

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted at Balili, Mankayan Benguet to document the process of practicing *Denet* as an agricultural thanksgiving ritual.

Specifically, it aimed to determine the different processes in performing *Denet*; the communicated values; perceived significance of performing *Denet* to the farmers, environment and to the community; how the elders transmit *Denet* to the younger generation; the changes and challenges being encountered in the practice of *Denet*; perceptions of the respondents regarding the sustainability of *Denet* as an agricultural practice and produced a booklet about *Denet*.

There were 30 farmers who became the respondents of study who tried practicing *Denet* or at least participated in the said practice. Also, seven elders from the community who are performing *Denet* were the key informants of the study.

Denet contains values relevant to the farmers, community and to the environment. Also, it served significant roles to the farmers, environment and to the community. According to



the respondents and key informants, participation and appreciation of the youth topped in the ways on how *Denet* can be transmitted to the younger generation.

Just like other rituals in the Cordillera, there were also several changes in the practice of *Denet* especially in the materials and in the processes. Lack of interest among the youth was the number one challenge or threat faced by the ritual and *Denet* is worth sustaining as an agricultural practice because of the enumerated importance to the people of Balili, Mankayan.

It is therefore important that the farmers in Balili, Mankayan should continue practicing *Denet*. Moreover, the youth should try to participate in the ritual for them to understand the ritual well and the values being communicated in the practice should be sustained. Further studies maybe conducted in other areas of the region to see the difference and similarities of practicing the ritual. Finally, the booklet produced in this study may be used by the people of Balili, Mankayan as a source of information for the ritual.



INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Our culture is considered as our signature as Cordillerans. It is our unique identity that distinguishes us from the other ethnic tribes nationwide.

According to George Mclean, culture gives people a sense that they could live in a meaningful universe and it provides social roles that make each individual a significant member of the universe. Culture also represents an adaptation or adjustments to the various condition of life, including the physical, social and the super natural environment.

In the Cordillera, the people's traditions, beliefs and rituals act as their laws governing them to maintain peace and order or to live harmoniously.

According to Sacla (1987), Benguet folks, just like any other ethnic groups, have no written laws. However, researches reveal that their laws are incorporated in the customs and traditions, which are observed with precepts, as rules and regulations. For instance, it is a taboo to be celebrating while a neighbor is mourning. A husband who divorces his wife without any valid reason is required to live all his properties to the children and the wife is another law.

Aside from the popular Igorot culture cañao, Benguet people, particularly people from Mankayan, also have *es-eset*, a thanksgiving for fortune and good health; *utop* for good health and prosperity, and others (Pekas, 2006).



Denet, a thanksgiving ritual before harvest, is being practiced in Mankayan.

Based on the observation of the researcher, some farmers are intently integrating *Denet* in their farming cycle before harvesting, in driving away pest and diseases and for the protection of their garden from calamities like soil erosion and infertility. It is a ritual performed by farmers before harvesting because they are hoping for a bountiful harvest. This ritual is being performed by appealing to the good graces of the gods and goddesses whom they believe to have control over nature and protects their crops. An elder is being consulted by the farmer regarding this matter and *Denet* is being performed (Sacla).

From the preliminary interview conducted by the researcher, *Denet* can be traced from a legend. According to Angyok Mangapak, one of the key informants, *Kabigat* and *Suyan* saw their dog barking a small lake while a bird is pouring water from a spring into the lake. When *Kabigat* was ready to throw his sphere into the bird, the lake became wide like a rice field so they decided to plant “paguey” or rice. Their grandmother *Bangan* ordered them to get chicken and perform *Denet*. After the ritual, they harvested more than what they have expected so they decided to share the blessing and spread the ritual so that they will be benefited to. This legend of *Denet* is similar to what Camiling (2012) in Buguias Benguet was able to document in her study.

In Balili Mankayan, where bulk of the population depends on farming as source of living, *Denet* is being practiced by some of the farmers. According to Dam-gas Labisen, a farmer who practices *Denet*, he has been practicing it because he believes that the ritual gives him progress like bountiful harvest and high vegetable price.



Thus, with the given importance of *Denet* in the life of the farmers, there is a need to document it as an agricultural practice to sustain the ritual. Through studying all about *Denet*, and compiling it into a written form in a booklet, *Denet* can be further understood and appreciated for the younger generation.

Statement of the Problem

The study answered the following questions:

1. What are the socio demographic profiles of the respondents?
2. What are the different processes in practicing *Denet* to drive away pest and insects, before planting and before harvest?
3. What are the communicated values in practicing *Denet*?
4. What are the perceived significance of performing *Denet* to the farmers, to the environment and to the community?
5. How do the elders transmit *Denet* to the younger generation?
6. What are the changes in the practice of *Denet*?
7. What are the challenges being encountered in the practice of *Denet*?
8. Is *Denet* worth sustaining as an agricultural practice?

Objectives of the Study

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Generally, the study documented the different processes involve in *Denet* as an agricultural thanksgiving ritual.

Specifically, it:

1. determined the socio demographic profiles of the respondents;
2. determined the different processes in practicing *Denet* to drive away pest and insects, before planting and before harvest
3. determined the communicated values in practicing *Denet*;
4. determined the perceived significance of performing *Denet* to the farmers, environment and to the community;
5. determined how the elders transmit *Denet* to the younger generation;
6. identified the changes in the practice of *Denet*;
7. identified the challenges being encountered in the practice of *Denet*;
8. determined the perceptions of the respondents regarding the sustainability of

Denet as an agricultural practice; and

9. produced a booklet about *Denet*.

Importance of the Study



The study may help in preserving the culture for the elders and to the younger generation through written document of the ritual in a form of a booklet. Results of the study may benefit the community by recognizing the need to protect, sustain and continue practice *Denet* as an agricultural practice.

It will also provide information not only to the people of the community who are interested to know and understand *Denet*. Also, the study may serve as a reference for other farmers who want to perform the practice.

