

**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIGENOUS GAMES AMONG THE
BA-PHALABORWA OF THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I , Mohlago Tracey Malesa hereby declare that the topic : “ The importance of the indigenous games among the Ba-Phalaborwa of the Limpopo Province” is the result of my own work except where sources have been acknowledged .


Signature

30/07/2012
Date

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my deceased father, Morape Phineas Malesa as well as my late son Mbio Mandlazi.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The indigenous games are as old as humankind itself. Many years before the colonisation of South Africa, people had their own indigenous games. The knowledge of indigenous games was passed on from generation to generation orally and practically. The rural children learned to play these games at home from their brothers and sisters before they could learn other games in the community because home is where informal education begins. Beashel and Taylor (1988:99) mention that people had always played and enjoyed their games. The desire to play has always been strong among Africans. Adults used to play games like, 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' (board games) for relaxation and enjoyment.

The indigenous games in Africa have been an expression of local people's culture and social realities. According to Bellard (www.Sacs 2004) participation in indigenous games emphasizes physical development, skill training and maintenance, re-enforcement of values and interaction between communities. Booth (1988:68) says that each population group have their own 'geopolitical home kind' to develop their talents and skills from birth. The indigenous games have always acted as a vehicle of change in the reclamation of peoples' culture; unfortunately African indigenous games are neglected.

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (1993: 6) in the early centuries, before reading and writing were common, individuals developed knowledge of the world around them through two means. One way was through personal experiences and observations of others' experiences. They then passed their knowledge to the next generation in the form of story-telling. The second way was by means of games. The knowledge of games too was passed on orally and in the form of play from generation to generation.

Games such as '*moruba*' (board game), '*diketo*' (pebble throwing), '*kgati*' (rope skipping), '*morabaraba*' (board game) and many others are the remnants of our infinite past which have been handed down from generation to generation by the members of community's word of mouth and these games are still prevalent amongst the community of Phalaborwa.

1.2 Problem statement

Ntuli indicates that Mpofo, the provincial indigenous games co-ordinator in Limpopo says that research indicated that most of the province's residence would like to rediscover the games as part of their lost culture (www.lowveldinfo 22.04.2004). After the demise of apartheid people needed to discover who they were and who they really are. This process of discovery can be a long one but it is very essential. The study attempts to make input to this process of self-rediscovery.

One area where this study can make contribution is the rediscovery of indigenous African games. These games are either ignored or vanishing and yet they were constituent part of African life and entertainment. Indigenous games can be viewed from a narrow perspective of play, enjoyment and recreational but, analysis of games reveals concerns that are not usually considered (Nyaki 22.04.2004). The indigenous games should be equally sponsored like Western games.

Lack of acknowledgement of indigenous games by the leaders and policy-makers in the Limpopo Province and other provinces led to immense neglect of the games in the Province and South Africa at large. Ba-Phalaborwa like other South African communities, have knowledge of their traditional games but they do not draw enough benefit from them as they are looked down upon as primitive and insignificant.

These games form a part of people's heritage as already stated. Odora Hoppers (2002:8) says that local communities are termed knowledge-rich, but economically poor. This means that local communities have resources that are not used to benefit them. Rural communities play the games for relaxation and entertainment only and not for commercial purposes.

Recreation and language are intertwined. When games are played, people use language to communicate and to work well with each other. For people to enjoy and be entertained, language should take place. Ba-Phalaborwa community like other South African disadvantaged communities are Africans who know little about Western languages, as such foreign languages may have contributed to the lack of knowledge of the indigenous games due to the fact that those who were knowledgeable about the games failed to express their ideas in foreign languages when the developers of the games approached them.

Ntuli (2002:53) points out that language as a conveyer of thoughts, philosophies and ideologies, was deployed to deprive African people of their right to define and express themselves and their sensibilities. Most people in Phalaborwa do not understand Western languages and as such, fail to communicate meaningfully in those languages. Learning these Western languages in order to understand their games is too costly. The domination of westernisation has undermined African culture to a large measure. In the remote rural areas the conflict between the traditional games and Western games is however, still observable.

To look at the history of sport is to look at the social history of a society. Sport reflects the society in which it is found (Beashel and Taylor 1988:99). The current games played around the Phalaborwa district, have been imported from the Western countries. Indigenous games are alienated because of Western games that are always traded with huge financial support. Coplan (1985:103) writes that sport was exported very successfully and greatly influenced the whole pattern of world sport development.

In South Africa games are not integrated even after democracy as sometimes claimed by sport authorities. Beashel and Taylor (1988:162) mention that the Sports Council group that travelled to South Africa to see for themselves the progress made towards multi-racial sport. They found that although South Africa claimed that much of its sports were integrated, in practice that was not the case.

African games are not written down; parents and community leaders have to orally transmit their knowledge to the offspring. Non-documentation may have contributed towards their vanishing. Ki-Zerbo (1990:239) quotes Amadou Hamparte Ba, who said; “when an elder dies in Africa, is a library that burns” It can be said that an elder’s knowledge is the equivalent of the unique and living

manuscript. On a day-to-day, such living manuscripts pass away and Africa's school system thus loses more of the roots of its cultural truth. Global influences have a mark on the erosion and adaptation of the games. These games were neglected in historical and anthropological accounts of the western (Bellard: www.Sacs 2004).

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to explore the importance of the indigenous games to the Ba- Phalaborwa.

1.3.2 Objectives

- To investigate the importance of the indigenous games among the Ba-Phalaborwa.
- To explore how the games have been marginalised.
- To propose new ways of reviving the games.

1.4 Operational indicators and definitions

1.4.1 Indigenous game

Indigenous games are an integral component of indigenous knowledge systems. These games are usually viewed by players from the narrow perspective of play, enjoyment and recreation. Without games life can be dull and boring. People depend on the games as a means of entertainment.

1.4.2 Games

Game is a mental or physical contest played according to rules. Games are usually played for fun but they can also provide excitement, challenge and relaxation. Some games promote mental, physical and social skills. To play a game, players may need a good memory, physical agility, or an understanding.

Probabilities of games may also require skills at guessing what players are thinking or an ability to visualise changing source patterns of pieces on a board (Grolier Incorporation 2000:71).

1.4.3 Ba-Phalaborwa

According to Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipal Council (March: 2001) the name Phalaborwa gained its origin from Ba-Phalaborwa tribe who started mining copper in the area decades ago. They were successful traders in copper and they referred to the place as ‘Phalaborwa’ meaning ‘better than the south’ because of the minerals found in Phalaborwa. Ba-Phalaborwa therefore refers to the inhabitants of Phalaborwa.

1.4.4 ‘Diketo’

According to Makgamatha (2000: 43) the name ‘*diketo*’ is derived from the verb ‘*hoketa*’ (to knock against something). It is a game played with ‘*diketo*’ (pebbles). One stone is thrown into the air and instantly when the stone is in the air, the hand scoops ‘*diketo*’ (pebbles) out of the hole. The stone is thrown up again and the hand returns the pebbles in the hole excepting one pebble. Should all the pebbles be returned into the hole without leaving one behind, this is regarded as a default. ‘*Diketo*’ is a game which requires fast reflexes and good hand-eye co-ordination.

1.4.5 ‘Moruba’

‘Moruba’ is a men’s board game which requires all the mental agility and concentration like in chess or backgammon. It is particularly popular among the mining communities and is also played in neighbouring countries.

1.4.6 ‘Morabaraba’

‘Morabaraba’ is a game played in the holes dug on the ground. The holes are called ‘kraals’ and the pebbles ‘cows’ because the number of cows one owns still measures the wealth of an African person. The cow is therefore a very valuable commodity for the Africans. It is the equivalence of money in the

Westernised world. The 'kraal' is the homestead of the African village. It consists of round huts, usually made of grass or mud huts, which are placed in a circle. The king's kraal obviously belonged to the head of the village.

1.4.7 'Kgati'

'Kgati' (skipping rope) is a vigorous rope skipping game played by young girls and women for fitness and weight loss. Masiea (1973: 43) indicates that the skipping rope game is basically an exercise for the legs and that the game is never played inside the village because it is believed that it may cause an epidemic or some other form of ill-luck to the residents. The researcher differs with Masiea on the view that a game of 'kgati' (skipping rope) is played inside the village. The way the games are played can differ from one place to the other.

1.5 Significance of the study

Games play a pivotal role in peoples' lives to an extent that they are hard to die to date. They are played at homes, schools, taxi ranks and many other places around Phalaborwa yet they are on the verge of disappearing. The present study tries to establish the reasons for the observable disappearance of the games; investigates the significance of the games to the Ba- Phalaborwa and explores the ways in which they could be incorporated to school games in the Limpopo Province.

Because of historical dominance of western culture, the games run the risk of disappearing and yet these games sustained African communities for centuries. Bellard (www.Sacs 2004) points out that legends have it that African chiefs used to select the best 'morabaraba' (board game) players to serve as advisers in their traditional councils.

If the indigenous games can be reclaimed and be played and sponsored like most games such as soccer and swimming, poverty and crime can be alleviated. These games again can contribute greatly in sharpening the intelligence of learners as games as like 'moruba' and 'morabaraba'(board games) require more concentration, and eye-hand co-ordination as in 'diketo'(pebble throwing game). The

more people are not engaged in something, the more they are likely to commit crime, hence the undertaking of this study.

Moshoeledi (www.suntimes 2001) one of indigenous games players mentions that he got interested in the games because he had to concentrate a lot, and that had helped him pay more attention to school work and books. Maseko (www.suntimes 2001) adds that if this generation could learn how to play 'morabaraba' (board game), they would be able to have a longer attention span.

Maseko (www.suntimes 2001) mentions that it would be wonderful if the traditional games could be made into national sports and maybe the Olympics. He adds that it would be nice to know that people have taken skills that were passed on to them by older people and turned them into a sport that the whole world can take part in.

Nyaki says that whenever indigenous games are played, spectators become overwhelmed with joy as they are reminded of their olden days. He mentions that the former Minister of Sports, Makhenkhensi Stofile jumped up and down his seat, exhorting young participants to get stuck into each other as they competed at games which like so much of this country's heritage, face extinction. As they watched, many of the elderly spectators doubtless experience flashback time to time when they too played those games in townships, streets and villages (www.inasp 2004). This statement shows that indigenous games are important as the study states.

A combination of promotion of games can serve as a vehicle for the elimination of poverty within rural communities because people can make use of playing games to earn a living. Indigenous games can also serve as a tool for the alleviation of the causes of crime as people will be engaged in games rather than idling.

The love of sports by Ba-Phalaborwa underlines the importance of the games to them. Research will culminate academic report on the crucial retention of knowledge of these games. It is also significant to note how these games persisted despite attacks from other games like tennis and so forth, to date. Both elderly and leaders show enthusiasm when the games are played. It is in this context that this study attempts to explore the state of importance and relevance of the indigenous games among the Ba-Phalaborwa.

1.6 Research questions

The following research questions will be answered.

