostering and maintaining ethnic and group identity among the people of Ukambani. The community's solidarity and way of life were demonstrated through the games. They portrayed the Akamba culture in all its aspects. As noted by Schein (1995) a society without identity lacks the basic consciousness and pillar upon which to base its political aspirations, economic development and social identity and hence cannot deal effectively with both internal and external problems and challenges facing them. That identity distinguishes the members of one group or category of people to another, thus defining a people and

their roles in the society (Hofstede, 1984). This is in agreement with the findings by Sutton- Smith (1979), Underwood (1881) and Eichberg (2005). Games were very important source of fun, recreation and relaxation. They provided the best use of leisure time. They allowed an outlet to suppressed energy. This agrees with what Marano (1999) and Terr (1999) advanced. It helped a lot in maintaining peace and tranquility. It indicated that, children played first to entertain and amuse themselves with games that they found enjoyable, fun and challenging. This perception relates to the relaxation theory that postulates that play is in essence revitalizing and essential to serve as balance against stress from survival and occupational activities as captured in the conceptual framework. Kinesthetic experiences of 'rough play', complex and repetitive rhythmic movement patterns, applying motor skills and co-ordination challenges stimulate the seeking and enjoyment of excitement. Satisfaction derived from such motor challenges corresponds with the popularity of chasing, challenging and competitive games in which the experience of success and recognition is highly acclaimed. This finding is substantiated by psycho-biological and social theories advanced by Avedon & Sutton- Smith (1979) as captured in the conceptual framework. The latter also supports the notion of children to demonstrate acceptable social values ('behaving as children' and 'keeping out of trouble'), and engage in activities which contribute to social bonding and interaction with friends.

4.9.4 Summary

In line with the objectives of this study, the traditional games of the Akamba fitted within Chaska's (1987) classification as it has been the case in other regions. The games were played within the community's socio- cultural settings. This means that the challenges that would have hindered participation in the games such as

inadequacy of facilities and equipment as it is with the modern games were overcame. Traditional games in the Akamba community carried with them a lot of value that made it necessary for them to be preserved and passed from one generation to another within the setting of the indigenous culture. However, they still require to be preserved through documentation and formalization for the purpose of cultural identity through space and time.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for policy and practice and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The traditional games of the Akamba fitted within Cheska's (1987) Scheme as follows;

a) Three games that namely, *kuselana vinya* (tug-of-war), *nginano* (wrestling) and *kusemba* (racing games) fitted within games of physical challenge.

b) Fourteen games involved physical skill and strategy. These include; *ndia*(spearing a rolling hoop)*, kukunya mukuni* (javelin)*, malingi* (trapping a rolling hoop)*, kola* (tossing game)*, kukuthana* (bow-and-arrows)*, lisu* (dodging the ball)*, kima* (hanging the stick)*, mbila* (cone), *kwikya maangi* (Long distance shooting), *ngilwa* (high jumps), *kuatha nzuri* (shooting plants like sisal)*, mwangi/ kyuthi* (marksmanship), *kuutha/manda/ ndalana* (hopping game) and *kutwaa ndia* (rolling hoop).

c) *Kumbulana* (hide and seek game) fitted under group interaction.

d) Rhythm and singing games comprised of *ithaa* (dance competition).

e) Games of imagination included *ndai/ mbano* (riddles/ story games/counting activities).

f) Mental games included *Kalata* (board) games.

g) *Kusyima* (hunting) and *kuthambia* (swimming) fitted under the category of games of Environmental context.

The facilities and equipment used included; marked areas on the ground for instance circles, squires, rectangles, holes; water reservoirs such as ponds and rivers; thickets and bushes; bows, arrows, sticks, stones, improvised balls, wooden cones, boards, whips, pieces of pottery, seeds and ropes.

