

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted at Balakbak, Kapangan, Benguet to document the indigenous knowledge, practices and beliefs in conserving the 'be-be.'

Specifically, it aimed to identify the reasons why the residents protect the 'be-be'; to identify the significance of indigenous practice in conserving the 'be-be'; to identify the changes in the practice in conserving the 'be-be'; and to determine the challenges met by the residents in conserving the 'be-be.'

There were three elders in the community who were chosen as the key informants of the study. Other information was also gathered from 20 respondents who had been practicing the indigenous practice in conserving the 'be-be.' Personal interviews with the key informants and the respondents were done to gather all the necessary information about the conservation of 'be-be.' Using narrative description to interpret the data, it was found out that 'Timpuyog' was a practice done by the community in conserving the 'bebe.' It was participated by the community by planting the trees, watering them and cleaning the weeds.

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There were three groups who participated in the ‘Timpuyog.’ Along with it were the beliefs connected in conserving the ‘be-be’ such as ‘inayan’, ‘tumongaw’ and belief in ‘spirits’ that were connected to the process of conserving the ‘be-be.’

Furthermore, the respondents claimed that participating in the ‘timpuyog’ is significant to them, in the community and the environment so they want to sustain the practice and preserve it.

It is then therefore important that the residents of Balakbak, Kapangan should continue practicing the ‘timpuyog.’ Further, young generations also should participate in the ‘timpuyog’ for the sustainability of the practice through generations. Lastly, a full compilation of the history of the ‘be-be’ (School and Community Heritage Park) is needed as a guideline for the next generation.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Brief History of 'Be-be'

Name. The name 'be-be' was coined by the community as a Kankana-ey term of pine tree. Since the area was planted with pine trees, the residents called it as 'be-be'.

When Peter Begawen Sr., one of the key informants of the study taught at Balakbak Elementary School in 1977, he saw the potential works of the community in maintaining the 'be-be'. Because of this, he named the area as "School and Community Heritage Park" in 2005.

Planting of trees. The land area totaling to approximately 2,000 square meters, was planted with sweet potatoes and bananas before it was planted with trees. In 1963, the Bureau of Forestry under the Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR) launched a project for widespread tree planting in the whole Cordillera and other places. Thus, then Barrio Captain Julio Bolislis headed the tree-planting activities in the said area. While the community was waiting for the cropping season to end, the residents were given pine tree seedlings and planted them.

The pine tree seedlings were funded by the Bureau of Forestry and DZWT, a radio station based in Baguio City as part of their community project. Other seedlings were donated by private individuals and residents of the community.

Since then, the community continued planting trees in the same area.



'Timpuyog' as a Practice in Conserving the 'be-be'

Description of timpuyog. *Timpuyog* is a practice done in the community by a group of people when completing a task. It is performed for free and with the zeal to help other members of the community. For instance, in building a house, the owner calls for some help from other members of the community to build his/her house. In that case, the helpers volunteer freely. In addition, 'timpuyog' is also done on rice fields- to plant and to harvest. Further, it is done in building stone walls in rice fields. Sometimes, the farmer/owner feeds the people who helped him/her.

Timpuyog in conserving the be-be. The first 'timpuyog' for planting trees in the 'be-be' was done through the voluntary efforts of the Balakbak Women's Club as their project with the support of former Barrio Captain Julio Bolislis in 1963. The community people went to the 'be-be' as a group to plant pine trees and help each other. One respondent related, "*Mantitimpuyog kami adi ay emey*" (We will go in unity). This was their tradition since they planted the trees until it grew.

Moreover, they also participate in 'timpuyog' in watering the plants and weeding the surroundings of the area. Teodora Balangcod, one of the key informants, said that the Women's Club has been practicing the 'timpuyog' in the 'be-be' for fifteen years already.

There was also a 'timpuyog' done by the pupils of Balakbak Elementary School (BES). Peter Begawen, one of the key informants, said that he had been requiring his class (Grade 5 and 6) to clean the 'be-be' and replace the plants that have been destroyed by animals since 1977.