1.6.1 What is the impact of indigenous games on the life of Ba-Phalaborwa?

1.6.2 How can South African society benefit from the indigenous games?

1.6.3 What measures could be taken to protect, develop and promote indigenous games in South Africa today?

1.7 Literature review

Although other authors have written about games, little has been written about indigenous games played in rural areas of South Africa. Most games written about are Western. Masiea (1973:3) in his work indicates that the missionaries could not do much to preserve these traditions because they were still not part of the Bapedi culture at that stage.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 147) in their work indicate that centuries ago, when reading and writing were not yet developed, people shared their observations and experiences through detailed oral descriptions that were later combined into a series of stories. These stories helped others understand what was previously observed or experienced and provided a base for extending knowledge of new experiences. In the absence of enough noteworthy books on this subject, this study will depend on extensive research.

Although Booth (1988: 86) shows that the fact that each population group have their own 'geopolitical homeland' to develop their talents and skills from birth, Ba-Phalaborwa people had less chance to develop their talents and skills further on games due to lack of resources. As a result, the indigenous games were dominated by western games.

Both Moshoeledi (www.suntimes 2001) and Maseko (www.suntimes 2001) in the statement they showed that they are enthusiastic about the indigenous games yet they did not mention how communities should be encouraged to play the games so that they could gain recognition like games

such as cricket, tennis and soccer. Communities should first compete in indigenous games among themselves, then make tournaments inviting nearby communities because they should take one step at a time.

Beashel and Taylor (1988: 99) indicate that sport reflects the society in which it is found. This is however, not the case among the Ba-Phalaborwa whose indigenous sports are dominated by Western games. For the society to gain their pride in the indigenous games they should first group themselves together; find ways and means on how they can reclaim the games as part of their heritage.

On the other hand, Coplan (1985:246) has shown concern that many semi-urban and rural areas of South Africa need to discover their past social history in order to embrace the process of cultural transformation. Although he does not mention how South Africans can rediscover their past, indigenous games are one of the tools that South Africans can make use of to rediscover their past.

Booth (1988:41) has discovered that the 1981 survey on 'important problems' among the Blacks identified lack of recreational facilities to be very high. Statement such as this shows some of the causative factors of the vanishing of the indigenous games. Although indigenous games are inexpensive, recreational facilities are a problem experienced by rural communities of this country even today. For the indigenous games to be on the limelight there should be facilities such as playgrounds and community halls where they could be played.

Africans at the time of colonisation had no writing skills until the missionaries created it. Games therefore, could not be documented to ensure their preservation for the future generation.

Cohen, Normann and Snyman (1993: 14) maintain that indigenous knowledge as local knowledge that is unique to a society. The indigenous games form part of Ba-Phalaborwa community's local knowledge but, they are on the edge of vanishing and this leads to these communities' shortage of some of their heritage. Indigenous games have been partly lost or forgotten hence, this study.

1.8 Theoretical framework

Borgatts and Chase (www.analytictech 2004) write that theoretical frameworks are also important in exploratory studies, where you really don't know much about what is going on and are trying to learn more. Giddens (1993:705) mentions that sociology is about our own lives and our own behaviour and studying ourselves is the most complex and difficult endeavour. He further states that in all academic disciplines ... there is far more disagreement over theoretical approaches. For this reason, the researcher has chosen interpretative framework as theoretical lenses through which the study could be undertaken.

1.8.1 Interpretive framework

Although there are many frameworks in anthropological research, the researcher finds interpretative framework suitable to the phenomenon under study. The researcher investigates that which is meaningful to the people being studied and how individuals experience their daily life regarding the indigenous games. In doing so an interpretative approach is adopted. As an exploratory study, the researcher deploys interpretative framework to understand the research topic and to be able to gather more information through investigations.

There will be social interactions between the researcher and the community under which the research will take place and through interpretative approach, the researcher will be able to interpret the situation and ways from the community, through which games can benefit them. People possess an internal sense of reality.

Social interactions and constructed meaningful systems explain much on the topic under research. The problem therefore is about the present status of the indigenous games in relation to the imported games in Phalaborwa. A new theory which may help in the integration of African and Western games may emerge from the study which may serve as a guiding formula for policy-makers.

1.9 Research methodology

The research process is qualitative in approach where little information exists on the topic. Through qualitative approach, the researcher was able to define the importance of the indigenous games. Qualitative approach evolves around description, investigation, interpretation and evaluation. The researcher was able to gain insight about the nature of the games, develop the idea and discover the problem that exists within the indigenous games.

MacMillan and Schumacher (1993:14) point out that qualitative research is based more on what they call “naturalistic phenomenological” philosophy, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of the situation.

1.9.1 Research design

In order to get information from the participants during interviews, a plan on how research is going to take place should be done. Welman (1991:46) defines research design as the plan according to which one finds research participants and collect information from them. The researcher finds the participants and collects information from them by means of interviews.

1.9.2 Data collection

Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 147) mention that to answer some research questions, we cannot skim across the surface. We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of a phenomenon we are studying. In qualitative research one has indeed to dig deep; collect numerous forms of data and examine them from the various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation.

The researcher used participant observation as a tool for data collection. Participant observation is cheap and enhances close contact. The researcher made close contact with the people and also take part in the games as they are played. Giddens (1993: 686) in his work indicates that fieldwork where it is successful provides much richer information about social life than most other research methods.

The researcher intermingled with the people to get an overall idea of the games. Key informants who provided information and insight to the indigenous games were identified. Neuman (2000: 71) states that the researcher shares the feelings and interpretations of the people he or she studies and sees things through their eyes. The researcher stayed with the community as an observer, interviewer and listener. The notes were also taken by the researcher.

Data was collected in the form of interviews. The researcher conducted interviews to gather information and to gain insight about the topic under study. The games that the researcher focused on are 'morabaraba' (board game), 'moruba' (board game), 'diketo' (pebble throwing), 'kgati' (rope skipping) 'melamo' (stick fighting) and 'matswele' (fist fighting).

1.9.3 Sampling

Kerlinger (1986:198) describes sampling as the taking of any portion of a population or universe. As the purpose of sampling is to gather information about the games, the researcher's sampling consisted of elderly people who have experience in the indigenous games and selected individuals for observation while the game was played as well as regular spectators.

1.9.4 Data analysis

Data collection and data analysis work hand in hand. Erlandson (1993: 341) points out that as data is gathered, it is analysed. The content of the recorded interviews were analysed by the researcher to see the importance of the games as an entertainment phenomenon.

Wolcott (2001:152) mentions that data collection and data analysis often occur simultaneously. The analysis typically often proceeds in description and interpretation. When the information has been collected the researcher organises it into a logical structure.

1.10 Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality

Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality is situated on the North-Eastern part of South Africa in the Limpopo Province. It is one of the four local municipalities in the Mopani District. The Municipality has a geographical area of 3,004.88km² that constitutes 27% of the Mopani District. The Municipality serves as a gateway to the Kruger National Park and the Transfontier Park through the Mozambique Channel. The population of Ba-Phalaborwa as estimated in the late 2010 statistics was 109,468 with 25 villages (Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality Council, August 2011).

The Municipality is renowned for its mining activities. Copper and phosphate ores are the most mined natural resources in the area, produced by the Phalaborwa Mining Company (PMC) and FOSKOR (Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality Council, March 2001).

1.11 Presentation

Chapter one in this research is about the background of the problem. In chapter two, focus is laid on the importance of the indigenous games and how they are played. Chapter three discusses the values and uses of the games. Chapter four has to do with fieldwork and findings and the last chapter which is chapter five, is about conclusions and recommendations with regard to the topic under study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INDIGENOUS GAMES AND HOW THEY ARE PLAYED

2.1 Introduction

The economic influence of the indigenous games bring along changes in the place of sports, although they have been neglected and some undergone modifications they still remain a heritage to the people of Phalaborwa. The games are still simple to play, accessible to people and inexpensive. They are part of oral culture amongst Ba-Phalaborwa.

The indigenous games are played at different times using different techniques and instruments. Observations and imitations take a lead in learning how to play the games. The young males and females observe their brothers and sisters as the games are played. They in turn imitate them. The indigenous games are not articulated like other games. This could be because they were marginalized.

These games are not documented as alluded in the previous chapter, but passed on from generation to generation through the word of mouth, observation and participation. This process of assimilation has been ongoing for centuries unnumbered. Imitation is one way of learning. Imitation takes place for example, when girls observe their sisters and mothers play.

There are games that Ba-Phalaborwa play even to date. Games such as '*kgati*' (skipping rope), '*diketo*' (stone throwing), '*moruba*' (a board game), '*morabaraba*' (a board game) and '*melamo*' (stick fighting) are prevalent in Phalaborwa. There are various types of games which are still played in Phalaborwa to date. The games here are categorized into groups. They are divided into memory games, skill games, and motivational games.

2.2 Memory games

Memory games are games which the style of playing, the time and aim thereof, remain the same. The ability and power of an individual player to remember how the game is played is embedded in this type of games. Memory games comprise of ‘*kgati*’ (skipping rope), ‘*diketo*’ (pebble throwing), and ‘*dibeke*’ (ball throwing).

2.2.1. ‘*Kgati*’ (skipping rope)



Figure 1 Schematic representation of ‘*kgati*’ (skipping rope)

‘*Kgati*’ (skipping rope) is played by both boys and girls especially teenagers. According to Hellmann in Archer and Bouillon (1982:131) skipping rope is a favorite pastime of both boys and girls. Children play this game during the day. Women also play ‘*kgati*’ (skipping rope) for weight loss. Nowadays both men and women use this game for physical training in the morning and in the afternoon at their homes. It is also a means of learning how to count in children. The aim of the game is to entertain, socialize, compete, exercise and win.

How the game is played

- A bare hard place in the yard but where players cannot get hurt.
- A rope of about three meters made out of plastic.
- Three people are required. Two swing the rope and the third one skips it. If there are only two people, a tree or any planted pole can replace the third person. The rope can be tied against a tree. Then the other person will swing the rope whereas the second one skips.
- Two groups consisting of three, four or even ten members can play the game depending on the number of participants available and how long the rope could be.

The rules of the game

The rule of the game is that as the two swingers swing the rope, the participant skips the rope. Should the rope touch the body, especially on the ankles, the player is defaulted and disqualified.

The variations

One person swings and skips.

- One person can swing the rope and skip at the same time. He or she skips as many times as he or she can or until he or she is tired. People who want to be fit mostly do this variation. It can be done by boys and girls, men and women.

Variations for young children

Children especially those in grade one to three use this variation to count skipping with both legs at the same time. When they skip the rope they sing children songs which comprise of small sentences which mostly repeat itself. In this variation children sing:

‘Tee, pedi

Ga tee, ga bedi

Ga tee, ga bedi

Ga tee, ga pedi'

(One, two

Once, twice

Once, twice

Once, twice)

The variation assists the young children not to default when they skip count. They sing while the rope touches the ground before they skip. Then they get in, skip twice, and move away from the rope. They continue to do so until they have defaulted. The player wins the game if he / she skips the rope to a set period of time without being touched by the rope.

Counting up to hundred and over.