Moreover, the study may give knowledge especially to younger generations about the values being communicated from the said practice.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on documenting the different processes involved in performing *Denet*. Also, it covered the values being communicated, perceived significance of practicing *Denet* to the farmers, environment and to the community, how the elders transmit the ritual to the younger generation, challenges or threats faced by the community and the changes observed in the practice of the said ritual.

Photos were collected from the people while performing the ritual.

The study was conducted in Balili, Mankayan, Benguet.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Denet as an Agricultural Practice

Denet is a ritual sponsored by farmers before harvesting because he is hoping for a bountiful harvest. Although he knew that good harvest depends on the care of plants, the farmer still believes he will have a good harvest. An elder is being consulted by the farmer regarding this matter and *Denet* will be performed. This ritual is being performed by appealing to the good graces of the gods and goddesses whom they believe to have a control over nature and protects their crops (Sacla, 1987).

This is supported by Baucas (2003) mentioning that in *Denet* ritual is performed to have an abundant harvest. Moreover, in the study of Camiling (2012) about *Denet* in Buguias, Benguet, *Denet* was traced from a legend. According to her key informants who narrated the legend of *Denet*, there were two siblings *Kabigat* and *Suyan* who went for hunting with their dog. While on their way, their dog was left behind barking into a small lake and a bird was pouring water from the spring to the small lake. The hunters went back home and reported what happened to their father, *Pati*. He ordered *Kabigat* to throw his spear into the wild bird but suddenly to their surprise, the small lake became wide like a rice field so the two brothers decided to plant “paguey” (rice). When their grandmother *Bangan* heard the story, she ordered them to get a healthy chicken and perform *Denet* to thank their ancestors. After the ritual, they harvest more than what they have



expected. With this they decided to spread their blessing to the other people so that the other will also be benefited and will also remember us every time they perform the ritual. Through the preliminary interview conducted by the researcher, this legend was proven to be similar the legend of *Denet* in Balili, Mankayan, Benguet.

Furthermore, Baucas said that as observed in the prayers, the native priest invokes the assistance and blessings of god *Masiken*, god *Pati* and god *Bangan* and also

Kabunyan to bless the farmer and his family. He added that in this ritual, the “manbunong” offers a chicken or more and some materials. The „*manbunong*’ checks the bile or biles of the chicken which if appears favorable and appropriate; it can prevent illness and bring progress to the farmer and his family. However, Camiling (2012) found out in her study that aside from the native chickens, other materials such as runo grass (bel-lang), rice wine or gin and woods are needed in the process of performing *Denet*.

Beliefs of Benguet People

The Benguet people believe in the existence of unseen beings that emanate from the Sky world and the underworld that they called spirits possessing power over man. It is further believed that these unseen beings (spirits) can be manipulated by man to his advantage. With this belief, the people strive to win the favor of the spirits using prayers and material offerings in a ritual which the people had adopted as part of their life ways and thought ways resulting to the establishment of their customs, traditions and taboos. Although this belief system is unwritten, it was preserved by the native priest in the form



of ritual prayers, which was passed from generation to generation until this day (Anonymous,n.d.).

Furthermore, belief system of both "kankana-ey" and "ibaloy" shows that above all the gods and goddesses, there is the “*adi-kaila* or *mengosochung*,” the most high. In this faith evolved a system of appeasing the malevolent unseen and appreciating the benevolent unseen. The malevolent unseen are the ones preying on the lives of men, women and children like robbers or kidnapers for ransom. And if not appeased, they harm their victims by inflicting sickness, injury or finish them to death. Parallel to the malevolent is the benevolent unseen who is thought to be the supreme one who gave man the power to counteract the malevolent in the form of rituals. The rituals are classified as to offensive, defensive and appreciative natures (Anonymous, n.d.).

The spirituality of the Igorots in general is encompassed in their strong belief on the power of the Almighty referred as *Kabunyan*, *Alawagan*, *Lumauig* or sometimes termed as *Adikaila*, *Nintotongdo* or *Manakabalin*. With such belief, the core values of *inayan*, *laton*, *maykasiyana*, *lawlawabaw* and others are their guiding philosophies in their everyday living.

Significance of Ritual Practices

Undoubtedly, Benguet people love ritual performance. Ritual practices and cosmological understanding cannot be separated from the daily round of subsistent practices. This reminds once again that analysis of the Benguet beliefs and practices includes subsistence, kinship, and intimacy with the landscape of language. A general



observation why the Benguet people love rituals is because through their rituals, their collective beliefs and ideal experienced affirmed and articulated in a much deeper and meaningful way than in creedal or doctrinal formulations (Taray, 2008).

Moreover, Taray (2008) added that rituals are windows into the heart of the Benguet people's social life. The persistence of ritual performance honoring their ancestors' shows the Benguet understanding that ancestors play a major role in fortifying and maintaining their solidarity as a kin group and as an indigenous community. During ritual performance people are expected let go of their individual preoccupations in order to join the community in honoring, remembering and reconnecting with their ancestors. It is always important for the „mambunong“ and the family hosting the ritual to mention the name of the ancestor for whom the ritual is being performed and to invite the other ancestors as well.

Taray (2008), further explained that inviting their ancestors and mentioning their names during rituals is a way of remembering and giving recognition to each of their ancestors. Hence, rituals are sacred moments when the living and the dead come together to strengthen their solidarity and interdependence. During the performance, the family yard becomes the sacred space where the human-spirit worlds come together.

Benguet spirituality involves mutual giving, receiving, enjoyment, forgiveness, and remembrance. For example, when it is determined by the elders and experts of tradition that there are indeed convincing signs that an ancestor wishes to shower blessing to her/his living relatives, the agamid and *sangbo* rituals are performed as ways of recognizing and reciprocating in advance the benevolence of the ancestor. A reciprocal

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relationship is equally important among the living members of the community. For instance, the giving of the *upo* is a form of economic and social obligation to be observed in times of death. In Benguet, relatives and the community are obliged to give material support in cash or in kind (rice, coffee, bread, drinks, firewood, etc) to the bereaved family. Significantly, the Benguet people believe that the dead would acknowledge and take these items as *baon* and “pasalubong” to the ancestral abode. In addition, relatives and neighbors do the cooking, serving, and keeping things in order so that the bereaved can focus on the rituals. The bereaved family is expected to reciprocate when others are also faced with the same situation. Reciprocity or mutuality, the Benguet people’s “Golden Rule,” remains operative in their community life.