In 1997, the school had a project titled “Global Competitiveness Through AgriBased School-Community Project” where they included planting and cleaning the ‘be-be’ as a Mini- Forest (See Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2. Pupils planting trees in the spacious area



Figure 3. Pupils cleaning the area to be planted

The pupils planted other trees like Acacia and Paper Tree aside from pine trees. From these trees, seedlings are being produced and propagated. (See Figure 4 and 5).



Figure 4. Seedling of Acacia, Pine trees and Paper trees for planting



Figure 5. Pupils fixing the seedlings

Begawen added that they always plant trees and the school helped in the maintenance of 'be-be' by participating also in the practice.

Moreover, they practice ‘timpuyog’ during the month of March. Teachers and students clean the ‘be-be’ because it serves as their venue for the Commencement Exercise. Under his management, Begawen initiated the practice until 2004. This practice was sustained until the present.

Another ‘timpuyog’ is participated by the community during Brigada Eskwela. Brigada Eskwelas is also known as “Bayanihan Para Sa Paaralan” where the community cleans and repairs damaged properties of the school in preparation for the start of the school year. Parents are informed, through the pupils, to clean the place.

Nancy Acoos, a teacher of Balakbak Elementary School and one of the respondents, said that the ‘be-be’ was also cleaned during the Brigada Eskwela when there is only little work to be done in the school. Furthermore, she said that the parents had to clean it because it is part of the school.

One respondent said, “*Mantitimpuyog kami ay emey mantitimpuyog kami ay man obla*” (We will go together and we will work together). This is after they are informed by their children to clean. (See Figure 6 and 7).

Acoos added that the parents continuously do the ‘timpuyog’ in cleaning the ‘bebe’. In addition, one respondent said she had been joining the ‘timpuyog’ when her children were in elementary until they graduated. The findings claimed that there were continuities in conserving the environment with the help of the practice ‘timpuyog’. This is supported by Tacloy (2000), when he stated that sustainable forestry practices, along with beliefs and customary laws that promote forest conservation and environmental protection, are practiced by indigenous communities in the Cordillera region.





Figure 6. Parents cleaning the weeds



Figure 7. Parents working together cleaning the weeds

The process of timpuyog. Before the community started to clean the ‘be-be’, members have to check on the area if the weeds grew tall and if other trees were destroyed.

Julio Bolislis, the Barrio Captain of the community settled a date for cleaning or planting. After that, he informed the community through house to house approach. The information dissemination was done before the cleaning.

During the implementation, the community people prepared their tools and sometimes their snack, if they wanted. At the cleaning area an elder led a prayer before they start which may go this way:

KANKANA-EY LANGUAGE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
<i>Dakayo ay manbe-ey esna ay pinad ing, mo man kospig da si luta yan ikewkew-angan you tan adi kayo kaila. Tan mo mapuntaan kayo yan manriri kayo ay manbunget kayo et pansakitan you din ipugao ay nankospig en dakayo.</i>	(To you, unseen spirits residing here, if they will throw soil, dodge it because we cannot see you. If you will be hit by the soil and you complain and get angry then beset the person who hit you with sickness.)

The respondents believed that they have to pray first before they clean because there might be some unseen spirits in the ‘be-be’ that they might hurt in cleaning.

After cleaning the area, lunch was served through buffet for everyone to partake. The food came from the crops planted by The Women’s Club such as sweet potato, banana and others as their food when they will plant trees and clean the area. Sometimes, oats, wheat and other cereals were also served. These supplies were given by the Catholic Church from Belgium. Cookies were also served as their snack that was given by Red Cross Organization. They also have potluck meals sometimes. Another group from the community members was assigned to prepare the food while others were cleaning.



Another prayer was led by the elder before they eat:

KANKANA-EY LANGUAGE

*Bendesiyonam nan makan ta mayat di
rikna din manobla ta adi da mankapoy
ay manobla. Mangan tako amin. Umali
kayo ta manga-o kayo sa kanen you*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

(Bless this food for the health of the laborers so that they will not be weak in working. Let us all eat. Come and get your own food.)



The prayer called for the people and the unseen spirits (if they are around) to gather and get some food on their own.