Children from grade four, five and six can skip and count up to hundred and over, using both legs. They can also count using one leg to skip.

Speed skipping

The swingers change the swinging speed. They swing faster than before and the participant should go with the speed. This exercise needs more energy and stamina. There is also more sweating.

Speed skipping and counting up to three

Children can play this variation in the lower grades. As the rope swings, the participant jumps in and counts: one, two, and three and gets off the swing. Gets back again counts and gets out until such time that the rope touches him or her.

Two participants skipping at the same time

Two players play facing each other or even holding hands. They can jump in silence, counting or singing.

Variation for older children

Older children of ten to fifteen years' sing songs consisting of different sentences with their own meaning when they play the game. In this variation, a player skips the rope singing. She calls all members of her group one by one, each by name to get in and skip the rope. As she calls her group members, each member responds by asking questions, for example:

'Tholi, Tholi

O reng sebara?

Ke nna sebara

O mang sebara?

Ke Manthate sebara

Le bo mang sebara?

Le bo Mohlago sebara

Le bo mang sebara

Le bo Molatelo sebara'.

(Tholi, Tholi

What do you say brother-in-law?

It's me brother-in-law

Who are you brother-in-law?

I am Manthate brother-in-law

And who else brother- in- law?

And Mohlago brother-in-law

And who else brother-in-law

And Molatelo brother-in- law).

The participant sings until all her group members are in. The ones who are touched by the rope will be sent out. They will wait until those who are playing, default one by one. Those who swing the rope will swing until the last person defaults. It is then that they will get a chance to play.

In the song, children sing about entering somebody's home. They introduce themselves one by one as they enter. They learn how to greet when a person enters another person's home. One cannot just get in without greeting first. Greetings are learnt at a young age in Ba-Phalaborwa's culture and tradition.

Defaulting

When rope swingers are tired of swinging and want to play, they deliberately cause the player to default by applying the following:

'Go kgopisa' (to default a person)

Those who swing the rope swing it so that it does not hit the ground; instead it hits the ankles of the player.

'Go nganga' (to pull the rope)

The rope swingers pull the rope so that it does not swing properly then, it defaults the player.

The myth surrounding *kgati*' (skipping rope)

The myth for this game is that '*Yo a tšwago pele, o lewa ke dimpša*' (the first one to default will be eaten by dogs). They discourage laziness especially taking into consideration those who are obese. They know that they will be the first to become tired. They want to encourage them to do more body exercise.

Another myth which they use on this game is that '*Ge le bapala kgati ka gae, go tla betha tladi*,' (when you play skipping rope indoors, lightning will strike). The parents use this myth to avoid soil erosion and dust. On the same note Masiea (1973:43) says that the game is never played inside the village because it is believed that it may cause an epidemic or some other form of ill luck to the residents. He

does not mention what that implies in real-life situation. One can conclude that women use this myth to forbid girls playing near their fathers.

There is also a taboo used on girls playing ‘*kgati*’ (skipping rope) near their fathers. On the same myth of ‘*Ge le bapala ka gae go tla betha tladi*’ (when you play skipping rope indoors, lightning will strike), women again avoid to see girls playing near their fathers because Ba-Phalaborwa believe that a male parent should not see his daughter’s underwear, they say ‘*di a ila*’ (it is a taboo). A female parent can see those of both boys and girls because she bathes, clothes them and washes both boys’ and girls’ underwear.

2.2.2. ‘*Diketo*’ (pebble throwing)



Figure 2 Schematic representation of ‘*diketo*’ (board game)

The game is usually played by girls between eight and twelve years old. The players learn to socialize, have fun, compete and win. The players play by means of collecting as many stones as they can without letting any stone falling. The playing period of the game is determined by the ability of a player to play longer and to sit for a long time. Archer and Bouillon (1982:131) indicate that stone games, in which pebbles have to be scooped from a hole in the ground is a popular game.

One player with the ability to throw the stone up and down, scooping the stones from the hole without losing the stone that is in the hand, can dominate the game as she wins game after another. Those who await their turn may feel bored and loose patience if the player does not get defaulted.

Material used

- A round hole dug on the ground
- Ten to twenty pebbles
- Two or four players
- A smooth pebble, carefully selected

The rules of the game

Two players, each with a pebble called 'keto' in the hand, play the game one at a time. The player throws the pebble up in the air and rapidly scoops the pebbles out of the hole before catching the pebble again. If she does not catch the pebble, she throws it into the air again and scotches the nine pebbles back into the hole and remain with the pebble, which she puts aside.

The game continues with the same process of subtraction and addition until to the last pebble. When all the pebbles are in her possession, she has won the game. To continue with the game, the player takes back the pebbles into the hole and starts playing the same way.

Variations

Retaining one pebble into a hole

Young girls aged between six and eight years prefer this variation as they learn to play the game. A player scoops two '*diketo*' (pebbles) and snatches one back into the hole and remain with one. In this variation, ten pebbles are preferably used.

Retaining two, three or four pebbles

Girls aged ten and twelve years prefer these variations. The players can agree to retain two pebbles at a time. They can also retain three or four pebbles depending on them. In case they want to retain three stones, the hole also becomes bigger to accommodate thirty to forty pebbles. Older girls aged between twelve and fourteen years prefer playing with more than two pebbles when the game becomes tougher.

Defaulting

Retaining one or two pebbles

If the players have agreed that a player should retain one pebble and she only retains two, it is a default. The same applies to when she should retain three stones and she instead retains two or four.

'Keto' (one pebble) retained

If all '*diketo*' (pebbles) can be scooped back into a hole and none is retained, it is a default. The player here takes but one pebble she has collected, back into a hole.

Failure to catch a stone

Should the player fail to catch the stone after throwing it up and the stone falls, it is a default, but, still keeps all the stones she has collected.

Still on default, other players are capable of holding a stone with a small finger in such a way that the opponent can think that she has defaulted. Only when she takes it to the other stones she has collected that the opponent realizes she has not defaulted.

Myths surrounding ‘diketo’ (pebbles)

Sitting posture

‘*Go fera seseka*’ (to sit in a millipede way)

‘*Go naba maoto, wa a fapantšha*’ (to sit with the legs stretched and crossed)

The myth surrounding sitting posture when ‘diketo’ (pebble throwing) game is played is that ‘*Ge o ka bapala diketo o sa fera seseka, mmago o tla hwa*’ (if one can play stone throwing game without crossing the legs, her mother is going to die). In actual fact through this myth, mothers try to educate the girls at a young age to sit properly. They teach them to hide their underwears so that even when they reach puberty stage and start menstruating, others should not see.

Another myth is that ‘*Ge banenyana ba ka bapala diketo ka dikoko, ba tla baka moya*’ (if the girls could use marula stones or pips to play, storm will strike). Women want to forbid girls for using the marula objects because women crush them and use the kernels as food supplement. Should the girls be allowed to play with those objects, they will scatter them all over and the women will have an extra work of collecting them before use. ‘diketo’ (pebble throwing) is still played at home and at schools on daily basis especially during breaks.

2.2.3. ‘Dibeke’ (ball throwing)

‘Dibeke’ (ball throwing) is a ball-kicking type of a game for both boys and girls aged between twelve and fifteen. The aim of playing this game is to have fun, while away time, socialize, compete in running and win. In most instances boys and girls play the game when the sun sets.

A player kicks the ball very far. One member will go and look for it and never returns. The other one will follow the partner but vanishes as well. Those who know they want to see each other will all vanish. When older boys and girls disappear, the young participants will disperse. Most of the boys and girls become involved in a relationship during the playing of this kind of a game. If this game could be adopted, some of its components like vanishing of players should be discarded.

Material used

- A ball made of cloth or plastic
- A ground with a centre line
- Two groups of players each consisting of six or eight members

Rules of the game

Each group stands on opposite side facing each other. One group becomes the defender whereas the other one becomes the attacker. To play the game, a member from the defenders holds a ball; call a name of a person they feel should start the game. For example, they can say ‘Manthate’ throwing the ball at the attackers. Manthate will then kick the ball passing the centre line. The ball should be kicked very far to enable the group members to run to the opposite direction – and should they reach the destination safely, they score a point. They throw the ball again to Manthate and she will kick the ball once more.

Default

The player should kick the ball to an extent that it passes the line between the two groups. Failure to do so is a default and the player is disqualified. It is also a default if the ball can be kicked up and one member from the defending group holds it. At this default, all members of the attacking group will be out. It is again a default to a player if while running, the defender catches the ball and throws it on the attacker and the ball touches him or her.

Variations

- A player, who kicks the ball, can run alone when the ball is away
- Some members of his or her group can run with him or her
- All members of the group can run together.

2.3 Skill games

2.3.1 'Morabaraba' (board game)

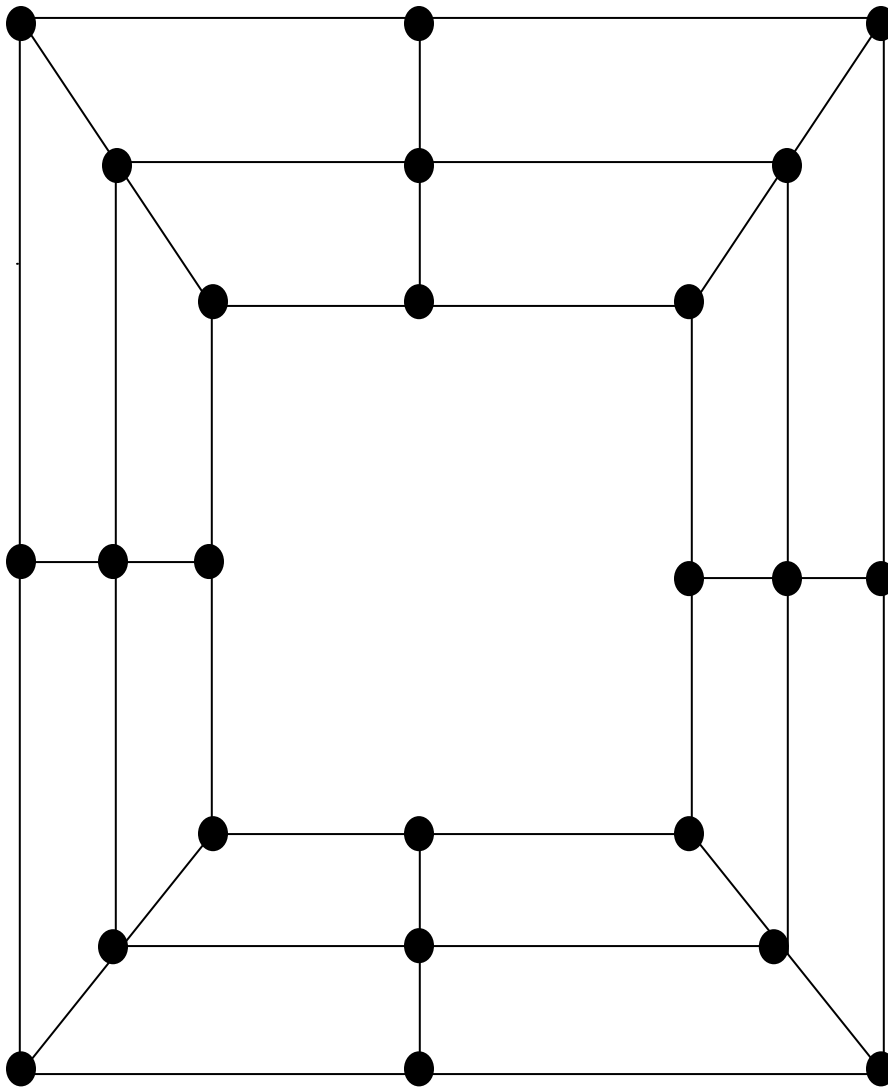


Figure 3 Schematic representation of 'morabaraba' (board game)

'*Morabaraba*' (board game) is a game of skill played by two participants. In the past this game was dominantly played by men. The game is mostly played by herd boys and men, miners, unemployed people and so forth. The aim of playing this game is to entertain, while time, and socialize and to defeat the opponent. '*Morabaraba*' (board game) requires mental agility. It keeps people busy in such a way that those who do not work are kept occupied in the game. Those who work shifts are able to play until it is time for them to go to work. People play the game to get rid of boredom.