On the other hand, in performing certain ritual, materials or props were also given into consideration and importance. Each ritual has its own specific material requirements. Each material offering is for a specific purpose in a specific ritual. The purpose of the ritual determines the material requirements to be offered. Props used in rituals play important roles portraying its own symbolic meaning.

According to Fiar-od (2009), community rituals require animal sacrifice with rice wine, water, salted meat and many more. However, rituals as a routine by individuals may not necessarily require animal sacrifice. Each of the material used has its own symbolical meanings thus it is important in the practice. For instance, rice, chicken or plant leaves symbolizes abundance, sculptured stone of a man is a symbol of good health and longer life. Rice wine or any other wine is always sipped to maintain friendly relationship with the living and the dead. It is to be offered freely as means to acknowledge the bountiful



harvest from *Kabunyan*, the Almighty. Also, carved wood standing as the guardian of the rice granary is a sign of abundance and sustainability, salted meat also is for abundance, sharing and generosity. Necklace like boar necklace, which symbolizes people's strength, or armlet are for protection. Live ember or fire for life and strength against the various elements of nature, water for longer life with cleansing effect, fire as acknowledgment to be first produced by *Kabunyan* and for an inspired spirit to kindle or rekindle friendship and the spear, bolo, shield are for security tools.

Moreover, lead officiant in a ritual must meet certain criteria's before he is said to be authorized to perform such ritual. He must be knowledgeable of the community event, can articulate messages of signs and symbols, trustworthy, unselfish, responsible, not envious, culturally inclined and a peace maker through indigenous strategies. Also, he must have the ability to establish relationship with nature (Fiar-od, 2009).

Dancing, chanting and drinking in rituals, give life to the event. Colored *tapis* is associated with happy events while dark colors are associated with sad events except with the *isnags* of Apayao. Gongs are also giving sounds as a symbol announcing that a feast of thanksgiving is ongoing. It drives evil spirits and calls for good spirits to give their blessings. This instrument gives sound to convey unity, cohesion and solidarity towards the attainment of a singular and unified vision for development and industrialization. It also symbolizes the highland culture of the Cordilleran's being optimistic in their outlook.

Ways of Transmitting Cultural Practices

Cordillera rituals are being transmitted from generation down to another generation word of mouth. Culture is not static. It changes or is modified or is gradually lost

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from time to time, but it is the very nature of culture that it will be passed on from generation to generation, even in its modified form, before it is completely lost.

According to Cliff as cited by Bag-ayan (2010), culture is divided into two categories, the material culture which includes physical objects, resources and others which can be preserved in museums and the non-material culture such as the nonphysical ideas that people have in their culture that are used to shape the peoples thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

According to Bag-ayan (2010), cultural rituals cannot be preserved in museums. However it can be documented thus, the performance of the ritualistic events, reciting of the rites and executing cultural activities can help in maintaining the culture from generation to generation.

Meanwhile, Nuval (2010) stated in his conclusions that while elders play an important role in the passing down of cultural practices, youth's acceptance and willingness to learn the cultural practices are essential to the protection of the cultures. Passing cultures starts from using the word *Igorot* to describe culture of the *Igorot* people, for the term, "*Igorot*", is itself a cultural heritage to be preserved. Other BIBAKS are already conducting informal sessions with the youth teaching them some of the elements of our culture. Youth should be taught some of the common dances and rituals like what is *begnas*, what is *senga*, what is *babayas*, what is a *tayao*, what is a *tadok*, what is *uy-ua-uy* and others. Also, the youth should know when these dances are being performed, what are their religious significance, etc. Orient the youth with some of the socio-political institutions or oral traditions, such as the *sipat* or *bodong* of the *Kalingas*, the *hudhud* of



the Ifugao's, the *ullalim* of the Kalingas, the *lawa* or *inayan* of the *Aplais*. What is *dap-ay* or *ator*, what is *ebgan orolog*. Another way of promoting the *Igorot* culture to the youth is to collect and preserve photos and printed literature about *Igorot* culture and review these printed materials with the youth (Botengan, 2003).

Although, it was said earlier that rituals are being transmitted by word of mouth, Faba-an (2007) claimed that it is helpful for the rituals to be put into writing and other means of documenting such as electronic format about the culture, the artifacts and the detailed process of the culture because the old folks who know the original performance of the ritual may soon be gone.

Changes in Cultures

According to George Mclean, culture gives the people a sense to a meaningful living of a universe and it provides social rules that make people significant to the members of the universe. In the modern period where there is cultural diversity and also some say that peoples culture still remains and cannot be easily removed and the people don't make a move on how to actually preserve this cultures in the course of time it will be gone. Culture also represents an adaptation or adjustments to the various conditions of life including the physical and, social and supernatural environment.

Further, Mclean added that there are actually two types of culture, the material and the non-material. Material culture is the objects created by in a given society while non-material are the norms, laws and customs of a given society.



With the rise of modernization especially the continuous existence of technology, youth of today adopt the modern ways of living disregarding the old traditions of their culture.

METHODOLOGY

Local and Time of the Study

The study was conducted at Mankayan, Benguet (Figure 1) specifically Barangay Balili. It is one of the twelve Barangays of the municipality of Mankayan. It has a distance of approximately six kilometers away from Barangay Poblacion, Mankayan starting from the national highway and approximately ninety eight kilometers from Baguio City. Balili is located in the North East part of Mankayan Benguet (Figure 2). It is the third largest barangay of the municipality in terms of area and population.

Barangay Balili is the target place of the study because bulk of the farmlands of the municipality is located in this area and some farmers here are still practicing *Denet*. It has an agricultural land area of 1, 523 hectares (MPDO Mankayan, Benguet). Most of the area was cultivated for agricultural purposes. Residents of this barangay depend on agriculture as the source of their food and income.

