

INDIGENEOUS GAMES OF THE AGTAS OF PEÑABLANCA, CAGAYAN

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Abstract— Culture is defined as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, intellectual, emotional and material features that characterize a society or social groups. And with this reality, culture plays a vital role in the development of a certain community and society. And one of the elements that is important in understanding one's culture is the presence of indigenous games. This study aims to identify the different indigenous games of the Agta community of Peñablanca, Cagayan, Philippines. Ethnographic method was utilized to determine the needed data. Results revealed that the indigenous games of the Agtas are Sigegud (Bow and Arrow), Magsinaang-ugaw (Tree Climbing), and Magkabay (Swimming), where these games serve as their practice for survival and for recreation.

Keywords— *Indigenous Games, Agta Community, Sigegud, Magsinaang-ugaw, Magkabay*

INTRODUCTION

Culture is defined as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, intellectual, emotional and material features that characterize a society or social groups (ASEAN Declaration of Cultural Heritage (2002). Pertierra (2002) also defined culture as an invisible lens through which one sees reality. It sets are pre-given as language, notions of identity, gender, nature and religion. Culture can also be a set of ideas, values, and practices as well as orientation and predisposition towards the world. The Philippines, a developing country in South East Asia is considered a culturally diverse nation due to the presence of many Indigenous peoples' group. And with this reality, culture plays a vital role in the development of a certain community and society. And one of the elements that is important in understanding one's culture is the presence of indigenous and traditional games.

For thousands of years, games have been the major pastime of all people. It is a form of communicative and expressive actions common among all human beings and evident in all cultures (Tubera 2005). The Philippines is rich in different traditional and indigenous games. Games for anytime, everyone and anywhere are readily available. Traditional and indigenous games, which are commonly known in the Philippines as "laro ng lahi" are games commonly played by children usually in the streets or in areas with wide spaces and

usually with the aid of locally available materials and instruments (Agudo 2012). Ticsay (1993) also described traditional games as inexpensive and wholesome form of entertainment enjoyed by children and adults whether as participants or as spectators.

Malay (1956) as cited by Lopez (2011) pointed out that Filipinos are game lovers and majority of the studies would affirm that claim (Carr, 1994; Demetrio, 1991; Lopez, 2011; and Rico, 2009). Traditional and indigenous games are part of Filipino past time especially in the rural areas and during moonlit nights, people, especially the children, gather and share games in the plazas, open areas, and main roads, trying different set of games as part of their recreation, socialization and relaxation (Tubera, 2005).

The Cagayan province, located in the northern part of the Philippines is assumed to have unique characteristics and cultural heritage. The province is home to different tribes and groups and one of these are the Agtas of Penablanca, Cagayan who are found usually in the foothills and the mountains of the Sierra Madre range. It is assumed then, that with the riches and diversity of the said group, it is believed that indigenous and traditional games are also present.

Meanwhile, it is a reality today that traditional Filipino indigenous and traditional games are being overshadowed by technology. Results of the study of several researchers revealed that playing for children means facing computer or other gaming device and spending most of the day sitting around while facing the gadget's screens (Nyota and Maparra, 2008; Morales, 2014; and Jones, 2014). Moreover, Magna Kultura (2010) also reported that Filipino children nowadays spend more time in internet shops rather than playing traditional and indigenous games. Also, what is alarming in the result of the study is that most of the children today already do not have any idea on playing traditional and indigenous Filipino games. Hence, this study was conducted to document the traditional games of the Agtas of Penablanca, Cagayan province.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative type of research using ethnographic method. The participants of the study were elders and children of the Agta community of Peñablanca, Cagayan Province. In addition, the researchers looked for key informants as to validate the results of the study. More importantly, ethical consideration was employed by the researchers as to keeping the confidentiality of the respondents. Ethnographic method was employed to gather data so that the researchers would personally observe and experience how the games are being played. Interview was also utilized with common guide questions in order to describe the different procedures of the game. Documentation was also observed through the use of video recorder, photo-camera and field diaries. Library research was conducted in order to gather additional and existing literatures with regard to Agtas indigenous games.

RESULTS

A. Indigenous Games of the Agtas of Penablanca, Cagayan

1. Name of the Game: **Sigegud (Bow and Arrow)**



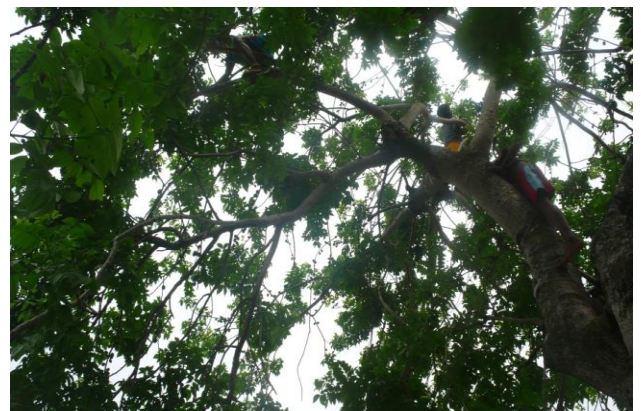
The game sigegud is an outdoor game played during daytime by both male and female from 7 to 15 years old. This game needs at least 2-10 players using bow and arrow and a banana stem. Fitness components and skills needed in the game includes balance, coordination, aerobic endurance, strength, body composition, and reaction time skill.