Lastly, after a group finished, another group continued to clean and plant trees. A group was composed of 10-15 members of the community and most of them are members of Women's Club. The first group does the job for one day and the next group will continue the next day. After the implementation they got home. Nevertheless, one respondent said that there were some people who continued working with succeeding groups even if they had done their part already.

Beliefs Connected in Conserving the 'be-be'

It was found out that the community has beliefs which they respected over time in conserving the 'be-be'.

Inayan. According to Dominga Peping, one of the key informants, the 'inayan' is an identified belief system which they follow. 'Inayan' means not doing anything bad to the environment and even to other people. This is true also according to the research of Tacloy (2000), *Indigenous Forest Conservation Systems in the Cordillera Region*, which stated that the 'inayan' or 'lawa' means not doing harm to the divine spirits present in the forest.

She added that when they cut trees they also ask permission to the unseen spirits so they will not be disturbed and harmed. It was confirmed in the remote upland village Mankayan, Benguet by Dapdapig (1995) that the residents are wary of the 'tiwwi' trees. People then are cautioned not to cut the species or even urinate under them lest the 'tummungaw' will be offended and bring harm to the guilty.



The tumongaw. Moreover, Balangcod also mentioned about the ‘tumongaw’, an unseen spirit that lived in the trees. Aside from the trees, they are also living in rocks, rivers and other forest places. She stated the story of Ayoan, a resident, who was called by a ‘tumongaw’ and hid her from the forest (‘be-be’). Ayoan lived with the ‘Tumongaws’ for several days. The people tried to find her. After a long search, they offered butchered animal, ‘palata’ (coins), blanket and others to call for Ayoan to come back. Balangcod said that, fortunately, Ayoan came back safe.

According to the respondents, Ayoan said that she can see the people looking for her however they cannot see her. She was also fed fruits by the ‘Tumongaws’. Balangcod added that the story implies that there are ‘tumongaws’ living in the place.

This supports the benguet.gov.ph (n.d.) stated that the locals believe in spirits who guard the forests, which they call as the ‘Bayani’ or ‘Tumongaw’ in enchanted trees. In connection, taboos or prohibiting laws and beliefs associated with supernatural beings had been the locals’ guide in protecting themselves against bad luck caused by spirits.

The spirits. One respondent said that there is a strong belief of ‘fairies’ also living in the trees. The ‘fairy’ was said to frighten the people to prevent them from cutting trees, or do something wrong in the forest. They mentioned that ‘fairy’ commonly appears as having long hair and is dressed in white. Others claimed it was a ‘white lady’ or a ghost roaming around in the forest and even in the school. Sometimes, the ‘fairies’ also change their appearance to animals like a pair of snake or dog.

Romeo Dilla, one of the respondents also stated another instance where the said spirits were seen was when an elder woman happened to burn a forest. She became ill with



‘bayang’ (a skin disease). They said that she destroyed the house of the ‘fairy’. The woman went to consult a ‘manbunong’ (an elder) and she was required to butcher an animal (chicken or pig) or ‘inlagaan’ to serve as offerings to say sorry. The woman claimed that she did not know the spirits were there.

The finding implies that there are beliefs in the ‘be-be’ in the process of conserving it.

Reasons of Protecting the ‘be-be’

The findings prove that there are some reasons why the community protects the ‘be-be’.

One respondent said they protect the ‘be-be’ because they planted the trees in it and therefore, the trees should be taken care of until they grow. Others claimed that it should be protected because it has been planted by elders years ago. One respondent said

“*Mabiyag di mula, mabiyag di ipugao*” (If plants will live, people will also live).

As Begawen stated, they want to protect the forest because it is the most important and richest ingredient of their life. Also, he added that the trees are responsible in the absorption of pollution and they help in the prevention of soil erosion.

Moreover, the community protects the ‘be-be’ because there are some benefits they can get from it. These are:

Source of fresh air. The residents claimed that when they go to ‘be-be’ they can breathe fresh air. At the same time, the trees there give shade to people. There were also elementary pupils playing at the ‘be-be’ because of its cool temperature.



Source of firewood. Moreover, parts of the trees that were cut due to typhoons are being used. The residents claimed that the school benefits from the branches that fell and the trees that were toppled down during typhoons. They use these as fire woods.