Nowadays '*morabaraba*' (board game) is played by both boys and girls aged between ten and seventeen. This is clear when both boys and girls play '*morabaraba*' (board game) on television program called 'friends like this'. Boys and girls socialize and compete in this game, and sometimes the girls win against the boy which indicates that they were denied the chance to play this mentally embraced game.

'*Morabaraba*' (board game) is played any time of the day depending on the chance players get. Players use their time to play the game to the best of their ability. As indicated in the previous chapter the game is played at taxi ranks by taxi drivers and commuters who await their transport. The game is also played during the weekend at the sport field, at home and at the 'shebeens'. Spectators enjoy looking on how competitors reason when playing the game. They become entertained to see somebody winning whilst the other one is looking on.

Material used

- Two people
- A board or a diagram can be drawn on the ground or on a piece of hard paper
- Twenty four stones

Rules of the game

'*Morabaraba*' (board game) consists of three steps and there will be two players standing or sitting opposite each other.

Step1.

The first player starts using twelve stones called 'cows' on a clear board. The players alternatively place one cow at a time on a junction. The aim is to create rows in a vertical, horizontal and diagonal way. Cows are only to be placed on unoccupied junctions three- in- a- row.

When 'three in a row' is achieved, the player can remove one of the opponent's cows. A player cannot remove an opponent's three-in-a-row cows if there are other cows on the board left to be removed. Only one of the opponent's cows may be removed at a time even if two or more lines of three-in-a-row are achieved with one move. Once a cow is removed, it may not be used to play again.

Step2.

After placing all twelve cows of each player on the board, cows may be moved from one junction to another. A cow is moved from a junction it occupied to an unoccupied adjacent junction. A player can break his own line, or reposition the cows. The cows can be moved back and forth to the same two junctions repeatedly. If a 'three-in-a-row' is remade, an opponent's cow is removed.

Step3.

When a player has lost all the cows but left with three only, he or she can move any cow to any vacant junction on the board. The game is won when the opponent cannot move any cows or when the opponent has lost all the cows or remained with not more than two cows. The game will be a draw if a player is down to three cows, and both cannot move (shoot).

Variation

The player can use the stones but of different colours. They can, instead of stones or cows, use bottle caps. One player can play using them facing down and the second player use facing up.

Vocabulary

When the game is played, some players prefer to compete against an opponent of his age because sometimes they use words which are understood by people of the same age group. Besides, a player can enjoy having played a fair game if the game was played between people of his age. To add this up, Worthington (1980:118) says that competition, especially against someone of similar ability, motivates the player.

The players use some of the following words and sentences:

‘Ke go pshišitše’ (I have burnt you).

‘ke go jele’ (I have eaten you).

‘Pha (I beat you) (used when a winner removes the opponent’s stones or cows).

‘Ke a go betha’ (I beat you) or ‘Ke a go ja’ (I eat you).

‘Pha hmm’ (the opponent says these words holding his stomach as a sign of having caused pain to the opponents by winning his cows).

‘Ka mmetha a sa ile

A ile bjaleng

O rile ge a fihla

Ka mmetha, ka mmetha

Maoto a ya godimo

A tla a hwa lehu’

(I place the snare during his absence

Having gone on a drinking spree

When he arrived,

I struck him a cracking blow; I struck him a cracking blow

The legs were eventually in the air

He died a tragic death)

The winning player sings this song while his losing opponent is stung. The winner shows that he is nearing the end of his game and he has victory in his hand. He enjoys the game more. According to Masiea (1974:39) some players cannot stand defeat. So, when they realize that their 'cattle' are losing the fight, they collect them and start the game afresh.

Sometimes the winner uses words like 'e re ke go hlabe' (let me stab you). Such words are used when a player is about to win the game and may be for the second time. He shows that he is opening up a wound or he is about to cause a big hole on the body of his opponent for he is winning the game. He shows the pain he is about to cause to his opponent when he defeats him again. 'E re ke mo thunye' (let me shoot him) even here the winning opponent is about to win. He shows that he is pulling the gun to shoot. He also makes a sound of a firearm as he sings his win. The sound word 'thu' is used. 'Sefofu sa ka se tlile' (my blind man has come), a player is referring to a person whom he wins all the time. It means an opponent who does not win him has come and the player is certain that he is going to win the game.

2.3.2 'Moruba' (board game)



Figure 4 Schematic representation of 'moruba' (board game)

Like 'morabaraba' (board game) this game is also played by men. 'Moruba' (board game) is one of the games that are widely played in Phalaborwa. As wealth is measured with cows in most African custom, 'moruba' (board game) players have for centuries adopted cows as tolls of the game.

This view is supported by Hammond-Tooke (1974:96) when he says:

‘Cattle therefore loom largely in a man’s thoughts. They are a principal form of wealth, his most treasured possession, and anything concerning them and their welfare focuses his attention’.

As cows are kept in kraals (paddocks), so are the elements of playing this game known as ‘dithuba’. This is a game of mental agility too. The players socialize, entertain, while time, compete and win. ‘*Moruba*’ (board game) is predominantly men’s game but nowadays girls do play it too. Both males and females compete against each other.

To add further, Masiea (1973:37) points out that the cattle serve as bride- price (mahadi) of a player. To avoid defeat (thlolo), a player may thwart (thiba) the opponent’s blow or move by pushing his piece to the opposite direction. If a player is defeated, he loses his bride-price which is a disgrace because he no longer has money to pay ‘mahadi’ for his bride.

Material used

- A minimum of two people and a maximum of four.
- A board with a number of ‘kraals’ (holes) or dig holes on the ground.
- ‘Cows’ (stones) or bottle caps.

The rules of the game

The first player begins playing by removing any four stones from his holes and placing one stone in the next hole until all the four stones are in four holes. The player moves in an anti-clockwise direction, moving from the left to the right.

- After placing the stones in the four holes, the same player takes all eight stones directly opposite the opponent’s stones. As the opponent collects stones he or she utters words like ‘pha’ (i hit). The player has completed his turn.

- If during the game, the player had one stone in row one, he or she must shift the stone until he or she reaches row two. If however, there are no stones belonging to the opponent in row three, but there are stones in row four, he cannot take them. When the player has completed his turn, his opponent begins the same way.

'Moruba' (board game) prepares a player to make correct decisions in life. Players take their time to think and avoid hasty move which can eventually bring disappointment. Competitors give themselves chance to think about the advantages and disadvantages of any new situation that may take place when they make a move. They first decide on the move they should make, support and to defend them, from the attack the opponent may impose.

2.4 Motivational games

According to Adair (1990:93) motivation covers all the reasons which underlie the way in which a person acts, including negative ones like fear along with the more positive motives, such as money, promotion and recognition. Further he maintains that a man, woman or child is motivated when he or she wants to do something. Motivation plays an important role in one's life. It moulds a person positively.

Players in the motivational games are motivated by other members of the community and those within the team. Besides, a player should inspire himself or herself first. Adair (1990: 94) mentions that the first golden rule of motivation is that you will never inspire others unless you are inspired yourself. Only a motivated leader motivates others. The games that fall under motivational games include *'melamo'* (stick fighting) and *'matswele'* (fist fighting).

2.4.1 ‘Melamo’ (stick fighting)



Figure 5 Schematic representation of ‘melamo’ (stick fighting)

The Collins English Dictionary (2004) describes stick fighting as a Caribbean form of combat between two trained fighters, each of whom uses a stick with both hands at the midpoint to hit the opponent’s head and body. The description gives the impression that stick fighting owes its origin in the Caribbeans. This withstanding, stick fighting has become universal. It exists in places like Poland, Japan, Australia and Indonesia (www.news.za.msn 2011/07/20). Methods of fighting however, differ from country to country or nation to nation.

Contrary to the definition above, stick fighting has been a martial art traditionally practiced among the Zulu in South Africa, particularly by teenage herdboys. Each combatant is armed with two sticks. These include a long stick for attacking, and shorter stick for defense. No armour or protective gear is used. The object of the game is to hit the opponent with a stick until pain is inflicted (www.wiki.ulwazi 2011/07/26).

Currently stick fighting among the Zulu has been developed into a regular sport, with rules and competitions. Playing areas, age categories, goal rules and scoring have all been well defined, with judges and referees controlling the matches. The reigning Zulu stick fighting champion, Evergreen Ngwenya defines his career as follows:

I started stick fighting when I was a boy in 1976 in Utrecht. I have taken part in many competitions and I have won them all. Now I have brought gold to my province and I am a hero in Kwa-Zulu Natal and the champion stick fighter of 'South Africa' (Daily Sun 2010/10/22).

An almost similar situation exists in New Zealand where the sport has recently been introduced in 2007. Contrary to Zululand, competitors in New Zealand are required to wear a minimum amount of protective equipments which is thoroughly checked prior to the competition start and each individual bout. All these measures are taken to prevent injuries, thus ensuring safety of the sport ([www.nznwingchun 2011/07/26](http://www.nznwingchun.com/2011/07/26/)).

Recently New Zealand played host to the first full contact sport stick fighting tournament with other countries like Indonesia, Australia and Poland where medals, plates and trophies were up for grabs ([www.nzwingchun 11/07/26](http://www.nzwingchun.com/2011/07/26/)). Stick fighting has now become a legitimate sport in New Zealand and will probably go from strength to strength.

'Melamo' (stick fighting) among the Ba-Phalaborwa assumes three forms;

- 'Thupa' (pliable rods with leaves)
- 'Kgati' (pliable rod without leaves)
- 'Molamo' (stick)

2.4.1.1 'Thupa' (pliable rods without leaves)

The game is usually played by herdboys aged between eight and twelve when tending the livestock. The fight is usually initiated by boys slightly older than them. The game extends to the initiation school level where initiates play this on daily basis. The next step is the playing of 'kgati' which starts from initiation age.