The socio- cultural settings within which traditional games of Akamba were performed included;

i. Playing was done in the natural environment such as on the farms, home compound and grazing fields.

ii. Children predominantly learnt indigenous games from their peers and significant others.

iii. Some games were done during community ceremonies such as initiation such as *kima* (hanging the stick) and *kukuthana* (bow- and-arrows) and marriage such as *ithaa* (dance competition).

iv. There was gender preference with some done by boys such as *kuselana vinya* (wrestling)*, kukuthana* (bows- and-arrows)*, kukunya mukuni* (javelin)*, malingi* (trapping a rolling hoop)*, kwikya* maangi (long distance shooting)*, kuatha nzuri* (shooting plants like sisal) *and kusyima* (hunting)and others by girls such as *kola*(tossing game)*, ndalana* (hopping game)*, lisu* (dodging the ball) *and kyuthi* (marksmanship).

v. Some games were done as per the available facilities and opportunities. For instance the popularity of water games was quite clear among children who

had access to dams and/or swimming ponds and the absence thereof among children who did not have these facilities.

vi. Informal social gatherings such as evening fire place gatherings *(thome)* and parties such as wedding ceremonies were indicated as favourite occasions for playing games that carried specific cultural content and were suitable for larger groups.

vii. The majority of games were played during dry seasons such as n*gilwa* (high jumps)*, kukunya mukuni* (javelin)*, kima* (hanging the stick)*, malingi* (trapping a rolling hoop)*, kwikya maangi* (shooting) and *kukuthana* (bow-and-arrows) compared to slightly lesser participation during rainy season. With the exception of water games being played mainly during rainy season such as *kuthambia* (swimming) and *kuatha nzuri* (shooting plants like sisal) there was no other preference expressed for games being played during specific periods.

The significance of the games to the individuals and the community were as outlined below. These were namely:

i. Improving physical strength and health to defend the community.

ii. Fun and enjoyment.

iii. Improving social and life skills.

iv. Educational tool in instilling the societal values to the youth.

v. Stimulated the brain through logical thinking and strategy.

vi. Fostered and maintained ethnic and group identity among the Akamba community.

vii. Building cohesion in the community.

viii.   Provided an avenue for families to spend time together.

 ix.   Development of character and personality qualities.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that, the Akamba had traditional games that have been cited by the elderly who were the respondents in this study. Their traditional games fit in the classification advanced by Cheska (1987). They were accompanied by elaborate rules and regulations as well as well designed facilities and equipment for every game. The games were held within the community's social- cultural settings and the Akamba traditional games had specific social, economic and cultural significance to the individual and the community.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy Formulation and Practice

Based on the research findings of this study, the following policy recommendations were made:

1. The historical information availed by this study is very relevant to Physical Education curriculum developers and Ministry of Education by enriching the existing knowledge and information on traditional games in Kenya. Their adoption in the curriculum will go a long way in achieving the national goals of Education.

2. There is need to include these games in the books for reference. This could be utilized in school and outdoor activities so that many people can enjoy the benefits that accrue from these games.

3. The Kenya National Sport Council and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports need to spearhead the formation of a national federation for the traditional games in Kenya as a way of promoting and reviving these games.

4. Borrowing a leaf from what has been done in other parts of the world as revealed in the study, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports needs to take advantage of globalization and technology to popularize these games from this end and eventually to other regions.

5. Kenya National Sports Council and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and all other stakeholders like the communities need to organize and participate in annual festivals for traditional games to create awareness.

6. The Ministry of Culture and Social Services should carry out sensitization of masses through the community based organizations, mass media and non-governmental organizations about socio-cultural and health benefits of traditional games.

7. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with Kenya Institute of Education should supervise and insist on the teaching of local traditional games in the learning institutions especially during Physical Education lessons.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The following are suggested as possible areas for further research.

a) There could be many other aspects related to traditional games in addition to the issues which this research has addressed. The research did not address the issue concerning how and the extent to which the modern sports and games have impacted on the indigenous games. There is a need therefore to conduct an investigation on this.

b) This study was delimited to only one community in Kenya and will be therefore a worthwhile undertaking to extend tentacles to research on other Kenyan communities' traditional games so as to have a richer and more inclusive documentation on national heritage for reference through space and time.

c) One scenario exposed by this study is that there seems to be a lot of similarities in traditional games of different parts of the world. An investigation into the commonality of these games could be looked into so that a common base and harmonization of these games could be established.

d) Gender disparity related to participation in these games emerged during this study. Further study to establish the underpinnings behind this state will be of value so as to assist in addressing such a gap in other areas of life including in the modern sports and games.

e) There is a need to carry out a comparative investigation of traditional games and modern games in all aspects so as to expose the potentials and significance as well as how they relate generally.

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APPENDIX A:
GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF RESEARCH AREA
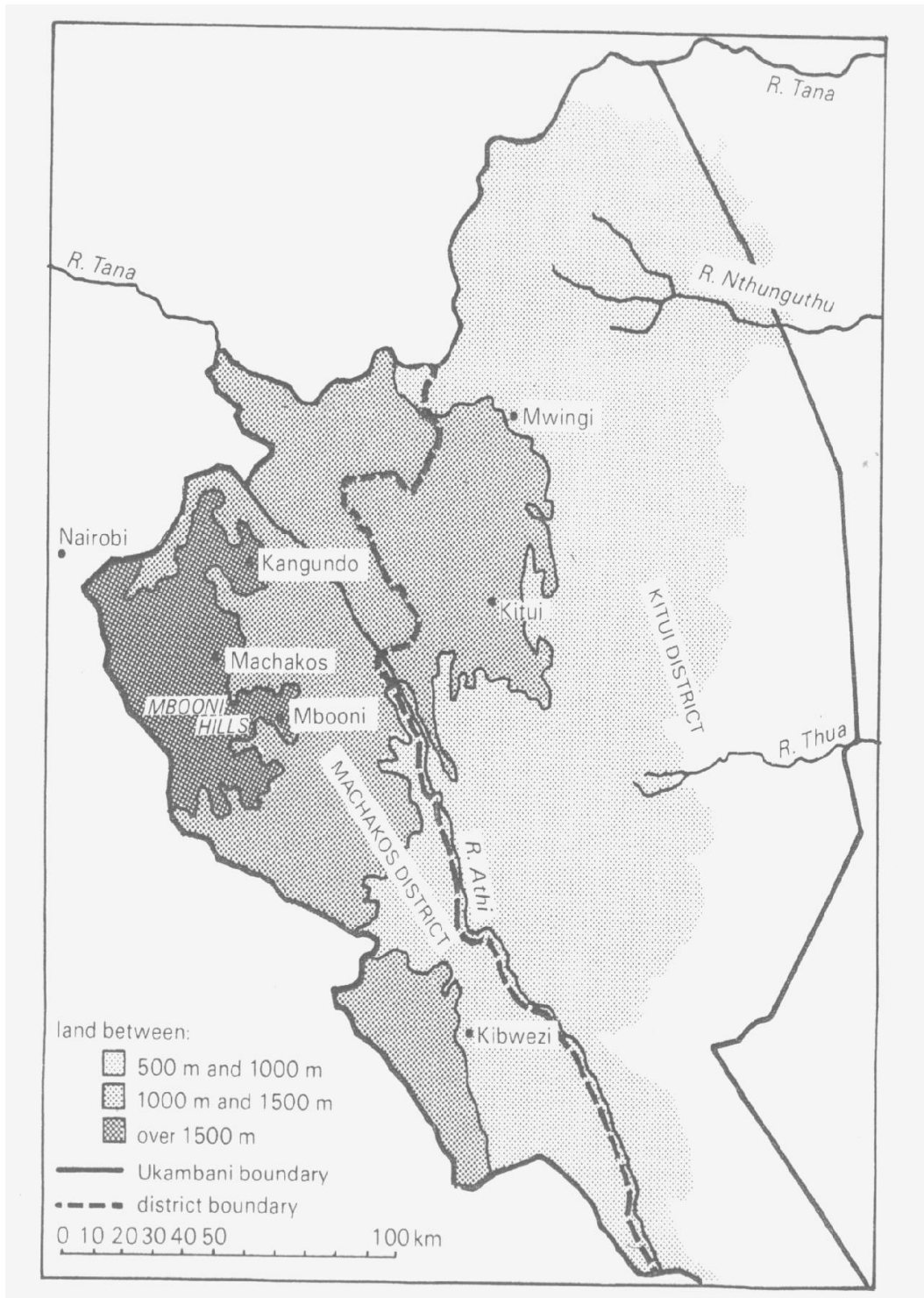
Map of the Akamba homelands (Ukambani)