Procedure:

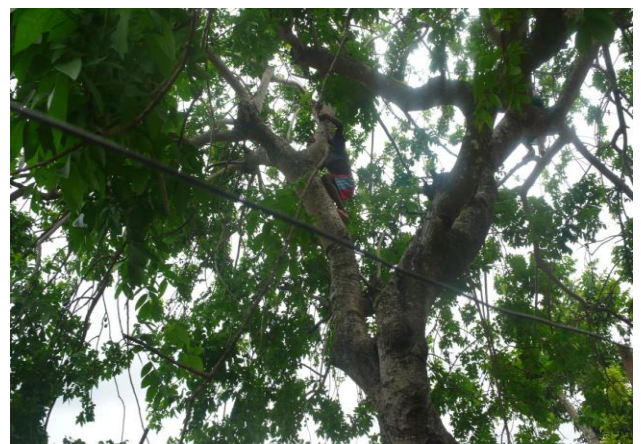
- a) The aim of the players in this game is to hit the target, which is the banana stem.
- b) The players form one line facing the target.
- c) The game will begin once the facilitator has given the command to do so.
- d) The first one to hit the target will be the winner.



2. Name of the Game: **Magsinaang-ugaw (Tree Climbing)**



The game is played by men with the age of 9 to 20 years old and it is played during daytime. The game needs at least 3-10 members using a tree. Fitness components and skills include agility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, coordination, power, aerobic fitness, low body fat level and flexibility, and balance.



Procedure:

- a) Players climb trees and avoid the *it* to catch them.
- b) Players are not allowed to step on the ground during the game.
- c) The *it* will catch one of the remaining players.
- d) The one who the bet caught will be the next *it*.



This game is also an outdoor game played by men during daytime having an age of 7 to 20. The game is being played by atleast 5-10 members in the Pinacanauan River. Fitness Components and Skills include agility, strength and power, speed, balance, endurance, and coordination.



Procedure:

- a) One person will serve as *it*.
- b) Bet swim to chase the other players, the person he catches will be the next *it*.
- c) The next bet will also swim to catch other player to be the next *it*.
- d) Players sometimes used banana stem as floater.

3. Name of the Game: **Magkabay (Swimming)**



DISCUSSION

This study aimed to document the different Indigenous games of Agta of Peñablanca, Cagayan. The different indigenous games being played by the Agtas of Peñablanca, Cagayan are, sigegud (Bow and Arrow), magsinaang-ugaw (Tree Climbing) and magkabay (Swimming). Generally, the indigenous games of Agtas are considered nature games because they rely on environment. Majority of the researches on Agtas in the Philippines revealed that the Agtas still rely on the natural resources as their major source for their economic activity such as foraging, hunting wild animals, farming, and fishing (Ocampo and Ocampo, 2015; Malicsi, 1982; Gloria,

1997; Simon, 1982; Headland, 2003; Tamanut, 1996). Meanwhile, Shimuzu (1989) stated that the Aetas of Luzon are nomadic people. Their social activities revolve around hunting of birds, frogs, and other animals, and gathering of fruits, insects, and mushrooms (Shimizu 1989); because of their way of living, their games are attached to environment.

In addition, indigenous games of Agtas are primarily for survival and recreational purposes. Most of the games played are survival driven games. Peñablanca for instance is topographically surrounded by large bodies of water and coastal area has contributed to the games of the respondents who have passion on fishing, hunting and animal trapping. sigegud (bow and arrow), is considered as survival due to its characteristic which is hunting. Results of the interview of the elders of the Agta community revealed that they let the children play the game so that when they get old they know how to hunt animals and search for food in the forest. The finding supports the study of Ocampo and Ocampo (2014) stressed that the Agtas are considered as the best archers in the world. Magsinaang-ugaw (tree climbing), meanwhile, a tree climbing game is also survival because it is food gathering. And lastly, magkabay (swimming) primarily teaches children how to swim and how to catch fish. It is also important to note that there is already a shift of their perspective with regard to their views and beliefs such as games. Most of the studies conducted with the Agtas stressed that games are primarily for survival purposes. However, the findings of the study revealed that the Agtas of Penablanca, Cagayan are playing these games not just for survival purposes, but also for recreation and entertainment.

Game was a matter of survival of the fittest, meaning, survival of the physically fit. Skill in the use of weapons, such as bow and arrow among the Agtas; agility and running, jumping and climbing; strength and endurance in throwing and carrying heavy burdens were physical attributes necessary for survival and which indigenous peoples had to develop to a high degree of perfection. Children's games were associated to physical activities in self-defense, search for food/shelter, and religious ceremonies.

CONCLUSION

Agta community in Peñablanca, Cagayan has different indigenous games, and these are: Sigegud (Bow and Arrow), Magsinaang-ugaw (Tree Climbing), and Magkabay (Swimming), where these games serve as their practice for survival.

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