2.4.1.2 'Kgati' (pliable rods with leaves)

'Kgati' (pliable rods with leaves) is a game played by old initiates during an initiation period. The game is played publicly at a village hosting the initiation school. The game is open for everybody from far

and wide including females. However, only old initiates are eligible to participate. They all stand in a big circle the size of which is usually determined by the number of the old initiates present. Uninitiated males, young boys and girls and females stand a distance outside the circle as spectators. Participants fight topless with only pants on. It is believed that ‘muti’ is used by participants to ensure victory.

Participants sing motivating songs with some blowing whistles, flutes and shouting. Anyone feeling motivated enough goes to the centre of the circle with his ‘kgati’ and a shield. Such a player becomes the challenger and any of participants who feel to take on the challenge steps into the circle for the fight. Although there are no any formal rules, it is a transgression to hit the public section below the waist. The head and the topless part of the body are the point of the focus. There are no bouts or stoppage time. Participants play for one round, the length of which shall be determined by the first serious injury on one of the players or when he has fallen down and fails to rise to his feet again.

This day remarks the success of the initiates (badika) and also acts as harbinger to the coming out (end) of the initiation period. This occasion is known as “go fetolela”.

2.4.1.3 ‘Molamo (stick fighting)

Depending on the desire of the individual, either two sticks or one shield are used. Where two sticks are used, one is used for attacking and the other for defending. The game usually takes place at an open ground suitable to accommodate a fairly large crowd. Spectators and participants stand on side rather than in a circle. The loser has three options to take, either throwing his fighting equipments on the ground and raises his arms, waving his stick in the air or running away. The third option however, is rarely taken as it carries with it a public humiliation and cowardice.

Another form of stick fighting takes place between two rival groups during a competition dance commonly known as ‘sekopo’. This is an informal type of fighting where the fight might be sparked off by two individuals belonging to different camps, either during the dance or outside the dance. The settling of the score between the two individuals unfortunately affects the camps to which they belong.

Fighting equipments include several sticks and a shield. Sticks are usually more than one to replace the one that breaks during the fight. One group attacks and the other one defend itself. Because the fight involves a large scale confrontation the group that loses always runs away to save their life. Anyone that will be trapped or caught is usually beaten to death. Of late however, fighting during the competition dance carries a penalty with it that might lead to a definite suspension or permanent expulsion from the competition.

2.4.2 ‘Matswele’ (fist fighting)



Figure 6 Schematic representation of ‘matswele’ (fist fighting)

The game of ‘matswele’ (fist fighting) is played by boys from the age of eight to eighteen as well as men. The boys play the game especially when they are in the field looking after the cattle and when they have taken the cattle for dipping. After the cattle had had a dip, those who herd the cattle arrange the fight between the young ones. The game is played to entertain, to while time and to win the opponent.

How the game is played

- A bare hard ground
- Two players

The rules of the game

A group of boys come together, make a circle. One boy enters the circle. The boys shout ‘o a mo tshaba na?’ (Are you afraid of him?). A boy who feels he can fight the challenger enters the center of the circle to take the challenge as he answers ‘aowa, a ke mo tshabe’ (no, I am not afraid of him). The two players begin to fight. They fight using their fists only. The spectators shout in order to encourage and to motivate the players. When a player is tired and about to lose the game, he runs backward, no longer fight back.

The player can insist on fighting until he falls down. He can rise up, fall again and his supporters throw a towel in the center as to stop the fight because they realize that their player is losing the game. Those whose player won the game enter the center, carry their player and begin to celebrate. As such the player is declared a winner.

The game of ‘matswele’ (fist fighting) is also played by men especially at the end of initiation ceremony. Towards the end of initiation, initiates have a celebration where people come to see their children for the first time – more especially women and girls who were not allowed to see their relatives while in the initiation school. The initiates come to the ground in groups to dance for the crowd but before the initiates come out, a man enters the ground, shouting for a challenger to come out.

A man who feels challenged comes out of the crowd to face his opponent. The fight begins. The two players fight until the one who feels tired waves his hands in the air. The loser may also show that he is tired by falling onto the ground and fails to rise up again. The winner may not leave the ground if he feels he can fight another player. In that case, another man gets in and the fight continues until a winner wins the game.

In some instances the challenger can challenge anyone from the crowd. Here the challenger can challenge somebody he undermines and thinks that he can win him easily. The opponent finds himself compelled to fight to avoid the embarrassment the challenger is causing him in front of his family, friends, relatives and members of the community. The players fight until the stronger fighter wins.

In most times when this type of a fight takes place, the challenger wins because he ensures that he chooses a player whom he will defeat. During this game, a person puts money on the ground and announces that whoever wins the game can have the money. In that case the player is not allowed to pick someone he knows he can easily defeat. The owner of the money can choose those known as 'dinkgwete' (heroes) within the community to fight. The game begins, players fight until the loser loses and the winner wins and takes the money.

As motivational games, the players of fist fighting feel motivated to play the game although in some areas, they do not get compensation, wages or salaries like in cricket or soccer. They play for fun. Munyaradzi Vomo quotes fist fighter Foster Chauke as he says: 'I am the Champion of Musangwe and I am proud because nothing else is talked about in Venda except for Musangwe. No soccer or cricket, just the Musangwe. So because I am the champion, people talk about me' (Tonight Television 2010)

2.5 CONCLUSION

'Matswele' (fist fighting) and 'melamo (stick fighting) games do not have rules that are prescribed as to when to start and to stop the game. The players are not restricted where to punch and when not to punch. They punch each other where they get chance to punch. Again, there is no referee to stop the game for the players to take a break. The players fight until the one who is tired gives in. During the fight, players play without hand gloves. This is an indigenous game for the indigenous people. People enjoy watching 'matswele' (fist fighting) and 'melamo' (stick fighting) to date.

CHAPTER THREE

VALUES AND USE OF THE GAMES

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the games in the lives of the people in Phalaborwa is to entertain. The entertainment phenomenon emphasizes element such as crime alienation and health promotion awareness. During the games, people have fun. They visit the sports field where they watch the game free of charge. The games have a great positive impact on society in which they are played. They have an entertainment effect, social and physical values, educational, health and motivational values.

3.2 Social Values

Socially, the indigenous games benefit the society in an immensely way. The communities around Phalaborwa are unified through the games. The people from diverse cultures compete. They make friendship, share ideas, work in groups and teams, socialize, support, sympathize, learn to make decisions and solve problems and above all, they learn discipline. The players learn to exercise patience, acceptance and tolerance towards one another.

Children come together, sing and dance when the games are played. The adults mingle with each other. They become socially occupied which lead them to forgetting the elements which made them angry before they involved themselves in the company of other people. They put their concentration on the game. Players develop positive thinking towards themselves and the entire team as they work together. They build each other's confidence to be able to handle defeat where necessary.

Most parents, whose children play the games, motivate and encourage those children to pursue with the games. Families and friends become united due to sport. In games such as street fighting, stick fighting and 'diketo' (stone throwing), parents do not expect their children to loose. As such, they give them an enormous courage. But, a defeated fighter accepts defeat, shakes hands and respects his opponent. After the game, the winner gains respect and self-confidence.

Youth's engagement in the games delay them exposure to early alcohol drinking, doing drugs and teenage pregnancy. They become involved in the game and have less time for crime. The players grow as disciplined, responsible and accountable members of the community. Instead of going to the shebeens, they visit sports field where they play, go home being tired, eat, wash and sleep. Exposure to criminal activities is minimal.

In every game, communication takes place. Every good game is accompanied by good communication. According to Smelser (1991:28) language is social. It cannot be learned without interaction – that is apart from other people. The people of Phalaborwa have diverse cultures. The games enable Bapedi, BaTsonga, BaVenda, amaZulu and maSwati to speak each other's languages. Their involvement in different games results in language intermarriage. These games bring them together and assist them to work as a team.

The languages help coaches to co-ordinate their duties. Children use games as a tool to their daily activities and growth. They also learn better as they play together. Through the languages, they are able to encourage, discipline, support, regulate activities and so forth. Young children learn how to speak through the games. Home is where language of an individual is developed and through with, people in the community communicate.

A child is able to speak a language before he could go to school and be exposed to reading and writing it. Children play an important role in developing each other's languages through play. When games such as 'kgati' (skipping rope) and 'diketo' (stone throwing) is played, children from nearby gather, to play together. A parent always knows where to find the child in case she wants her back home. She works freely at home knowing that the child is safely playing with friends from the neighbourhood. The social value displayed when the games are played is an indication that through the game, a child feels she belongs to a group or team. She has friends to share playing materials with.

A man and older boys in the game of 'melamo' (stick fighting) also, they want to be accommodated in the family and to gain respect from men. When they fight, they ensure that they win the game. They win for their family, fans as well as the entire community. They gain for themselves, respect. During initiation, initiates fight to gain respect from his peers and elders. He becomes determined and winning

the fight boosts his ego.

Different games unite different communities around Phalaborwa. People from different neighbouring areas such as Mashishimale, Maseke, Makhušane, Lulekani, Seloane and Namakgale come together to compete especially when they play ‘morabaraba’ and ‘moruba’ (these are board games). They develop friendship, share ideas, work in teams and groups, socialize, and become entertained. These players also challenge each other to go and play in another area in the coming session. As such, the players know their neighbouring areas due to game playing.

3.3 Communication as a social phenomenon.

During ‘dibeke’ (ball throwing) game, communication takes place. Alagich (1995:128) maintains that when passing between each other the players are able to communicate. The better the players communicate, the better the chances of winning and having a successful game.

Understanding of each other and group work in a team is equally important for winning the game. In ‘dibeke’ (ball throwing) players understand the direction a partner is taking to be able to work through defending techniques. Groups enjoy the competition. According to Allen and McLean (1970:41) competitive training, groups against groups, is a great incentive to faster running.

To maintain good performance and strong team, the team should form strong bond. Players perform to the best of their ability as they communicate when grouped together. They display good results. McNab (1989:51) states that the most effective stimulation comes from competition. Equally important, group-work enables a person to get used to finding position from which to move.

Every game has a manager or a coach. The games enforce a good relationship between the coach and the players. Good relationship works hand in gloves with good results. With the effort of the coach, players are able to realize the mistakes they commit during the games and work on them. Young players depend on adults and coach for direction. Alagich (1995:296) maintains that it is clear that if young players practice without direction and correction they will develop bad habit that will be almost impossible to correct at the senior level.

Families come together to cheer their members and to give them support and encouragement. They do not want to miss a member of their family's turn to play. Haines, Cornfield, Gordon, Agherdien and Burt (2004:141) show that people with strong social structures such as family and friends or organizations that provide help and advice, tend to keep their heart rate and blood pressure low, which contributes to better health.

People work together in their daily activities. Supporting this further, Magubane (1988:98) maintains that crop harvesting was usually cooperative, done in rotational basis, with communities in area gathering harvest in each other's crop in turn. The owner would act as host and provide liberal quantities of beer and refreshments so that this became a festive occasion, with convivial social interaction as an important feature of the event.