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

a) What were the various forms of traditional games that existed among the people of Ukambani and how they were performed?

b) Who were the participants in the traditional games of the people of Ukambani?

c) What kinds of equipment and facilities were used in traditional games of the people of Ukambani?

d) What was the socio-cultural setting within which the people of Ukambani traditional games were undertaken?

e) What was the significance of each of the traditional game to the participants and the community?

f) How do traditional games of the people of Ukambani fit within formal classification used in classifying other traditional games?

APPENDIX C:

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES IN EACH DISTRICT AS PER THE DIVISIONS/AREAS

Machakos District

Division	Age Range	Number
Machakos Central	80- 98	12
Kangundo	78- 89	9
Yatta	82- 102	11
Kalama	77- 89	13
Yathui	82- 99	16
Masinga	74- 88	12
Ndithini	86- 90	9
Mwala	83- 106	14
Kathiani	70- 82	7
Athi- River	72- 88	<u>9</u>
Sub Total I		**<u>112</u>**

Makueni District

Division	Age Range	Number
Kilome	71- 89	11
Kaiti	74- 78	15
Nzaui	77- 100	7
Kibwezi	72- 86	9
Mukaa	71- 87	10
Mtito Andei	70- 77	11
Nguu	71- 72	8
Kisau	70- 78	10

Kilungu	72- 80	6
Kasikeu	71- 81	9
Mulala	71- 77	11
Mbooni	73 – 101	9
Tulimani	71- 89	7
Kathonzweni	73- 80	<u>12</u>
Sub Total II		<u>**135**</u>

Kitui District

Division	Age Range	Number
Kitui Central	71- 79	8
Mutonguni	73- 100	7
Matinyani	74- 99	10
Yatta	71- 96	6
Mutomo	70- 86	9
Mutitu	73- 89	11
Mwitika	72- 88	9
Mutha	70- 82	10
Ikutha	71- 79	8
Kyuluni	71- 84	7
Katulani	72- 84	<u>7</u>
Sub Total III		<u>**90**</u>

Mwingi District

Division	Age Range	Number
Mwingi Central	78- 87	11
Ngomeni	72- 84	9
Nuu	71- 94	7
Kyuso	73- 78	9
Muumoni	71- 82	10
Nguni	75- 79	8
Tharaka	74- 98	11
Syeikulu	72- 84	8
Mingwani	71- 88	_7_
Sub Total IV		**80**
Grand Total		**417**

APPENDIX D:

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Telegrams: EDUCATION", Nairobi
Fax No.
Telephone: 318581
When replying please quote
MOEST 13/001/35C 537/3

JOGOO HOUSE
HARAMBEE AVENUE
P.O. Box 30040
NAIROBI
KENYA

24TH April 2007

**Kithuka Raphael Munyao
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844
NAIROBI**

Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION
Following your application to conduct research on "Study of the traditional games of the people of Ukambani, Kenya". This is to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out research in Machakos, Kitui, Mwingi and Makueni districts for a period ending 30th December 2008.

You are advised to report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officers in the mentioned districts before undertaking on your project.

Upon completion of your research project you are expected to submit two copies of your research findings to this office.

Yours faithfully

**B. O. ADEWA
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY
C.C.
The District Commissioner
Machakos District
Kitui District
Mwingi district
Makueni District**