The study was conducted from January to February 2013.

Respondents of the Study



The seven key informants were purposively selected following the given criteria: the respondents is a resident of Barangay Balili, must be knowledgeable about *Denet*, can perform the ritual and should be familiar with the different rules and materials in performing the practice.





Figure 1. Map of Benguet showing the locale of the study, the municipality of Mankayan

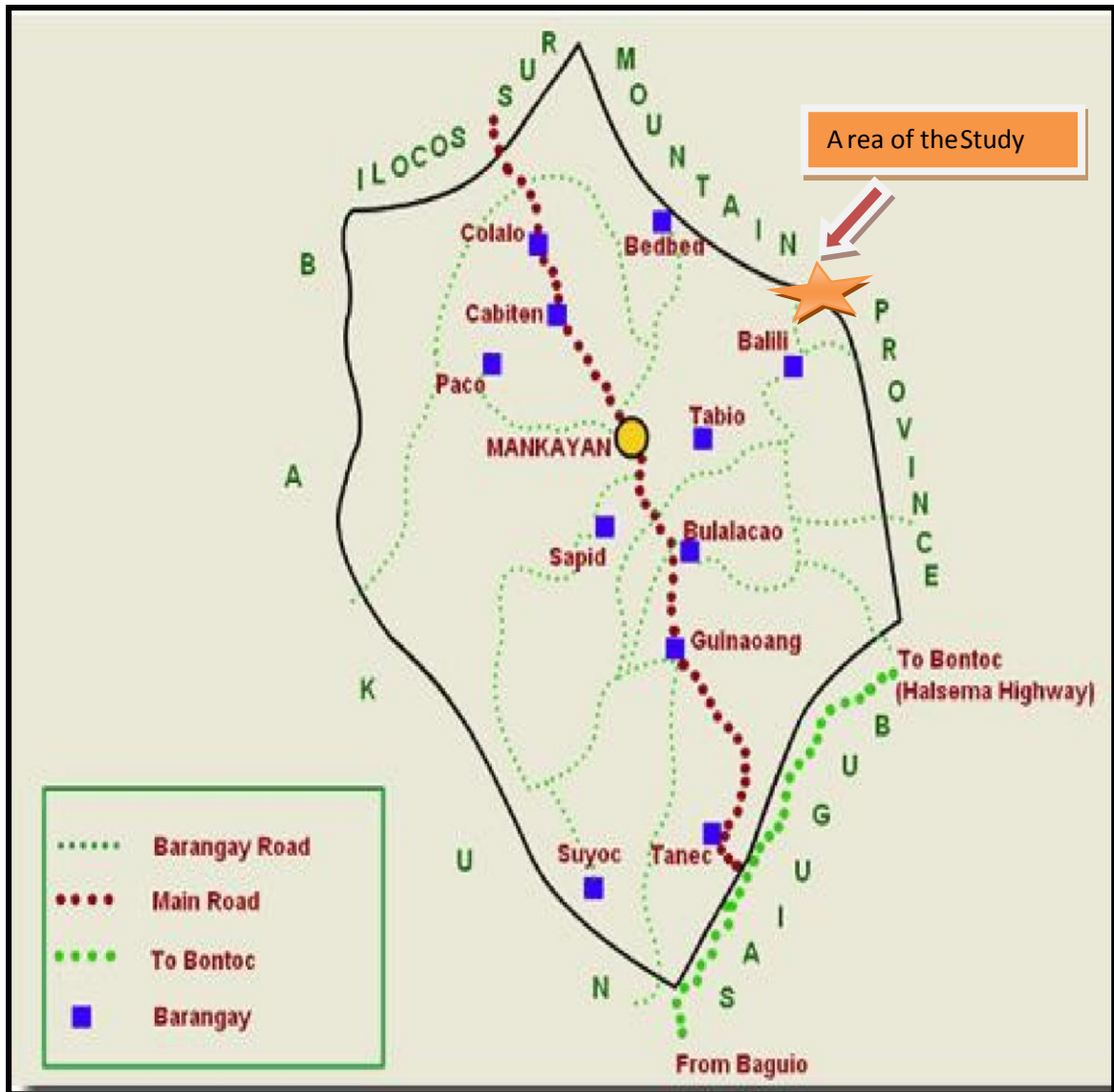


Figure 2. Map of the Municipality of Mankayan showing the location of the study, Barangay Balili

Aside from the key informants, 30 respondents were chosen from the residents using the following criteria: must be a resident of the target place; solely dependent on farming as source of livelihood; and must at least tried practicing the ritual or able to witness and participate in the said practice.

Moreover, for the reliability of the answers in the 7th objective about the sustainability of *Denet*, the researcher added 30 respondents from the community who were knowledgeable about the ritual but may or may not have attended the ritual during the conduct of the study.

Data Collection

Collection of the data was done personally by the researcher. Face to face interview was conducted in the field and guided questionnaires were administered to the respondents. These questions were divided into two categories namely the socio demographic profile of the respondents and the different processes involved in performing *Denet* as an agricultural practice.

Also, for easy understanding and less barriers, mother language specifically Kankana-ey was used in asking the questions to the respondents, determining the communicated values, determining how the elders transmit *Denet* to the younger generation, the perceived significance of *Denet* to the farmers, environment and to the community and in identifying the changes, challenges faced by the community in performing the ritual was also considered.



Data Gathered

The data gathered focused primarily on the different processes of the ritual *Denet*. The communicated values, the perceived significance of the ritual to the farmers, environment and to the community, challenges and changes faced by the community in performing *Denet* were also considered.

Also, photos were collected during the actual performance of *Denet* in one of the gardens in Balili, Mankayan, Benguet.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were consolidated, tabulated and analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequency counts and percentages. It also applied narrative presentation in discussing the data gathered. Results of the study were documented in a booklet.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Among the thirty seven respondents, there were seven elders of Balili, Mankayan who were the key informants of the study. They were the elders who performed the said ritual and are knowledgeable about the different characteristics of *Denet*.