Another social value of the game is that it encompasses oneness especially in children. Children play together, share resources as they play. Moreover, they learn from each other. They learn easily when they are in the same age group. They are free to talk and learn. According to Krige and Krige (1980:107) children learn more easily and more willingly from other children than from adults.

Recognition from other members of a team is important in a player. A player can learn well too with the recognition made by his or her peers. Arguing this further, Adair (1990:101) mentions that for it is recognition – by our peers – discerning equals or colleagues – that we value even more than the praise of superiors. The spirit of oneness is displayed when the games are played. After a victory, players hug each other as a token of love, compassion-ship and team work. The players feel proud and happy to have won the game as a group.

The indigenous games are an aid to discouraging anti-social and criminal behaviours as well as developing and sustaining community cohesiveness. The more people become busy most of the time, the more they forget things such as stealing, house-breaking, car hijacking and so on. They become involved and occupied in the games. They will live a busy and peaceful life.

3.4 Health and physical values of the games

Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. When a game is played, the entire body is exercised. When '*kgati*' (skipping rope) is played the hands of those who swing the rope and the legs of those busy jumping the rope become more exercised. Masiea (1973:43) says that skipping rope is basically an exercise for the legs. People who suffer from leg pains can make use of the game to reduce the pain.

Playing a game serves as a means of relieving stress, getting the body fit and resistant to illness. When a person is stressed, playing a game becomes therapeutic. The more people play the games, the less stress they will get. According to Holderness-Roddam (1994:36), exercise increases the ability of heart and lungs to function effectively for longer.

Games such as running '*dibeke*' (weeks) and so forth, benefit the health of a player. Exercise is essential in combating illness. If taken seriously, it will serve as one way of getting rid of being prone to illness and diseases. Coe and Coe (1988:15) state that a carefully worked out running schedule, coupled with a good diet, will not help us to achieve fitness, but will also be one of the best pieces of preventive medicine that we ever undertaken, 'exercise is good for you' has long been believed.

Running, jumping and walking are activities that increase one's pulse. The indigenous games assist in maintaining a good health. A player of these games is not easily prone to illnesses and diseases. Regular exercise and healthy eating lead to good health. Haines et al. (2004:141) mention that eating healthy and exercising regularly are both linked to the control of heart disease and depression.

Games have been and still are maintaining people's lives. They contribute to the wellbeing of individuals especially those who engage themselves in training and exercise. Thabe (1983:1) mentions that many men or women would have long gone to kingdom come one day or another had football not played such a vital role in his or her life. This is an indication that games such as football play a role in supporting life.

Through '*kgati*' (skipping rope) personal hygiene on the player is observed. Players of this game ensure that before they play, their underwears are clean. They do not want their dirty underwears to be seen

when they jump up and down. This game teaches the player to look after herself. Those who are on periods too, ensure that they sit properly so that those younger girls do not see them. Health education takes place at an early stage of a child's development. It is a life-long learning which a player will live with.

Training and exercise result in strong muscle development in a player. According to Holderness-Roddam (1994:34) muscle function contracting and relaxing are stimulated through action of nerves. When a muscle receives the stimulus for an action it also receives oxygen and other basic elements necessary to produce sufficient energy for the action required.

The fitness of the body parts assist the body to work appropriately. Holderness-Roddam (1994: 36) says that essentially, increased fitness results in the ability of the body to function more efficiently for longer periods. The relevance of the games as muscle building is evident in the shoulders and hands. The muscles on the shoulders and on the hand become strong.

Playing games collaborate with training and exercise. As people play, they develop physically. They become fit and strong. The body muscles become rigid. The player becomes physically healthy and strong enough to endure punches when games such as fighting takes place. The body of a player becomes strong to enable balancing when playing. According to Alagich (1995:340) when juggling, it is necessary to be relaxed and have good body balance.

The games have positive impact on the society. Toddlers, teenagers, and adults can benefit physically from the game. The more toddlers are taught to be fit, the more likely they become fit adults. Haines et al. (2004:139) point out that from the research; it seems inevitable that today's unfit teenagers will become tomorrow's unfit adults unless young South Africans start making the effort to increase their fitness.

In the game of jumping like 'kgati' (skipping rope), the legs and the upper body are exercised. Men and women become fast in running if they run often. They develop strong muscles especially on the legs. According to McNab (1989:50) speed cannot be separated from other elements such as upper-body strength and other parts of the body should be strong. Both men and women should train for speed.

'Kgati' (skipping rope) is appropriate for building muscles of the hands and legs. The body's fitness is also increased. Holderness-Roddam (1994:36) says that essentially, increased fitness results in the ability of the body to function more effectively for longer periods. This indicates that the more a person exercises, the more the body functions effectively. Exercise is the best for the body.

In 'kgati' (skipping rope) the players jump up and down when the swinging of the rope takes place. The eyes, legs, and feet work together. These parts of the body are trained. The feet and the legs become strong. When the legs are strong they enable a person to move from one place to the other when there is no transport as when there is no money for the transport. Holderness-Roddam (1994:36) says that exercising increases the ability of the heart and lungs to function effectively for longer. Children play the games almost every day and this will result in their heart and lungs functioning effectively. Should they continue to exercise even in adult hood, they may become healthy men and women. Their bodies may always remain strong and healthy.

When 'kgati' (skipping rope) is played the player cannot afford to lose focus on the movement of the rope as losing focus leads to defaulting. As the legs move, the eyes are looking at the rope. There is a balance between the legs and the eyes. Concentration therefore, is required in this game. The game depends mostly on fitness of the legs to jump for a longer period.

3.5 Moral values of the games

The indigenous games play an important part in the moral aspect of a person. There are factors that can hamper a person's morale such as lack of respect by some members of the community. If a person has a habit of undermining another person in front of other people, games such as stick fighting and 'matswele' (fist fighting) can help the one who is always undermined to gain his respect and morale. A fight can be organized and the two people can be engaged in a fight to determine who the boss is between the two.

If the person who is always belittled could win, his opponent will start respecting him. The winner also gains his confidence and self-esteem. Fighting games can earn the winner recognition from other

members of the community. He can become the community's legend. He will no longer feel threatened whenever his opponent is present. He then becomes optimistic about winning an opponent as he already proved himself.

A player who does not perform and lost hope in a running game can regain confidence if he or she gets training and motivation. Australian Athletic Union (1986:1) indicates that students and distance runners engaged in group training become motivated.

Self-esteem is a need in one's life to win the game. This is demonstrated when games are played. The ability to win comes from within. It is one's inner feeling which can be achieved through hard-work and determination. A player builds himself from within to be able to face the challenges which accompany the game. Allen and McLean (1970:25) state that a player will often develop confidence from discovering that anything the other person can do, he himself can do better.

Members of the community who are both able and physically challenged can take part in sports. Handicapped people's morale can also be built in sport. Bowie (1989:73) shows that for handicapped people swimming can open up new possibilities in movement and give a tremendous boost to their morale. Sometimes it can be their only way of exercising. For many years water therapy has been used to rehabilitate the disabled.

Games can assist physically handicapped people to realize their potential. They can utilize the part they are left with, more effectively. Polio paralyzed victims for example, can learn to swim with the remaining muscle power, like swimming with legs only. They can adapt increasingly well. Although polio is less prevalent nowadays, other malicious diseases and misfortunes causing disabilities exist (Bowie, 1989:73).

Most people have lost confidence and self-esteem due to handicap. Games like 'diketo' (pebble throwing), 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' (board games) can bring back their confidence if be motivated and encouraged to play. These games can be used by handicapped as part of their exercise.

3.6 Integration

There is integration between the games played within the community and the learning areas at school. As children play, they learn to work as a group and team. Sharing is one of the factors of group work, starting at home when children play. When games are played children bring utensils and natural objects like stones that were used by parents at home. As they play, mothers can use old boxes to keep clothes whereas children use the boxes to make 'moruba' or 'morabaraba' (board games). This is an indication that they too, use what mothers use at home, into their play.

Through games skills, values, knowledge and attitudes are learned. In 'morabaraba' (a board game), a skill of decision making is developed. Players also gain knowledge as they play, on how to solve a problem the opponent put forward. Having a problem-solving skill will assist a player to solve problems in real-life situation. The game teaches a player to solve future problems he or she may encounter.

Players of 'morabaraba' (a board game) again develop a thinking skill. This thinking skill enables the player to think before making any move in whatsoever. He or she must think before taking any decision. The skills are important and useful when a person grows up and be faced with the challenges in life. The knowledge that one acquires when playing the games and the way he or she values things eventually changes his or her attitude towards the decision to be made.

Bottle tops are used to play 'morabaraba' (a board game). It is one way of recycling. The players have developed a skill of using bottle caps as cows. This knowledge of reusing bottle tops for a different purpose than the original one is a community awakening. The process of recycling can assist the community as an awakening that used properties can be used to serve another purpose in future. The more bottle tops are left scattered in the area, the more untidy the environment will be.

'Diketo' (pebble throwing) embodies mathematical operations such as counting, using addition and subtraction. Children learn these mathematical operations before they could attend school. When one plays 'diketo' (pebble throwing) out of the ten stones scooped, one should be retained. The player knows that she is left with eight, seven, six, and five until to the last 'keto' (pebble). When the time for

the child to attend school arrives, she is able to count one up to ten. Learning becomes easier for her.

It is through the games that people learn when, why and how their bodies function. The time when the game should be played, and the rationale behind the playing is vitally important. As Bowie (1989:3) points out swimming facilitates food digestion. It is not wise to swim straight after a meal. No one can perform well and long time after their last meal. This is an indication that players learn as they play.

3.7 Political values

Traditionally men and women as well as boys and girls were not seen as people of the same ability and power. Men were highly regarded than women. Van der Zanden (1993:220) indicates that men and women often differ in their access to privilege and power. The distribution problem of who gets what, when and how has traditionally been answered in favour of males. Although women do enjoy some positions in power, these tend to be an exception.

Archer and Bouillon (1982:127) point out that sport were introduced only in English medium schools by missionaries. However, these sports were Western, neglecting indigenous sports altogether.

Males were in the past, taken as superiors to women who were regarded as subordinates. According to Smelser (1991:281) in the past, much of higher education was closed to women. Teachers working in the foundation phase and in the lower primary level were females whereas male teachers were in senior phases and in high schools.

Although women were not regarded as equals to men in the past, they can obtain the speed covered by men. They are as capable to sports as men. They can play 'moruba' (board game) and other games the way men do. Women can train and do better in games the same way as men. Arguing this further, McNab (1989:6) indicates that when it comes to training for speed, women are just as capable of undertaking vigorous training as men.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIELDWORK AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on interviewing people who have knowledge of the indigenous games. Informants were selected randomly regardless of age, experience or whether they play the games or not. The legends and recent game players are asked to take part to make the work for this chapter a success. The people who enjoy and want the games to be played and to gain recognition are also targeted. The findings are reviewed.

4.2 Interviews

In this section the focus is on how the interviews were conducted. The interviews were done through participant observation where close contact took place when the games were played to see how the games are played and enjoyed by the participants and the spectators. Questions posed to the interviewees were answered and written down.

