In the book 'A study of Philippine Games' (1980), author Mellie Leandicho Lopez noted that 'laro' is the Filipino generic term for all forms of recreational play. The closest word term for the game is the 'palaro' referring to a group of special occasion games that take place during wakes, festivals and town fiestas. This would also refer to games that are competitive in nature where each contest is always brought to a conclusion.

Major studies of games pointed out that traditional games are shared communally within Philippine context. The same situation exists in neighboring countries, especially Indonesia.

The family is a social agent that builds the development of each member of the household. As traditionally practiced in the Philippines and the neighboring countries, children learn from their parents. It is the obligation of the parents to help their children learn social customs, standards and values of his culture. This system is also shared by other members of the family, relatives, and, by and large, the members of the community, speeding up the learning process of any child. Also, with this frame of attitude, preservation of tradition is enhanced, and the children benefit from it. It is in this process that whatever they learned is right away integrated into their consciousness.

Malay (1956) pointed out that 'Filipinos like to play game,' and this is observed true.

Traditional and high-tech games are simultaneously played around the country. As part of Filipino pastime, especially in the rural areas and during moonlit nights, the neighborhood gathers and shares games in the plazas, open areas, and main roads, trying different sets of games and interacting with each other as part of their recreation, socialization, and relaxation after a hard day's work.

12 PHILIPPINE TRADITIONAL GAMES

The selection is based on the premise that these games share commonality around the country and that of their neighboring Asian countries. Majority of these are common or ordinary games utilizing physical strength, and classified as mock warfare, racing games and formula games, most making use of dexterity and skill.

1. **PATINTERO (block the enemy game)**

- This game is played by boys and girls, ages 5 to 10 years old in mixed teams. Adults though tend to rank themselves according to sex.

- There are two sets of this game. One requires six players to a team while the other needs eight players.

- It is played outdoor at anytime of the day and at night when the moon is out.

- It is prepared on the ground by drawing a rectangular field (usually five to six meter with four parallel lines inside) using either water, stick and charcoal on the ground to define the boundary.

- To play, one set of taggers or the 'it' situate themselves inside the lines of the rectangle while the runners will try to get through both ends of the field and back without being tagged or blocked. When caught, they right away change roles. The group that has lesser tagged incidents is declared winner.

- The game is widespread in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.
2. KARERA NG BAONG SANGKO (coconut shell stilts race)

- This game is designed for racing.
- It requires two or more children of both sexes ages between 7 and 12 years old or much older.
- It uses coconut shells with string of abaca rope inserted into the eyes of the shells. The strings are measured to the height of the user. A set of starting and finish lines are drawn.
- The players, with their feet on the coconut shells stilts, run at full speed to the finish line.

3. LUKSONG LUBID (jump rope)

- This is another common game played only by girls between the ages of 5 and 15.
- It is usually played outdoors when the weather is good and indoors during the rainy season. The length of the abaca rope depends on the players involved.
- It is played first using two 'its' who are replaced after a player touches the rope with his feet.

4. TAGUAN (hide and seek)

- This game has no limit to both boys and girls of ages between 5 and 15.
- It is played outdoors during daytime and on moonlit nights. Children are most often discouraged by parents partly due to a belief in unseen spirits that might harm their children.

- It starts in an unidentified base where the 'it' closes his eyes and counts to 100 while the other players start hiding. After the count, the 'it' start looking for the rest of the players. Once found, one is automatically out of the game. In some provinces though, once a player is found, the 'it' will have to run to the base and touch it while the found player tries to beat him to it. When the found player beats the 'it,' he remains 'it' until everyone else is located.