Table 1 shows the socio demographic profile of the key informants that were categorized according to age, sex, address, civil status and the number of years that they performed *Denet*.

The key informants were asked to narrate the legend of *Denet*, enumerate the different processes of the ritual, who are authorized to perform the ritual and what are the purposes in performing the rituals. Furthermore, they were the ones who enumerated the changes that occurred in the practice, the threats they encountered that affected the ritual and the possible ways of transmitting the ritual to the younger generations.

On the other hand, aside from the key informants, Table 2 presented the socio demographic profile of the thirty respondents who were the residents of the barangay who performed *Denet* in their garden or able to witness and participated in any event where *Denet* in being performed. They were also categorized in terms of age, sex, address and civil status.



Table 1. Profile of the key informants

NAME	SEX	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	NO. OF YEARS IN PERFORMING <i>DENET</i>
Angyok Mangapac	Male	86	Married	60
Doroteo Wag-e	Male	82	Married	56
Liwayan Ladyog	Male	80	Married	45
Camewet Bunagan	Male	80	Widowed	40
Arthur Lab-isen	Male	60	Married	33
Andress Agatlao	Male	56	Married	32
Bosilan Galidan	Male	68	Married	28

Age. Eight (26.67%) of the respondents belonged to the age range of 31-35 followed by 26-30 (20%). These findings may imply that middle age-farmers perform *Denet* more than the younger farmers.

Sex. Twenty six (86.67 %) of the respondents are males and four (13.33) are females. This finding implies that males attended *Denet* more compared to females. Aside from the fact that males usually are the bread winner and are the ones who stay in the garden, the ritual also prohibits females to attend.



According to Bosilan Galidan, females are not allowed to attend because the ritual will bring bad luck instead of good luck to the crops. An example of this would be the formation of cracks in potato tubers.

Civil status. Nineteen (63.33%) of the respondents were married and eleven (36.67%) were single.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY (n=30)	PERCENTAGE (%)
20-25	3	10
26-30	6	20
31-35	8	26.67
36-40	5	16.67
41-45	1	3.33
46-50	2	6.67
51-55	3	10
56-60	2	6.67
TOTAL	30	100

Sex

Male 26 86.67



Female	4	13.33
TOTAL	30	100
Civil Status		
Married	19	63.33
Single	11	36.67
TOTAL	30	100

Processes of *Denet* Ritual

There were several processes in performing the ritual *Denet* in Balili, Mankayan (Table 3).

Before the ritual.

Consultation. When a farmer decides to perform *Denet* in his garden whether for thanksgiving before harvesting, protection of his crops against unwanted pest and diseases and for fertility of the soil, he consults a „mambunong“ whom he wishes to perform the said ritual. According to Arthur Lab-isen, *Denet* is not so strict in who will be performing the ritual. He stated that the officiant of *Denet* is not necessary a „mambunong“ or an elder. As long as he knows the exact process of the ritual and knows all the prayers uttered, he can be qualified to perform the ritual. Upon the agreement is confirmed, the elder and the sponsor farmer will set the date and place where the ritual will be done.

In the study of Camiling (2012) about *Denet* in Buguias, Benguet, the ritual is being done before harvesting. However, according to Angyok Mangapac, one of the respondents of the study, *Denet* is to be performed depending on what the farmer wishes to achieve. If



it is for the purpose of driving away pest, the ritual is being done as soon as the farmer noticed abnormalities in his crops. If it is for the fertility of the soil and protection against soil erosion and damages brought by calamities, *Denet* is being done before planting. If it is for thanksgiving because the farmer expects a bountiful harvest and is hopeful sell his crops at higher cost, *Denet* will be done before harvesting.



Figure1. Part of the garden is being cleaned by the farmers where the ritual is to be performed



Figure 2. Farmer sets-up the pudong near the area where the ritual is to be done to signify that Denet is taking place

During the Ritual.

Preparation. To start with, cleaning the area, any part of the garden but usually at the center in between columns, and preparing for the materials to be used (Figure 1) are done. The farmers will prepare wood and five pieces of runo grass (bellang) to be used in setting-up the *pudong*.

Setting-up of the pudong. *Pudong* is a symbol set-up in the fields to signify that *Denet* is being done in the field thus; this should be the first to be set-up. In Balili,

Mankayan, *pudong* is made up of only five pieces of runo grass wrapped around a wood and usually placed near the area where the ritual is to be performed (Figure 2).

However, in Buguias, as founded by Camiling (2012), *pudong* is also the first being prepared during the ritual, placed at the corner of the garden but is made up of only 13 pieces of runo grass.

Praying for the chicken to be sacrificed. After setting up the *pudong*, the „mambunong“, sponsor farmer and another participant will hold the three native chickens as sacrificial animals. The elder will invoke (Figure 3) the unseen spirits and ancestors.

Table 4 shows a sample prayer uttered during this stage.



Figure 3. The Mambunong (first from right) is seen here praying for the chicken to be blessed before butchering. Beside him is the sponsor farmer *Butchering the*

chicken. After the invocation of the unseen spirits and ancestors, the „mambunong“ will give the chicken to the farmers so they can butcher it. In butchering the animals, the wings of the chicken are being whipped (*pinikipik*) until muscles swell (Figure 4). Cutting the neck (*mauguan*) may bring bad luck to the farmer and his family because blood was shed on the ground.

Again, Camiling found out that two native. Chickens are being used in Buguias while in Mankayan, three native chicken, one rooster and two hens, are being used as sacrificial animals.

Moreover, in the study of Baucas (2003), he stated that the „manbunong“ checks the bile or biles of the chicken which if appears favorable and appropriate, it can prevent illness and bring progress to the farmer and his family.