Venue for graduation ceremony and camping. Begawen said that the 'be-be' serves as their venue for Commencement Exercises because of its cool temperature. Until now, the 'be-be' is still being used as the venue for the said event. Other events, like Boy Scout and Girl Scout Camping Jamboree and Reunion, are also being held in the area.

Serves as water shed. One of the respondents said that they found an 'eb-eb' (spring) which served as a source of water of Salacop, Sitios of Balakbak when they started to conserve the 'be-be'. It was also iterated by the study of Dasmann (1972) that forest land considers all the values and the potentials in the areas. As watersheds, they are maintained to produce optimum amount of clear and useful water.

Serves as a tourist spot. One of the key informants said that the 'be-be' is being visited three times consecutively during 'Christmas ed Kapangan' from 2010 to 2012. Begawen said that they are trying to improve the 'be-be' for tourists such as building chiosco and a view deck.

As a compliance to laws in conserving the be-be. The respondents said that there were laws that had been followed by the community in protecting the 'be-be'. They said they were giving penalties to those who cut trees. Begawen stated that the penalty of cutting trees is 30 pesos per foot. He added a tree is approximately 3 to 5 thousand pesos. The community had been imposing the law so that the community members will not cut trees and the residents will not want to be penalized.



Perceived Significance of the Practice

In an interview, most of the respondents claimed that the practice should be preserved because it helps in the preservation of their environment and their community as well.

To the residents. According to Saya Legazpi, one of the respondents, claimed that “*mayat tan mantitinulong kami ay manobla. Magano pay di obla*” (It is good because we help each other working. The work also is finished even faster). Thirteen of the respondents said that it was good to participate in the ‘timpuyog’ because they were happy joining other people at work even with no pay. They said it was helpful to the community that when there are occasions, the work would be done faster. Also, one respondent stated “*Laylayden daka adi no emey ka makitimpuyog. Tan nu adi ka emey yan wada di ibaga da en sik-a ay lawa*” (They like you if you are participating in the *timpuyog*. When you do not participate, they will say something bad about you). *To the environment.* One of the respondents said that they are doing the practice to beautify the place. Also, they maintain the area by cleaning and replanting trees. According to the key informant, when the weeds are tall, they eradicate them so that the trees can absorb more water from the soil. Moreover, an ‘eb-eb’ (spring) has been a source of water in Salacop when they started to conserve the ‘be-be’.

To the community. Ten of the respondents claimed that they are being united or they help each other because of the practice. Also, they observed spirit of cooperation when they work as a group. After their work they also socialize and know each other well. They stated that with the ‘timpuyog’, their works are finished faster. One of the respondents said, “*Maragragsakan kami no adado kami. Malaglag-anan di rikna ay manlinis*” (We are happy because we are all working. It lightens the burden in cleaning.) The findings showed



that the practice had a very good significance in the lives of the respondents, in the environment and to the community as a whole.

Changes in Conserving the 'be-be'

There had been some changes that occurred in the conservation of the 'be-be' over time.

The existing practice of timpuyog. Before, if the people go to plant or clean the 'be-be', they pray first before they start the work. But now, they start cleaning even without praying because of they do not believe in supernatural beings such as

'tumongaw', 'spirits' and 'fairies'. Also, eating in the place during lunch or snack times was usually done but now, the people would rather go home straight. Respondents claimed that they were doing other things like household chores or farming.

Beliefs connected in the be-be. There were changes that were noted with regard to the beliefs of the community in the 'be-be'. One of the respondents claimed that their belief in 'tumongaw' had diminished because of the spiritual belief of the community that affects the way the community thinks in the beliefs connected in the 'be-be'. They observed the decrease of Pagans. This, according to the respondents, contributes to the decrease of belief in supernatural beings. Also, it had effect in the practice where they will not pray before cleaning, because some people did not believe that 'tumongaws' are residing in the area.

Challenges in Conserving the be-be

In the findings, there were some challenges that the community encountered when they were conserving the 'be-be'.