5. KOLYAHAN NG SARANGOLA (kite fight)

- This is a game of dexterity and skills at manipulating high-flown kites. Kiting is one the old games found in the repertoire of Philippine games.
- It is played by boys, ages seven and older, outdoors during summer (March to June in most provinces and extended to the month of October in other areas).
- It is played by two groups using their kites: either a big one (gorion) or a small one (small kite) to engage in the 'kolyahan.' The players would try to damage the each other's kite while avoiding damages to their own kites.
- This game needs preparation since the kite's string is coated with powdered glass, to help cut the strings of the opponent's kite. The owner of the kite that is damaged and plunges to the ground loses.
6. **DAMA (checkers)**

- This is another familiar game and pastime that uses skill, usually played by males 10 years old and above, and played either indoors or outdoors.
- It is played on a small wooden board with 10 squares and 14 end points. The checkers (dama) pieces are comprised of 24 pitsas made from pieces of small bamboo, stones, or bottle caps, with the players having 12 pieces each.
- The players position the 12 pieces of pitsa on the end points of the diagram. The players move alternately from point to point. Like chess, the game ends once the opponents pitsas are captured or literally eaten, especially the dama or queen.

7. **TURUMPO (top)**

- This is a popular game throughout the country. Each province has its own shape and style of top but the most beautiful and biggest are those found among the Maranao of Mindanao.
- It is done with ordinary skill in order to manipulate the top. The top is usually made of soft wood for those used in regular games and hardwood for heavy competition.
- It is played by winding the meter-long string around the top. The top is held between two fingers and the thumb and thrown to the ground.
- The competition is of two kinds - one is to inflict damage on the opponent's top (the top that receives the heavy damage lose the game) and the other one is to keep it spinning for the longest time (the one that spins the longest wins).

8. **YOYO**

- According to early researchers and documents, this particular piece of instrument was not intended for game purposes but as instrument in hunting or capturing animals and as self-defense.
- Presently, yoyo is made of wood and acrylic plastic though before it was made of carabao horn, ivory, silver, and even gold.
- It is quite new, played alone or by two, outdoors or indoors, by young and adult alike of both sexes.
- The mechanics of the game is simple, the players only have to outwit the opponent in reeling the yoyo continuously without interruption. If the opponent did not complete the required style, e.g. 'around the world,' 'walking the dog,' and loses momentum, or his yoyo stops in the process, then he loses the match.

9. **SIPA (rattan football)**

- This is a common game that requires kicking skills.
- It is played outdoors during daytime with young adults participating in the game varying in numbers from two, four, and eight players.
- Like the ball in the volleyball game, the rattan ball is kicked by the players to their opponents who kick it back and so forth. The ball should never touch any parts of the body except the knee down to the toes.
10. **PALO SEBO (climbing a greased bamboo contest)**

- It traces its origins to a similar game widely played in the Visayas that had men racing up a greased coconut tree. It is also similar to the ‘Pinang’ game of Java, Indonesia.
- It is played by young males and generally done in an open space during fiestas and other celebrations.
- A long polished bamboo pole greased with oil is planted on the ground with the prize placed at the topmost of the pole. All players, whether individually or as a team, try to climb the pole for the prize. The prize, usually cash, is increased depending on the sponsor's generosity.

11. **LUKSONG TINIK (thorn hurdles)**

- This is a very common game played largely by girls ages between 7 and 12, though, in some areas, boys join in.
- It is played outside with players divided into sets, comprising of the mother ('inay) and her child ('anak').
- The 'it' are two players who seat facing each other, stacking their feet and hands together, gradually increasing the height while the opponents jump over it. Any 'child' player who touches any part of this hurdle is saved by the 'mother' who would jump on the former's behalf. If she, too, fails to accomplish the feat, both 'mother' and 'child' becomes the 'it' who would assume the seated position.

12. **SUNKA OR chongca, sungca, sunkaan, sunca, tsunka (board game)**

- This is another set of game widely distributed in the country and the rest of Southeast Asia.
- It is played both outdoors and indoors and is played by both children and adults.
- It is played by two players with a wooden pea-pod shaped board with seven small holes in rows on each side, and a big hole on each end filled with an equal number of 'sigays' (small shells).
- Each player takes turns picking up from any hole on his/her side, putting one 'sigays' in the small/big hole to his/her left, then picks up all the 'sigays' from the last hole that the last sigay is put and places them in the big hole to his/her left. This is repeated until one person no longer has any 'sigays' to play with and is declared the loser.
- The person with the most number of sigay is declared the winner.

*(Data from the book of Artemio C. Barbosa titled, Traditional Games in the Philippines; Date Published: August 15, 2003)*