

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES
OF THE KALANGUYA TRIBE**

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ABSTRACT

The study attempted to describe the different indigenous knowledge systems and practices of the Kalanguya tribe. Focus group discussion and key informant interviews were the main gathering tools used in the study. The kalanguya elders and leaders residing in the provinces of Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, and Nueva Ecija with a total of 514 participants were considered in the study. Results reveal that the tribe practice *inagumo, hangbo, keleng, bahliw, dahada, tagibel, pogad, Pahang, inumban, hagawhaw, hongga, and ihandil* are the rituals and practices of the tribe on life cycle. And finally, *tongtong, banat, bultong, man-ili, balhan, awil*, and the value of honesty are other social rituals and practices of the kalanguya tribe.

Keywords: *Kalanguya tribe, indigenous practices and beliefs, life cycle, rituals*

INTRODUCTION

Global forces and trends greatly influence Asia's development. Globalization opens opportunities for developing countries as it allows broader and faster access to expanded markets that shape relations among countries, social groups and changing the nature of development process itself. However, globalization involves risks because increased linkages among countries can constrain the capacity of national government to chart their own economic and social policies widening further the gap between countries at different levels of development (ADB, 2001).

Despite progress brought by globalization in the past three decades, the Asia and the Pacific region is still home to the two thirds of the world's poor. The most affected are the disadvantaged or vulnerable groups of which indigenous peoples of IPs/ICCs are classified. The United Nations (UN) report (1997) affirmed that in the Philippine situation, one third of the total population lives below the poverty line. In the list of ten poorest provinces, two provinces of the Cordillera Region belong to severe poverty and four provinces of Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) occupied by IPs/ICCs are included.

Almost one hundred forty (14) ethnolinguistic groups found in the fifty of the country's seventy eight provinces are mostly located in remote and resource rich areas, protected and ecologically fragile communities. The inaccessibility of these hinterlands occupied by IPs/ICCs hindered them to avail of basic services that contributed to high illiteracy rate, malnutrition, poor health, and death. The ugly face of globalization hastened poverty in IPs/ICCs because of structural and macro-economic policies of government that foster "development aggressive" programs on conversion of ancestral domains to commercial complex, large plantation and huge development projects such as dams and mining projects that fostered land grabbing and non-participation of community on decision-making process and destroyed IPs indigenous local systems, native technology and collective rights over natural resources of their ancestral domains.

International and national IP advocates rallied for a stop to all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation and marginalization of IPs/ICCs and urged legislators to enact laws in support to IPs/ICCs. The IPs/ICCs with their rich and unique culture had proven since time immemorial that they could sustain life through their practices. Unfortunately, this cultural beauty

of indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSPs) are threatened by extinction and not spared from the advent of globalization.

Sustainable development for the IPs/ICCs anchors on their desire to protect, promote, and preserve their ancestral domains and cultural diversity are keys to national development and economic stability which continuously draw international and national recognition evident on the increasing advocacy for the full implementation of international protocols and treaties.

Article 2, section 22 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes and promotes the rights of IPs/ICCs within the framework of national unity and development and ensures that these rights are implemented to the development of the IPs/ICCs. In addition, the enactment of the special law for the IPs/ICCs known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA, RA 8371) provides the legal framework for IP/ICCs sustainable development. The IPRA created the national Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as the primary government agency responsible for the formulation and implementation of plans, policies, and programs to recognize, the rights of IPs/ICCs in accordance to their traditional customs, beliefs, and practices.

The Kalanguya tribe occupies the peripheral boundaries of seven municipalities of CAR, Region 1, and Region 2. The political boundaries had nearly extinguished their ancestral domain and threatened their identity as one of the major tribes of the Philippines. Based on the Kalanguya congresses conducted since 1994 to present, the Kalanguyas continuously asserted their identity as a peaceful tribe with time tested culture and rich ancestral domain as proof of their existence. It is within this context that the research on the Kalanguya's cultural life specifically on their indigenous knowledge systems and practices is undertaken.

METHODS

This study utilized qualitative type of research. The study covered the kalanguya areas on three provinces which are Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, and Nueva Ecija. In particular, the three municipalities of Tinoc and Asipulo in Ifugao province; the municipalities of Kayapa, Ambaguio, Sta Fe and Aritao in Nueva Vizcaya; and Carranglan of Nueva Ecija.

The participants of the study are the kalanguya elders and leaders. The selection of the Kalanguya elders and leaders were done by the community themselves by consensus through consultations.

