

TRADITIONAL GAMES AND DANCES OF MOUNT KENYA REGION CULTURE - EDUCATIONAL APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

At the level of the traditional culture, physical education activities including games and dances had a collective, pro-life, functional inclination. Among the people of the Mount Kenya region in central Kenya, these activities were of a wide range including several forms of dances by big-boys; the "Uthi" game for old men and many of these activities were vigorous and potentially dangerous. A typical example was the Kikuyu "Muumburo" dance performed by mature boys before the circumcision season. Other potentially dangerous activities included the Meru "Ndikano" (Wrestling) and "kiigumi" dances of the older mature Meru boys who were ready for circumcision. Other forms of dances such as Kikuyu marriage dances were slow in action and the use of language provided for the main attraction and thrill both for the dancers and spectators. The dances for warriors as well as a forum for social display of their strength and might. The traditional activities were a way of life. The children's games enhanced preparatory skills to adult life while those for young men enhanced warfare or work-related skills required for day-to-day activities. The dances were a means of entertainment, a means of bringing people together and a means to health and fitness. Many other activities fulfilled this multi-faceted function, including the widespread wrestling matches. Above all, these activities which were intricately interwoven in the cultural fabric, enhanced social cohesion, communal responsibility and group survival.

Key words: Culture, physical activities, pro-life, work-related skills.