Table 4. Sample prayer invoking the unseen spirits and ancestors

KANKANAEY LANGUAGE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
<p><i>Dakato ay ap-apo ya toton-od mi ay natey,</i> <i>umali kayo ta pansasangoan tako nan denet</i> <i>ay insagana mi. Mantitinulong tako ay</i> <i>mangidaton sinan ritual tan siya di inya-at</i> <i>yo ed idi. Kanayon da ay ayagan dakayo ay</i> <i>mangidaton ya mangikararag sin Denet tan</i> <i>amo da ay wada kayo am-in sisa. Dakayo ay</i> <i>panglakayen ed idi, kanayon ay maayagan</i> <i>kayo tan siged ya maresrespeto kayo.</i></p>	<p>(To you our dead relatives, come and let us perform <i>Denet</i>. Let us help one another in offering because you always did this ritual in the past. They always call on you to offer and pray over the <i>Denet</i> because you are all there. To you leaders in the past, to you elders in the past, they always call on you because you were good and respected bless this ritual so there will be bountiful harvest and more</p>



Bendisyunan yo nan Denet mi tapno chicken. Bless and give more graces to the mabunga nan maapit tapno umad-ado din family.)

manok Bendisyonan yo et idawat yo di sifed sin pamilya.

Reading of the biles. The chicken biles will be given to the „mambunong“ so that he can read the meanings (Figure 5). According to Arthur Lab-isen, good biles are those in proper position facing straight downward and is not covered by the chicken liver. Camewet Bunagan added that there are chicken with no biles and there are with two biles, which mean that “swerte” (good luck) awaits the farmer. The farmer may again butcher another native chicken when he goes home to receive the good luck.



Figure 4. Farmers butchering the sacrificial animals during the ritual whipping the wings (“pinicpic” method) of the chicken



Figure 5. The „mambunong“ reads the biles of the native chicken to see if reflects good signs

Before, if the biles reflect bad signs, the „mambunong“ requires another sacrificial animal until such time that good biles will be found. The key informants claimed that in instances that good biles cannot be found, the tendency is the offering of pigs. However, due to changes in the society, three chickens are enough to perform the ritual not minding the biles.

Invocation and pouring of the ginebra san miguel. While the chickens are being cooked, the „mambunong“ will pour a locally-available liquor such as Ginebra San Miguel (to substitute rice wine), at the foot of the *pudong* after invoking (Figure 6).

The key informants said that wines or liquor are being offered for them to communicate with the unseen beings or to their dead ancestors and unseen spirits like *Kabunyan* to come down and join the ritual. The sample prayer for the wine or any liquor, which they called *peltic*, is shown in Table 5.

After the „mambunong“ prayed for the wine, he will pour it at the foot of the *pudong*. Arthur Lab-isen said that this is to offer drinks to the unseen spirits who came down to join the ritual. After this, the „mambunong“ will put chicken feathers around the *pudong* symbolizing that *Denet* had just took place in the area.

Table 5. Sample prayer for wine or any liquor

KANKANAHEY LANGUAGE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
<p><i>Ayagan mi amin ay toton-od ya iiba ay natey si acsidenti ya suicide. Sapay kuma ta naurnos kayo ay umali ay makitunos sinan panagdenet mi. umali kayo ta inumen tako nan san miguel ay insaganami.</i></p>	<p>(We call all the relatives who died through accidents. May you come together in an agreement of goodwill in performing this ritual. Come and let us drink the wine we prepared.)</p>





Figure 6. The „mambunong“ seen in the picture is invoking the wine while calling the names of the sponsor farmer’s dead ancestors to join the ritual.

Praying and distribution of the cooked chicken meat. When the chicken meat is already cooked, the „mambunong“ will again pray for the meat. Table 6 shows a sample prayer for the cooked meat of the native chicken to be blessed.

After the meat was already cooked, it will be served to the people present in the ritual. According to the key informants, the chicken meat should be eaten in the garden and should not be brought home.

Moreover, key informants added that ladies are forbidden to join the ritual. They said that it will bring bad luck to the farmer and his crops if women will participate in the ritual.

They may watch how the ritual is being done but are not allowed to eat the chicken meat. According to Liwayan Ladyog, this was only a belief of the „mambunong“ that if women will join the ritual, the ritual will not be good. An example of the bad effects of women joining in the ritual may be the formation of cracks in potato tubers.

Table 6. Sample prayer to the unseen spirits and Kabunyan to bless the cooked chicken meat

KANKANAHEY LANGUAGE

Ayagan mi amin ay toton-od ya iiba ay natey si accidenti ya suicide. Sapay kuma ta naurnos kayo ay umali ay makitunos sinan panagdenet mi. umali kayo ta inumen tako nan san miguel ay insaganami. Sik-a ay Kabunyan ay kangatuan, napuan di amin ay pamindisyon, bendisyunam nan idaton mi ay manok ken sik-a. Maawagan kayo (nagan di tuton-od ya iib-a ay natey) dawaten mi ay mantinulong kayo ay mangidaton sinan nay Denet ta siya di siged ay in-aat yo ed idi. Kanayon da ay man adawag en dakayo ay mangidaton ya mangikararad sin Denet tan wada kayo am-in es-sa.

Maawagan kayo (nagan di panglakayen ay natey), apapon di mambunong ed idi. Ayagan da dakayo tan siged ay marespeto kayo asi maawagan da pati en kabigat ay nangibingay sin Denet sin epogaw ed kalutaan, bendisyunan Denet mi et din mula adu di lames na duwan maibingay abe di swerte sin ib-a na.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

(We call all the relatives who died through accidents. May you come together in an agreement of goodwill in performing this ritual. Come and let us drink the wine we prepared.



We ask you almighty God, the source of all the blessings, bless this chicken, bless this *Denet* ritual offering.

We call on you (names of dead relatives) may we ask all of you to come together to offer this ritual since by tradition you always did so. They always call all of you to offer and pray for the *Denet* because you are all there.

We call on you (name of dead priest/ elder), the leader of all priest in the past. They call on you because you were always good and respected. Then we call on goods *Pati* and *Kabigat* who shared this practice to the people of the earth, to bless this ritual so that there is lack, bountiful harvest and good graces to the relatives.)



After the ritual.

After the ritual, all who participated in the ritual may eat the chicken meat. If other farmers want to join, they are allowed even if they did not attend the ritual. Kids are also allowed to eat the chicken meat. However, women are not allowed to eat in the ritual.