Table 1. Distribution of the Participants

Province	Municipality	Frequency	Percentage
Ifugao	Tinoc	114	22.18
	Asipulo	94	18.29
	Total	208	40.47
Nueva Vizcaya	Kayapa	156	30.35
	Ambaguio	56	10.89
	Sta. Fe	32	6.23
	Aritao	23	4.47
	Total	267	51.95
Nueva Ecija	Carranglan	39	7.59

	Total	39	7.59
Grand Total		514	100.00

This study utilized research instruments such as focus-group discussion, documentary analysis, key informants interview and participant observation. The data gathered from the survey were done in coordination with some of the local officials and the tribal leaders and elders of the Kalanguya Tribal Organization. The researcher supervised the implementation of the data gathering. Proper facilitation of the Focus-Group Discussions were conducted with the local officials and the enumerators to ensure proper implementation of the survey. Meanwhile, key informants were interviewed to shed light on the different Kalanguya IJSPS and share experiences on the practice of the rituals. The researcher, herself, had to do interview on the ritualists during her visit in all kalanguya areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Rituals and Practices on the Life Cycle

a. *Inagumo*

The Kalanguya rituals and practices start from conception. The performance of *inagumo* by a *mabaki* or ritualist so that gods will make the pregnant mother healthy and strong in carrying the baby for nine months as not to encounter profuse bleeding during delivery.

Before the *inagumo*, the household shall prepare the rice wine placed in an *ungot* or made out of coconut shell, betel nut and leaf placed in a *giyag* or wide basket made out of rattan. If the materials are ready, the *mabaki* would start by holding the native chicken to be offered to the gods and ancestors while reciting his *baki* or prayer asking the support of the gods to grant the household petition or wish. After reciting, the chicken is butchered to check on the goodness of the bile. If the bile is stout and green, it may indicate that the gods and ancestors are guarding and taking care of the mother and the baby in the womb. If the bile is shriveled and pale in color, then another chicken has to be butchered. Afterwards, the chickens are cooked for the family to eat. A ritual *pukley* is also performed when the conceiving mother craves to certain food or fruits called *timmanga*. The *pukley* is to request the gods to minimize the cravings.

b. *Podad*

Ritual known as *podad* is also performed to ward or drive the evil spirits of ancestors who died by accidents to allow the mother to have normal delivery. Rice wine, chicken, betel nut, and leaf are utilized during the ritual. The *mabaki* may differ in the invocation of the petition or prayer. After delivery, a stem of the fresh *runo* leaves is attached to a cane or spear which is pegged on the ground in front of the house or inserted on the roof as a sign that no visitors are yet allowed to enter the house for eight to ten days. The fresh leaves are attached to a spear if the baby is boy or cane if girl.

Some of the preserved smoked meat will now be boiled with smashed ginger for the viand of the mother who has just delivered. The Kalanguya believed that ginger would make the mother strong and healthy immediately after birth and would induce lactation for breastfeeding.

On the 3rd or 5th day after the delivery of the baby, the *tiklab* or *agom* will be performed whereby neighbors and friends will be gathered in the house of the mother who has newborn

baby. The preserved meat called *tinalo* or *ginako* will be cooked to be added to the butchered chicken, which is offered to the gods to ask help to make the baby strong and healthy.

c. *Pahang*

The Kalanguyas are concerned with the health of family members. When a family member feels lazy, has questionable character, poor appetite, gets thinner for no apparent reason, the *Pahang* is performed to ask gods and good ancestor to take care of the victim. Rice wine is prepared with betel nut and leaf. The *mabaki* will use native chicken as offering, but the number of native chickens will depend on the bile and on the request of the ritualist.

d. *Inumban*

When a family member travel to other places, *inumban* is performed to ask the gods to ensure safe journey and protection from danger. The *mabaki* is called to perform the ritual. Rice wine, betel nuts and leaves are prepared and used during the ritual. Usually, pair of chicken is used as offerings to the gods to seek their protection.

e. *Hangbo*

Dreams are indicators for the kalanguyas and may influence the direction of their lives. Any member of the family who dreamt of a dead ancestor giving him things for safekeeping performs the *hangbo*. Just like the other rituals, the *hangbo* needs rice wine, betel nuts and leaves. Chickens are also offered to seek the support of the gods. Aside from dreams, the *mabaki* has to perform the *hangbo* to ensure the protection in the family especially if there are queer birds, snakes, insects or undomesticated animals that enter the house, which may be interpreted as signs for family to perform the ritual.

f. *Keleng*

The *keleng* is a symbol of greatness in the Kalanguya custom. A couple who performs all the ladder-type and level of *keleng* will be considered among the richest and respected leader and elder. The *keleng* is a series of repeated festival organized according to the level of greatness the couple can afford in the Kalanguya custom. It is performed in four different levels twice.