Before the interview proceeded, the researcher gave a brief introduction of herself and the purpose of the interviews that they were conducted for study reasons. The researcher requested the respondents' permission to keep record of the proceedings in writing as well as the use of a tape-recorder. The participants were at liberty to give information required.

Examples of interview questions:

4.2.1 When did you become interested in the indigenous games?

A sixty-eight year old informant told the researcher that he had been playing the game from childhood. The first game he played was '*moruba*' (board game). He stated that this game was played at the field when cattle were grazing and that at some stage one would hear an old woman shouting as a way of

chasing away the cattle that invaded her field while the boys were playing the game. According to the informant, these games are not written anywhere but sustain marginalization. He also said that he learnt the games through observation and participation.

Another informant said that he started playing the game more than sixty years ago. He also mentioned that the indigenous games served as our culture and having played them for so many years, to see them disappearing, it was a bad experience to bear. He went on to say that he loved the games and wish to see them played equally the same as other games that seem to dominate them.

Some informants shared the same sentiment that in the olden days when the games were played, most members of the community became anxious. Homes were empty as members went out to watch the games. Today people still enjoy watching the games as they are played. The players both young and old are still interested in playing the games. ‘These games are our legacy; we should promote and develop them in whatever way we can. We should not let them fade away, he added’.

4.2.2 What are the problems that you come across in reviving these games?

Although the games are played daily in the areas of Phalaborwa, they are still not recognized as games to be played at schools like soccer, cricket and so forth. The indigenous games are not documented as to how they are played to serve as reference to future generations. People who teach the games rely on word of mouth from the elders. Most of the people interviewed mentioned that by playing the games they were trying to outreach people both young and old, men and women to take part in reviving the games.

One of the informants said that the indigenous games needed to be funded by the Department of Sport Arts and Culture and business people around the area to enable players to hold competitions and to get incentives. The players of these games still use home grounds to play because there are no public grounds and facilities for them to utilize.

The problems encountered by people while reviving the indigenous games include:

4.2.2.1 Lack of protections

Some of the informants say that stick fighting game can be detrimental to one's health. According to (Daily Sun 17.12.2010) Mnyakama and Kukard criticize stick fighting as a dangerous sport. It can leave participants with large bloody gashes on their heads and bodies.

Informants further say that in fist fighting, participants use fists without hand gloves or helmets for body and heads protection. Vomo (2010.11.08) points out that there is not a single medical aide in sight- real men apparently do not fear concussion and brain damage. He continues to say that what is serious, however, is that should an open fist land on the face; there is a chance of considerable permanent injury.

One of the fist fighters Foster Chauke in the Daily Sun, 17.12.2010 indicates that the lost teeth do not grow back and the scars are permanent. Meanwhile, Vomo (2010.11.08) had earlier pointed out that this factor did not seem to deter any of the men in the villages. Mbulelo Mkhwakhi (2010.11.08) a stick fighter supported the statement by Vomo when he said: "we are against the helmets because that will kill our lovely game. We like it bloody and rough as it is. The helmets also make us hot when we fight".

Although some people regard lack of protection of players as a problem, organizers like Vuyisile Dyolothana (2010:8) one of the fight organizers says:

"Efforts to introduce protective helmets were useless. Each time we bring the helmets to the game we get people refusing to wear them. They say it is the flow of blood that brings the excitement to the event".

4.2.2.2 Western games versus the indigenous games

The researcher discovered that other problems people come across are that of players playing the western games at the expense of indigenous games. The western games are on the process of dominating the indigenous games but because they are expensive and need equipments of high quality, in places like Phalaborwa are unable to maintain them.

People also believe that for one to become a star, he or she must be a tennis or cricket player and also think that the indigenous games would not take them anywhere. But because the indigenous game's equipments mostly are around the corner, they have no option but to play them. In addition, western games need skills that one learns at a later stage whereas the indigenous games skills are acquired at an early age because the games are played every time in the family and even within the community around which one grows.

During the research, primary school kids indicated that they played the games at schools and at home. They have learnt how to play from their homes before coming to school. The revival of these games will make them play with confidence and that they will be proud to see the games which they play everyday, gaining exposure.

4.2.2.3 Lack of funding and sponsorship

The involvement of companies such as Coca Cola, Absa bank, and Standard bank can also be of good help. Informants maintain that there are competitions running now to receive the games. Members of teams are expected to pay certain amount as affiliation fee. Due to lack of employment and the fact that some families live below the bread line, it becomes difficult to fund the games. They rely solely on donations around the area. All the teams are from Phalaborwa and when asking for donations, they all ask within the same people which make it difficult for them to get the money that could assist them to affiliate.

To sustain of the games and to reach the level where they are played nationally and internationally if possible, they will need funding. The problem of sponsorship is also of a major concern. For the games

to survive there should be sponsors that would assist in remuneration of players as well as paying for other needs.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and Recreation should take an initiative in this regard. Their involvement and that of shop owners, mining companies around the area can make a difference. Although the indigenous games are cheap on facilities, proper facilities such as play grounds, boards and skipping ropes are needed and should be funded. A young informant and soccer player says that most of the grounds are rocky and unsafe for one to play on. The players can be easily hurt.

The above mentioned view is supported by Archer and Bouillon (1982:7) when they point out that the vast majority of black people simply had no facilities or training opportunities available to them.

Thabe (1983:1) indicates that football among the Blacks, especially in this part of Africa is a way of life, a second religion. He continues to say that football has become big business. The indigenous games such as 'diketo', 'morabaraba' and 'moruba' if sponsored, can be popular like football.

4.2.2.4 Lack of support

An old 'moruba' (board game) player mentions that nowadays people especially in rural areas prefer visiting shebeens and taverns where they play 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' (board games) even if they do not drink alcohol but, due to lack of a specific place where the games can be played. He further adds that the government, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and Recreation and parents are the ones who can ensure that the indigenous games are played at schools and at home grounds to sustain them.

Lack of parental support is a malicious habit that retards the progress of reviving the games. The parents are the ones who should be teaching the kids how the games such as 'moruba' (board game) and 'diketo' (pebble throwing) are played. Some places like taverns and shebeens where board games are usually played are not conducive for children. They are thus denied the opportunity to learn these games because such places are inaccessible for them.

Most of the players are youth and for them to see their parents watching them could mean a lot. Blacks should learn to visit playgrounds and be supportive like whites. Whites even take their kids to the playground to watch them play. They are able to identify the child's talent at an early age; they already have a clue of the type of game the child can pursue as his or her career.

A young girl who plays 'diketo' (pebble throwing) says that our schools too, are still behind in encouraging learners who play some of the indigenous games in front of them, to take the games more serious and to the next level. There could be less gifted learners in class who play the games with determination and also, having skills. Those learners if given a chance to prove themselves can become best players within the community and compete worldwide one day. To ensure a high level of revival of the games, they should be equally played at schools and at home.

An informant living within the community urges that children are our future. They enjoy belonging to a group and a team and we should support and encourage them as this builds them towards responsible members of the community. Perhaps the games are their future means of living that need developing into reality and a successful one too. The games may serve as a vehicle through which parents and schools can use towards managing and controlling their children from roaming around the streets.

The informant further says that the games could gain the support of parents and schools; they could assist to suppress children's habits of visiting shebeens as they will be more occupied at their spare time. More children enjoy and love the games and their revival will make them happy.

Most of the informants share the same sentiment that a school is a place where formal education begins. Educators can ensure that they develop sports because learners have different skills. Some may be good in particular sports and failing to develop their skills denies them a lifetime opportunity. They have dreams which could become a reality one day. Parents, educators and learners should work together to make the dream come true.

4.2.3 How can promoting the games benefit the community?

One of the informants says that his perception of the games is that most communities play them even to date. These games can benefit the community whereby strong bond is built within members of the community. If there is a strong bond within the community, they will be able to work as groups and organize themselves to come up with solutions to the problems pertaining to the society. They will be able to make friends to people of diverse cultures within the area. The participants can then develop social and interpersonal skills where he or she will be able to handle defeat and develop self-confidence to overcome whatever he or she could come across in life.

He further shows that the games can serve as supplement and support to physical education. As the games are played, participants will be involved in body and mind exercise which lead to positive thinking and reasoning. Through the games, job opportunities could be created.

A chairperson of the indigenous games around Mashishimale in Phalaborwa indicates that players will have latitude to visit places they have never been to. They will be able to learn about other cultures around the country. Intermarriages can also increase as players visit other places and intermingle with people of different cultures.

Most community members share the same sentiment that sports enhance a healthy lifestyle for youth. Promoting the games can benefit the youth because they will learn to avoid anti-social and criminal behavior. Not only youth will benefit but, parents as well will be happy to see their children behaving well, spending most of their time in the playground taking orders and sharing ideas. Community cohesiveness will also be sustained when the games are played. The quality of life for the people in Phalaborwa can as well be improved through participation of sports.

One community member indicates that the games have an impact in the lives of the youth, elders as well as the community at large. He further points out that, boys under ten and seventeen years old practice everyday. They enjoy the games and they are kept busy. Practicing the styles and techniques performed by those they regard as their role models is what they enjoy most. Should the games be promoted, sponsored, funded and have facilities and materials, the more players may join in.

On the same note, an informant who plays ‘morabaraba’ (board game) says that during practice players learn values, and the skills to win. They imitate their role models as they play. They benefit a lot from practice sessions and ensure that skills and knowledge they gathered during training are incorporated during the game against other teams over the weekend. A young ‘moruba’ (board game) player and a learner at a high school who plays for a local team says that when he grows up he wants to become a ‘moruba’ (board game) champion.

One old community’s legend says that when there are tournaments, sometimes the old crocks are given chance to play. Women, young boys and teenagers attend. As they stand at the side of the poles, they sing and dance, motivate the players by calling them by their names so that the players can play to the best of their ability. Their attendance is an impression that if they can have facilities such as play grounds, they can visit the place regularly to relieve boredom.

Sports can also benefit the community through tourism. The people who participate in the games will be able to entertain tourists in the area. The tourists will in turn gain experience of the different types of games played in different types of towns and rural areas of South Africa. The players may perhaps be invited to go and entertain spectators in other countries and as such they will be gaining exposure and also, making money for themselves and their families.

4.2.4 Which games are identified as indigenous?

The chairperson of the indigenous games in Namakgale indicates that the dynamics regarding the games that are found in Phalaborwa are known to its inhabitants and to other neighbouring areas of Limpopo Province. Although there are lots of games people played, not all are identified as appropriate for competitions around the area. She also says that the identification of similar games played in different communities has been completed.

The South African Sports Commission (SASC) conducted a workshop in April 2001 where the identification was finally endorsed. The games that are currently identified nationally as indigenous are ‘diketo’ (pebble throwing), ‘kgati’ (skipping rope), ‘moruba’ and ‘morabaraba’ (board games), ‘melamo’ (stick fighting), ‘jukskei’ and ‘khokho’ (running games).