Values Communicated in *Denet*

The respondents were able to enumerate some values being communicated in *Denet* (Table 7).

Enhancement of cooperation among farmers. All of the respondents claimed that *Denet* can enhance their cooperation as farmers. According to them, they considered *Denet* as their meeting period for talking and sharing ideas with each other especially how to manage new arising diseases of their crops, bankruptcy, best ways to take good care of their crops and more topics related to plants.

They claimed that farmers rarely meet each other as groups to share new knowledge about farming due to their hectic schedule. However, with *Denet* being practiced, they can create an avenue to communicate with each other.

Honor to ancestors. The respondents claimed that performing *Denet* is one of their ways to show that they honor their ancestors. According to them, following the rituals and practices started by their ancestors is respecting and honoring them even if they are already dead.



In the process of performing *Denet*, one of the prayers uttered by the “mambunong” is thanking their ancestors for starting the rituals and for continuous guidance of the farmer.

Taray (2008) explained that inviting their ancestors and mentioning their names during rituals is a way of Benguet people in remembering and recognizing each of their ancestors. He also added that the persistence of ritual performance honoring their ancestors, show the Benguet understanding, that ancestors play a major role in fortifying and maintaining their solidarity as a kin group and as an indigenous community.

Respect to elders. The respondents claimed that they learned how to respect elders in *Denet*. According to them, elders of the community know better than them, accepting the facts that they (elders) have more experience about the different things than them.

Renewal of community relationships. The respondents stated that *Denet* renews their relationship within the community. They claimed that relationship in the community can be renewed and can be further enhanced through community gatherings like rituals. They added that mingling with each other is a way of renewing the relationship of the people within the community.

According to Taray (2008), during ritual performances, people are expected let go of their individual preoccupations in order to join the community in honoring, remembering and reconnecting with their ancestors.

Table 7. Values Communicated in *Denet*



VALUES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %	RANK
	N=37		
Enhancement of cooperation among farmers	37	100	1
Honor to ancestors	35	94.59	2
Respect to elders	32	86.49	3
Renewal of community relationships	15	40.54	4

*Multiple responses

Perceived Significance of *Denet*

To the farmers. According to the respondents, performing *Denet* gives them prosperity like high cost of crops and bountiful harvest. They stated that it is their responsibility to give thanksgiving ritual for having bountiful harvest and for the protection of their crops.

To the environment. The respondents claimed that they believe that the ritual protects their crops from any unwanted pests and diseases. Also, they claimed that the ritual prevents their field from soil erosion caused by calamities as well as prevent their soil from infertility but rather would give healthier plants and bountiful harvest.

To the community. According to the respondents, cooperation and help from the community especially from their co-farmers is being strengthened resulting to



establishment of good relationships with each other. Through the ritual, the respondents added that they meet friends and relatives when performing *Denet*.

On the study conducted by Camiling (2012) her respondents also claimed that *Denet* is significant to the farmers because they find satisfaction and fulfillment in their lives since the ritual is viewed as an act of thanksgiving and prosperity and bountiful harvest and it prevents them from bankruptcy. They also added that when conducting the ritual, and their farm is not productive, their crops grow healthy and they will also have bountiful harvest.

Moreover, the respondent narrated his basis in believing that indeed, *Denet* is important. According to him, when he followed the suggestion of an elder to perform *Denet* in his garden before planting, his use of pesticides was reduced compared to the previous cropping seasons because pests in his crops was minimized. Also, when thunderstorm (dalalo) came, his plants were not affected. The farms of his neighbors were stricken, however.

This findings imply that *Denet* is important to the farmers, environment and to the community.

Transmission of *Denet* to the Younger Generation

In Balili, Mankayan, all of the key informants said they learned *Denet* by accompanying the elders during the times they conduct *Denet*. While listening to the prayers uttered by the elders, they tried to memorize and cite those prayers by themselves. After continuous time of going out with the „mambunong“ during the ritual, the elders



claimed that their knowledge and capabilities to perform the ritual improved and been polished, thus, after the death of the „mambunong“, they also tried to continue the ritual.

With their experience, they also believed that youth if today can learn how to perform the ritual if they are willing to join them when they conduct *Denet* and are also willing to learn *Denet*.

This situation strengthens what Nuval (2011) stated that aside from the important role of the elders in teaching the ritual, youth acceptance and willingness to learn the cultural practices are essential to the protection of the cultures.

Further, the key informants claimed that to let the youth be familiarized about the practice, they narrated the legend of *Denet* during vacant times like lunch breaks and are also more willing to teach those who are interested to learn about the processes and the prayers being uttered in the practice.

Cliff, as cited by Bag-ayan (2010), said material culture can be preserved in museums but non-material culture like rituals are only being preserved and are being transmitted through documentation while rituals are being performed and by reciting the rites and executing cultural activities. Moreover, McLuhan once said that culture is being transmitted to younger generations through words of mouth.

Changes in the Practice

Just like some cultures, there are also some inevitable changes in the ritual *Denet*, as shown in Table 8.



Chicken meat. The key informants said that native chicken should be ideally sacrificed in performing the ritual. However, due to limited number of native chicken, commercial chicken can also be used as long as there will be a sacrificial animal to be offered.

Moreover the key informants stated that the number of chicken to be butchered is not dependent on bile reading. Before, if the bile shows a bad sign, butchering continues until a good bile is seen from a chicken. Now, three chickens are enough to sum-up all the animals that should be offered to perform the ritual because it is too costly.

Pudong. Just like the study conducted by Camiling (2012) in Buguias, *pudong* in Mankayan was also put-up in the different corners of the field. But now, the key informants stated that it could be placed anywhere in the field. However, usually it is placed near where the ritual is being performed.

Rice Wine. Since rice wine is the usual beverage of the Igorot before especially during occasions, it is also being used during *Denet*. But now that many kind of alcohols were manufactured and the fact that farmers seldom make rice wines, the key informants said that *tapey* can be replaced with any intoxicated drinks. According to them, it will not affect the ritual.