Pasturing of animals. The respondents said there were some individuals who use the ‘be-be’ as pastures. They place their animals (such as cow) in the place. Balangcod said, “*Protectaran iman en Barangay Captain Julio Bolislis din kakaew. Gaana ay manpastol si baka*” (Barangay Captain Julio Bolislis is always protecting the trees. He does not want to pasture their animals). Further, Begawen said there had been a warning not to use the place as pasture for animals because they might eat the young trees planted. Also he added, “If we have enemies in maintaining the ‘be-be’, they would be the people pasturing their animals”.

Cutting and burning of trees. The respondents claimed that cutting of trees is considered as a challenge in conserving the ‘be-be’ even the community is not allowed to cut trees. One respondent said that there were some people who have been penalized, however because of the low amount for penalty, violators tend to do it again. One respondent said, “*Wada od iman di manputputo si kaew ngem itabtabon da isunga adi da katiliw*” (They cut trees but they are privately doing it that is why they were

apprehended). They said they are cutting the trees during night time or during typhoons.

Sustainability of timpuyog. Most of the respondents claimed that the continuation of the enthusiasm of members of the community who participates in the ‘timpuyog’ is also a challenge. There is a decrease of people participating in the ‘timpuyog’. Begawen said that the young generation today is not exposed to the said practice because of the presence of technology. With the advent of technology such as computers and televisions, the youth opt to stay at home rather than help in the works in the community.



SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study was conducted at Balakbak, Kapangan, Benguet to identify the practice in conserving the 'be-be'; identify the significance of the practice to the residents, environment, and to the community; to identify the beliefs occurred in conserving the 'be-be'; to identify the reason of conserving the 'be-be'; to identify changes/innovations in conserving the 'be-be' and to identify the challenges in conserving the 'be-be'.

This study also aimed to produce a leaflet.

There were three elders in the community as the key informants of the study. Other information about the conservation of the 'be-be' was also gathered from 20 residents who have participated in the 'timpuyog' in conserving the 'be-be'.

Personal interviews with the key informants and the respondents were done to gather all the necessary information about the conservation of 'be-be'.

'Timpuyog' was done in conserving the 'be-be'. It was participated by the community by planting the trees, watering them and cleaning the weeds. There were three groups participate in the 'Timpuyog'. The first group was the Women's Club headed by Barrio Captain Julio Bolislis. The members of the Women's Club had been conserving the 'be-be' for fifteen years. During the process, there were two invoked prayers led by the elders before and during the work.

The second group was participated by the Balakbak Elementary pupils headed by



Peter Begawen, Sr. The pupils also planted Acacia and Paper Tree aside from Pine Tree. Under his management, Begawen initiated the practice until 2004. This practice was sustained until the present. The third group was the Community members especially the parents. The parents practice the ‘timpuyog’ during Brigada Eskwela.

There were some minimal changes incurred in the practice but the members of the community are still participating in the ‘timpuyog’.

Moreover, most respondents claimed they believed in supernatural beings, such as ‘Tumungaw’, ‘fairy’, and spirits or ghost living in the ‘be-be’, however it has been diminishing because of their spiritual beliefs today.

Furthermore, the respondents claimed that participating in the ‘timpuyog’ is significant to them, in the community and the environment so they want to sustain the practice and preserved it.

They are protecting the ‘be-be’ because they planted it and they get benefits from them.

On the other hand, the respondents claimed there were challenges that they are facing however they are still invoking the community not to pasture animals and to cut trees.



Conclusions

The study concludes that:

1. The indigenous practice of the residents of Balakbak has protected their environment for many years.
2. There are beliefs associated to indigenous practices which help in the continuation of the conservation of the environment.
3. The conservation of the 'be-be' ensures the sustainability of source of natural resources for the community.
4. So long as the community members actively participate in the conservation of the environment, changes may be incurred through time but the practice will continue.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following:

1. The residents should continue in conserving the environment because they say it's the ingredients of living.
2. The youth of Balakbak should be encouraged to join the 'timpuyog' for the practice to be sustained.
3. A full compilation of the history of the 'Be-be' (School and Community Heritage Park) will be useful as a guideline for the next generation and as information source for those interested in environmental conservation.



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