In the *keleng*, all relatives, distant and near including the general public are invited to partake of the feasting. On the first day, which is the *kading*, one pig is butchered and all preliminaries on the ritual are observed. On the second day, the *keleng* is performed with three pigs butchered. For every boar butchered, a piglet is paired called *binangwa*. On the *katlo*, blood and some parts of the big such as the head and feet are fed to the public. On the fifth day, another pig is butchered until the eighth day where pigs are butchered daily.

g. *Bahliw*

Bahliw is a poetic dialogue between elders and other leaders being chanted and answered by group of women and men the chanted verses. Rice wine is served throughout the ritual to add to the merrymaking. It also refers to joyful chanting of blessings received in life or may be a sign of welcome for visitors to be blessed and enjoy the stay in the community. It does not require butchering of native animals but sometimes *tapuy* or rice wine is needed to perk the spirits of the participants.

h. *Dahada*

Families who build houses are required to perform the *dahada* or in moder times, *house blessings*. The ritual is performed before the family occupies a newly constructed house. A big native pig with chickens is butchered to be offered to the gods to bless the house and occupants so that they could be blessed with material wealth with peace and harmony. The ritualist would act as the priest to bless the house and occupants.

i. *Tagibel*

Kalanguyas believed on unseen spirits who roam around the forest and act as guardians of the mountains, rivers, minerals and whatever resources found within. When a person gets sick who just came from the forest after gathering firewoods or cleaning the kaingin, it is believed that the fairies or *bibiyew* got the soul of the person. The *mabaki* sought to perform the *tagibel* to seek the mercy of the fairies to release the soul of the person. A native mother pig is butchered with offerings of rice wine to appease the displeased fairies.

j. *Honga*

Honga is the ritual on death and burial. When a person is dying, *hongga* is performed as the last resort of the family to request their ancestors to make the sick person live if possible. Pigs and chickens are butchered as offering to the gods and ancestors to make the sick person well. Also, when a person is dying, he/she will be brought outside temporarily and be brought back inside the house after some minutes. This has to be done because it is believed that the preserved palay seed will not germinate if the dying person will not be brought outside temporarily. In case of abrupt death, the palay seed will be brought outside temporarily and to be returned after some minutes. Usually the first child or the last child in the Kalanguya family will be the one to host the corpse of their dead father or mother. The middle brothers and sisters will just bring their help for the burial in terms of animals, food and liquor.

k. *Hagawhaw*

Dog, a sign of anger and bravery is butchered to return back the curse especially if death in the family is involved. If dogs are not available, ducks are used but not native pigs nor chicken.

l. *Ihangdil*

When a rich person dies, a big mother pig is butchered in the evening for the ritual called *bah-wat* or *ihangdil* wherein the corpse on bed will be placed on a *hadag*, a ladder type made of newly chopped betel nut trunk or wood. The dead person will be placed in a sitting position on the ladder. Meanwhile, a poor dead person will not be placed in a *hadag* but will be made to lie on bed with the cheapest blanket, g-string or tapis.

B. Other Social Rituals and Practices

a. *Balhan*

In times of needs and problems, the Kalanguyas practice *balhan* which means solicitation. It is asking help from relatives in the form of cash, animals, or food. The sense of being concern, helping and promoting family closeness are some values that can be extracted from the said practice.

b. *Tongtong*

The *tongtong* is the highest arbitration body. This body handles civil disputes, petty crimes to the most heinous of crimes. Membership to this body requires integrity and some degree of economic independence on the part of an elder. The membership also varies in number depending upon the number of *lallakay* or elderly men in the community. Women and children are present in the *tongtong* but the overall decision comes from the *lallakay* through consensus that is usually final.

Tongtong is a means of settling disputes through the Council of Elders or leaders. After the *tongtong*, parties involved in the conflict can still maintain good relations and camaraderie as compared when legal courts are involved. Sometimes, amicable settlements are used as ways

to prevent deeper conflicts. Penalty may be imposed to erring parties depending on the outcome of the *tongtong*.

c. *Banat*

Banat is performed to ask favor from ancestors to bless the person asking to be victorious during settling of disputes, gambling or election exercises.

d. *Awil*

Awil is gift giving of chicken or duck to relatives who may visit a relative for the first time. This practice is usually for small children who visit relatives or friends. The person visited shows deep gratitude by giving live native chicken to be taken cared and not to be butchered.

e. *Bultong*

Bultong or body wrestling was used to settle disputes especially in land conflicts.

f. *Honesty*

Honesty, a virtue prevalent among the kalanguyas is shown in their houses and granaries that are not locked to allow visitors to cook food. Travelers who were hungry could just enter a house along the way and eat cooked foods. Granaries where harvested palay was stored were not locked because stealing was not a problem.

g. *Man-ili*

The grouping of people called *man-ili* is composed of clans, villages and sitios who bind themselves together as a working force during occasions. When a person as member of the *man-ili* will have occasions such as *keleng*, *kahiw*, *da-nga*, *patey* or the like, the member will act as the workforce to prepare and to do all work of the person. The *man-ili* will provide food, wine and materials for the occasion.

Man-ili is the household head organizations among the Kalanguyas in a barangay as basis to share the meat of pigs, cows, and/or carabaos butchered. The members of this *man-ili* gather in the household who will perform *danga* to accomplish a project like construction or repair of a house, hauling of a sick person to a far clinic or hospital.

CONCLUSION

The kalanguya rituals and practices occur in almost all phases of life, which are from conception, birth and death. Social rituals are practiced to maintain peace and harmony in the community.

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