Reading the biles. The number of sacrificial animals needed in the ritual before depends on the position of the biles, if it reflects good or bad signs. Now, three native chickens are enough for the ritual not minding the biles. This is because not all the people who perform *Denet* can afford to buy plenty of sacrificial animals.



According to the key informants, as generation changes, the ritual also has some changes as long as for the improvement of mankind.

Table 8. Changes in performing *Denet*

CHANGES	BEFORE	AFTER
Chicken meat	Native chicken	Commercial chicken are used as substitute
Wines	Rice wine	Any liquor



Pudong	Placed in the four corner of the garden	One <i>pudong</i> is enough for the ritual
Reading the biles	Biles determine the number of chicken to be offered	Three biles, regardless of the signs, are enough for the ritual.

Challenges in the Practice of *Denet*

The key informants and the respondents have identified three major challenges that they encountered in practicing *Denet* as shown in Table 9. The respondents claimed that proliferation of Christian belief is one challenge in *Denet*.

Moreover, the respondents claimed that the lack of interest among the youth is also a challenge. Liwayan, one of the key informants, said that youth of today prefer joining modern activities than participating in the traditional cultures. He stated that when they tried to call the presence of the youth to participate in the ritual, they always have alibis. But when someone calls them to parties and other outings, they have time to go. He added that youth today spends more time in front of the television or computer than participate on rituals.

Table 9. Perceived Challenges in the practice of *Denet*



CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RANK
n=37 %			
Lack of interest among the youth	34	91.89	1
Proliferation of religious belief	26	70.27	2
Economic Aspect	17	45.95	3

*Multiple Responses

Economic aspect is also another challenge. The respondents claimed that the fact that the price of native chicken gets high, farmers sometimes cannot afford to conduct *Denet* in their garden although they wanted to do so because they need to buy the sacrificial animals. They claimed that not all of them are native chicken to use in the ritual.

Perception on the Sustainability of *Denet* as an Agricultural Practice

Table 10 shows the response of the respondents regarding the sustainability of *Denet* as an agricultural practice.

Forty nine (73.13%) of the respondents responded that *Denet* is worth sustaining as an agricultural practice. According to them, the ritual is a legacy that their ancestor left and should be continuously be practiced and be followed in honor to them. Moreover, the respondents claimed that the ritual should be sustained because they believe that it is helpful to the farmers as well as to the protection of the environment.



Table 10. Sustainability of *Denet* as an agricultural practice

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY (N=67)	PERCENTAGE (%)	RANK
Yes	49	73.13	1
No	18	26.87	2

*Multiple responses

Eighteen (26.87%) of the respondents responded no when asked about then sustainability of *Denet* as an agricultural practice. They stated that they are now living in a Christian community offering new teachings. They said *Denet* is considered a culture. From the past thus a ritual of the pagans before. They suggested that instead from conducting the ritual, farmers should offer thanksgiving to God through prayers. Also, the respondents' reason in answering no was because of the cost of the animal offerings in *Denet*.

These findings imply that although new sets of beliefs are coming in, *Denet* is a ritual still worth sustaining because of the given importance cited by the respondents.

Denet Booklet

The size of the booklet is 8.268x11.693 and yellowish in color. It is all about the ritual containing the legend of *Denet* (See Figure 9). It has also the different processes of the ritual, the different materials used, the purpose of conducting the ritual, the prayers uttered by the elder in the ritual, and a short introduction about culture. Finally, the references of the material were also included.



PERFORMANCE OF DENET AS AN AGRICULTURAL RITUAL



Figure 9. The produced booklet (front page)

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study was conducted at Balili, Mankayan, Benguet to determine the different processes in practicing *Denet*; determine the communicated values in practicing *Denet*; determine the perceived significance of performing *Denet* to the farmers, environment and to the community; determine how the elders transmit *Denet* to the younger generation; identify the changes in the practice of *Denet*; identify the challenges being encountered in the practice of *Denet* and determine the perceptions of the respondents regarding the sustainability of *Denet* as an agricultural practice.

Also, this study produced a booklet about *Denet* and its processes.

There were seven elders in the community who were chosen as the key informants of the study. Also, the other information about the ritual was gathered from the thirty farmers who had performed *Denet* in their garden or at least witnessed or participated during the performance of the ritual. In answering one of the objectives, another twenty respondents from the community was added during the conduct of the study.

Personal interviews with the key informants and all the respondents were done to gather the necessary information about the ritual. A digital camera was used in gathering photos for documenting the said ritual.

Denet is a ritual for practiced by some farmers in Balili, Mankayan to drive away unwanted pest and diseases of crop, protect the soil from erosion and infertility, thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest and hopes for prosperity.



There are several processes in performing *Denet* from before, during and after performing the ritual with the necessary materials.

Furthermore, the respondents claimed that *Denet* is significant to the farmers, community and to the environment. Thus they believe that the ritual is worth sustaining. Moreover, the respondents added that just like other rituals there were several changes in *Denet* brought by the change of generation. Also, there are challenges that they are encountering in the performance of *Denet*.

Conclusions

After the study was conducted, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. *Denet* has different processes being followed before, during and after performing the ritual;
3. *Denet* contains values relevant to the farmers, community and to the environment;
4. *Denet* performs significant roles to the farmers, environment and to the community;
5. Participation and appreciation of the youth tops in the ways on how *Denet* can be transmitted to the younger generation;
6. Just like other rituals, there are also several changes in the practice of *Denet*;



7. Lack of interest among the youth is the number one challenge or threat faced in the practice of *Denet*;

8. *Denet* is worth sustaining as an agricultural practice because of its given importance to the people of Balili, Mankayan.

Recommendations

1. The youth should participate regularly and try to be active during the performance of *Denet* to appreciate it
2. Related studies maybe conducted in other areas of the region to see the difference and similarities of the ritual.
3. The farmers should continuously practice *Denet* because of its importance to them, to the community and to the environment
4. The values being communicated in *Denet* should be retained.
5. The booklet produced in this study may be used by the people of Balili, Mankayan as a source of information for the ritual.



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