These games have been played by our great-grand parents passing the knowledge to us. They are our heritage which makes them easily identified from the games played today. Names like 'jukskei' and '*khokho*' (running games) sound new and foreign, but they had been extant since time immemorial. These are indigenous games that were on the verge of disappearance but being revived mostly by coloured people.

4.2.5 What are the plans for the future regarding the games?

The coordinator of indigenous games in Phalaborwa points out that there are two different entities responsible for proper delivery of sports and recreation. They are the South African Sports Commission (SASC) and Sports and Recreation of South Africa (SRSA). He adds that workshops have been conducted whereby the government is trying to relocate, revive and investigate the indigenous games for computerization.

He further says that the South African Sports Commission (SASC), the Sports and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) and the national product as well as other role players are taking an initiative in the development of the games. Their main objective is to create opportunities to the people especially those living in rural areas to participate in sports and recreation activities.

He continues to say that these role players also want to narrow the gap that exists between the poor rural and urban areas because in urban areas, there are equipments and funding for the games they play. The indigenous games are now reaching a high level of recognition whereby communities after playing among themselves; they went to compete with other areas of Limpopo such as Ga-Sekhukhune and Venda. This shows that in future they may be competed nationally, even internationally.

The process of developing the games is also ongoing. Facilitators are receiving training. The South African Sports Commission (SASC) has presented the indigenous games festival in 2003 in its campaign to popularize the games. All the nine provinces gathered and shared ideas about the games. The commission encourages mass participation by all members of the community regardless of age, race or gender.

4.3 Conclusion

The indigenous games serve as an entertainment phenomenon among Ba-Phalaborwa. They bring people together to share their ideas of games and learn to move about other cultural connotations around them. The vanishing of these games denotes the vanishing of some pivotal aspects of culture in the black communities. The games need to be protected, promoted and developed within the communities in which they are found and played.

This chapter deals with field work and findings. The findings are gathered by means of interviews. The researcher asks informants questions such as; when did you become interested in the indigenous games, what are the problems that you come across in reviving the games, how can promoting the games benefit the community, which games are identified as indigenous as well as what are the plans for the future regarding the game.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

From the discussion above it is evident that Africans have long been engaged in games which served as expression of their culture and social realities. Knowledge of these games was transmitted from generation to generation both orally and practically. People participated in the games for physical development, skill training and interaction reinforcement between communities (1.1).

Although efforts were made to improve the equality of life of the Ba-Phalaborwa through the introduction of formal education and mines, other heritage activities like traditional games for instance were undermined or ignored (1.2). The improvement approach therefore was not entirely holistic.

The significance of indigenous games is demonstrated not only in their narrow perspective of play, enjoyment and recreational (1.2) but also in their capacity to co-ordinate body parts (1.4.4 and 1.4.7) and development of mental agility (1.4.5).

Indigenous games as a component of the broader traditional culture of Ba-Phalaborwa people are modeled in accordance with their cultural thinking and practices. Men were traditionally subjected to physical and emotional hardships to build their manhood. This kind of physical and emotional training starts at teenage level as exemplified in 2.4.1.1, where the combatants are armed with two long sticks each with no armour or protection gear. African boys therefore are usually subjected to hardships at an early age with the intent to make them aware of hard life ahead of them.

The choice of game like fist-fighting and stick fighting assigned to men attest to this traditional belief. Women on the other hand, with expectation to accomplish domestic activities like child rearing, food production and house-keeping for instance, did not participate in any games. Meanwhile boys and girls whose early life is characterized by no clear cut division of labour usually engage in common games like skipping rope. Over and above, they usually play together as depicted in figure 1. Also, men, as

heads of households and wielding wand of authority and also decision-makers engaged in thought provoking games like 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' (board games).

In the discussion, there is an indication that the games were categorized into memory, skill and motivational. The games are important in the sense that skill games such as 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' (board games) were used to evaluate the ability of a man if he is ready to marry even to occupy a leadership position by the way he plays (2.3.2). It is discovered through discussion and study that the games have a variety of values such as educational, health, social, physical and moral which enhance peoples' life and wellbeing.

Games assigned to both boys and girls accomplish another dimension in their life. Memory games like skipping rope (kgati) and stone throwing (diketo) do not only promote bodily co-ordination but encourages information learning as well (2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3). Stone throwing promote co-ordination between eye-contact, arm and mind. Since the game involves numerical counting, pre-school children learn numerical skills at early age.

This study serves to rediscover the indigenous games which constitute part of African life and entertainment yet not usually considered and not equally sponsored like Western games. The games form part of the people's heritage but, they do not benefit the communities financially (1.2). It is observed in the study that in the past a man's wealth was measured by the number of cows he has whereas today a man's wealth is measured by the amount of money he has. When 'moruba' (board game) is played, the players refer to the stones (dithuba) as cows which signify a bride's price. This indicates that the games have the significance and meaning to the community as well as the players around Phalaborwa (1.4.6).

This research shows that indigenous games are still played at homes, schools, workplaces and taxi ranks around Phalaborwa. This is an indication that the games should be relocated, reclaimed and protected (1.5). Most importantly these games should be commercialized either at regional, provincial or national level to alleviate the problem of unemployment and crime reduction as outlined in the ensuing section of recommendation.

5.2 Recommendations

The people of this country engage themselves in a diverse way of entertainment; playing the games as one of them. Games are taken as the best entertaining phenomenon. The players' talent is only known within the community in which they are located. The players are not sure whether their talents can be taken to the next level. They play but end up as unemployed old men and women instead of benefiting from their talents in the indigenous games.

The researcher suggests that as home is where informal education takes place, parents should continue to teach, motivate and encourage the children to play the games and to ensure that the games are developed. They should also visit the sport field whenever the games are played. The parents can become participants or spectators and that can have an impact on the development of the skills and the love of the games within communities.

The indigenous games should be played at schools locally, provincially and nationally to influence the playing of the games globally. Competitions can be organized at local, provincial and national level. The children will be able to learn and know places around them practically at an early age than reading about them from the books. People will have the opportunity to travel and thus tourism will be promoted.

The study proposes that stakeholders such as children, parents, educators, members of the community and local government should show commitment as well as involvement in the games to ensure that they are protected and promoted. In the areas where the indigenous games are played, experts should be appointed to do research and the findings be used to see how the games can be relocated, documented and developed. Documentation of the games is important to enable those who do not know how the games are played as well as future generation to read how the gamers should be played.

The government should also take responsibility for developing training programme with regard to the indigenous games which can serve to combat ailments and anti-social behaviour within the community such as unemployment, poverty, sexual harassment and abuse, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted diseases. This study suggests that

playing the games can become an option in life to improve their conditions for the better. Unemployment, lack of facilities and economic activities results in robbery, stealing, corruption and killing among people.

Media programmes, schools' physical education lessons, workshops and competitions should be organized. The Department of Education together with Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and Recreation should work together to revive the games. Official venues where the games can be played should be established. The resources used to play the games such as pebbles for 'diketo' (pebble throwing) can be modernized and replaced by marbles to draw attraction. Boards can be designed where 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' (board games) will be played.

As with western games, coaches for indigenous games should be identified and appointed. Game rules should be documented. These games should also be refined to standardize them.

Elderly people are as important as everyone in the community. Their interest and wellbeing should be taken into consideration. They should be able to go and refresh their bodies and mind. Their bodies need exercise to stay healthy and fit also, to relieve stress and boredom. Therefore, the researcher proposes that recreation centers be built for them.

The study further recommends that the South African broadcasting authority should ensure that the indigenous games are broadcasted. An elderly informant points out that although we pay television licenses, most of the time we watch games from overseas. Like other games such as soccer, rugby and cricket, indigenous games should also be broadcasted.

The games that enjoy bigger chances of being broadcasted are games which are already famous and have money. For the underdeveloped games to gain popularity, they too should be advertised by the media. Some games such as 'melamo' (stick fighting) as well as 'diketo' (pebble throwing) are slowly developing from rural areas and remain favourite to the people who grew up playing them. The researcher recommends that these games be protected for the sake of those who love and play them.

Home is where informal education takes place; as such parents should take an initiative to ensure that the games are developed at the early age of their children. Parents should encourage and motivate children to play the games at school as well. They should also attend sport competitions of their children as a way of supporting them. Becoming spectators of the games can also have a great impact on the development of the skills and the love the games within communities.

It has been pointed out that elderly people play indigenous games like 'moruba' and 'morabaraba' usually at inconvenient places like the shebeens and tavern. This is an indication of lack of proper facilities. The study therefore recommends that indoor facilities be built.

As the games are developing, members of communities should join hands to make the process a success. Players, parents and educators and coaches should bear in mind that everything starts from bottom up. Young players who are tomorrow's champions should start realizing their potential by playing at home ground, school, compete with other schools locally, nationally and internationally if needs do.

This study recommends that players' talents should be taken to the next level to encourage them to play. This can be eliminated through the intervention of sponsors, coaches and promoters of the games. These people can also seek information on how the players can be selected to play for bigger teams. Through networking, creation of time for practice, training and upgrading of recreation centers can contribute towards the development of the games.

The stakeholders such as parents, educators, local government and members of the community should show commitment as well as involvement in the games to ensure that they are protected and promoted. They need to ensure that the future of the games and that of the players is guaranteed.

The indigenous games are an important element of cultural heritage for Ba-Phalaborwa and some of the South African communities. They are recognized as an important means of self expression and social instrument. The indigenous games are truly a living and still developing tradition rather than a memory of the past. Relocating and reviving them can benefit the communities as well as the whole country in many ways such as reducing anti-social behaviour, relieve boredom, have a healthy lifestyle and so

forth as alluded in the previous chapters.

South Africa is a country with diverse cultures due to democracy. Both Black and White live together, with few elements of segregation. The researcher recommends that all the games should be played to benefit both races economically, socially and physically. Despite the fact that Western games had an impact on the fading of the indigenous games, they too should be played to accommodate players of all races.

There are different talents in the children regarding every game which needs development. This study suggests that working together in communities can assist in realizing the vision and mission of the African renaissance which redress the imbalances of equalities. Games like cricket, basket ball, netball, rugby and so forth, are played especially in well equipped schools. Government therefore, should provide facilities to accommodate indigenous games.

Although games like stick fighting and fist fighting are indigenous in nature among Ba-Phalaborwa, they are nevertheless not unique. Stick fighting for instance is somewhat pandemic in terms of 2.4.1. Recognition of the game as professional would afford the Ba-Phalaborwa and other South Africans at large the opportunity to compete at international level. This would not only benefit them financially but would give them exposure to the outside world. Likewise, professionalization of fist fighting by our government would end the localization of the sport in Venda to become a national sport. The sport would gain prominence and like boxing, its counterpart, fist fighting would also gain universal recognition. Of course new rules would have to be formulated to bring the sport to acceptable standards.

We have games like boxing, chess and table tennis for instance, featuring in the Olympic Games. If these games have been professionalized, there is no reason why the indigenous games counterparts like fist fighting and board games cannot be equally recognized, Much as we have world chess champion, we should one day also speak of a 'morabaraba' world champion.

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