

# THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AND CONCEPTS OF GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES OF THE TRIBAL FILIPINOS IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR

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## ABSTRACT

*The study describes the socio-political and economic systems as well as the concepts of government and development issues of the tribal Filipinos in the province of Ilocos Sur.*

*The 456 respondents are from the interior municipalities of the province particularly: Ipanay, Burgos, Nagbukel, Salcedo, San Emilio, Galimuyod, Cervantes, Alim, Suyo, Lidlicda, Sugpon, Zgay, del Pilar and Quirino. The tribal Filipinos are subjects of great interest not only among cultural anthropologists but also enthusiasts in archaeology and tourism.*

*This study describes the colorful and unique culture of the tribal Filipinos in Ilocos Sur. It attempted to look into the stock of information the tribal groups possess regarding political and government concepts as well as the socio-economic systems and development issues which are strongly influencing their life. It also tried to find out determinants of their progressivist systems vis-a-vis their traditional concepts and practices. Their educational attainment and age did not play a very significant influence on their progressivist systems.*

## INTRODUCTION

Rich not only in natural resources, historic and scenic spots, the Philippines is also a vast store-house of folk culture, a unique culture characterized by colorful traditions, folklores and artifacts which found a remarkable place in History and Tourism. This is possessed by the hardy mountain tribes found in the interior municipalities of the province of Ilocos Sur. Said culture manifests a highly creative mind which seemingly resulted from the meditative atmosphere of the isolated mountains where these tribes lived. Proofs to these are: the wonderful rice terraces reflecting a highly skillful engineering art.

intricate designs of customs and tools and solemn rites for worship, for the dead and other rituals such as those for wedding ceremonies and planting crops.

Hopefully, this study is expected to help the religious as well as the general educators of the Tribal groups, especially for their awareness and appreciation of their indigenous culture, to understand their mode of behavior so they can be realistic and discerning in the process of fuller and more authentic christianization. It is also hoped that this study can help other attempts made by both government enthusiasts and lay people for

cultural revival. The study can also provide data for cultural identity and revival, as well as the preservation of Ilocano culture and its history. This study can also yield results which can be fruitful sources of historical facts needed as reference materials for history as a subject and for other related social sciences. They can also provide materials for tourism projects and programs.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study attempted to: typify the Tribal Filipino household heads of Ilocos Sur in terms of their demographic and socio-cultural characteristics as well as their political and government systems which are progressivist vis-a-vis the traditional systems; assess their stock of information and reactions/awareness of the national and local government problems/issues and of past and on-going development projects/programs and; find out the determinants of their progressivist concepts and systems vis-a-vis the traditional and adverse concepts/issues.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Government scholars, anthropologists, and all interested people from all walks of life both in the country and foreign nations, have been making several surveys on culture and modes of behavior particularly about tribal groups in the various parts of the country and manifestations of their valued enthusiastic attempts can be seen in various museums for public display. Noteworthy to account are:

The study of Rev. Domenico Gaioni on the cultural, social, religious and economic development of the tribes in Bangilo Malibcong, Abra called Gubangs, emphasized on the immaterial culture which is the trait of bravery. Bravery was a great prestige and honor. This explains the unusual tough-mindedness of the non-Christian

tribes. Fr. Gaioni also accounted on their complex and solemn rituals in their systems of worship, marriage and burial of the dead.

Manuel Terrenal also accounted on the cultural aspects of the tribes in Abra describing the problem of illness, its causes and treatment. Letty Miranda in her "Tingguian" concepts of magic and omen accounted on the love charm, popularly known as tagi-root. Augusto Miranda accounted on burial customs among the tribes in the country.

William Henry Scott in his "Discovery of the Igorots" accounted on the political and economic life of the Igorots during the Pre-Spanish and Spanish regimes. Don Alonso Martin Quirante also accounted on the Tingguians' economic and political systems.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The study made use of the descriptive method of research. Data were gathered directly through the interview technique and indirectly through the questionnaire method.

Presentation of data was done by both documentary analysis and descriptive method, with photo documentation for purposes of emphasis.

Frequency and percentage distribution were employed in determining the general profile, economic profile and the analysis of the political systems of the respondents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Respondents by Municipality and Tribal Group

Table I representing the distribution of respondents by municipality and by tribal group shows that the biggest tribal group that responded are the Itnegs followed by

the Bagos and the Igorots respectively. The floated questionnaires in Galimuyod **were** not all retrieved because of transportation problems. Besides, there seemed *to* be an indifference of the natives in most barangays of the town.

Table 2 gives a picture of the socio- demographic characteristics of the respondents which shows that the biggest age-group of the total respondents is between 30-39 with ages 60 and above as the least. For status, 80.04% are married where most are household heads. The average number of children in each household is 2-4 as per 40.79% respondents; the most common specific location of the respondents' residence is along mountain area as per 41.23% the household age dependency among the tribes is 0-14 as per 69.96% and age 60 and above as per 16.01%. There are also 60.09% of age 15 and above who are dependent, making it a common economic problem of the respondents, and for their migration behavior factor, marriage ranks first as per 49.12% followed by misunderstanding with other tribes in their locality; their most common religious affiliation is catholic, as per 30.26% followed by 17.32% who are Iglesia ni Cristo and Jehovah's Witnesses, 13.16%. Most of the respondents (16.67%) didn't finish elementary schooling; 15.35% didn't finish high school. Though 7.89% have no schooling, 7.89% finished college degrees/courses, and 8.11% didn't finish college. Dialects spoken by the respondents are Bago, Ilncg, Igorot and Ibaloi, all mixed with Ilocano. There are 3.29% who can speak both Tagalog and English.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondents by Municipality and by Tribal Group

Tribal Group							TOTAL
Municipality	BAGO	ITNEG	IGOROT	IBALOI	KANKA-NA-EY	TING-GUIAN	
Nagbukcl	16	12	2				30
Burgos	6	16	14		2	2	40
Salcedo	20	6	3	1	1		31
Banayoyo	16	18	9	2	3		48
Lidlidda	6	23	3	2			34
Galimuyod	6	9	3	3	3		24
Suyo	8	18	5	2	3		36
Alilem	8	8	5	1	3		25
Sugpon	6	5	7	1	5	3	27
San Emilio	15	8	4		3		30
Del Pilar	9	6	7	6	3		31
Sigay	9	7	6	10	1	2	35
Quirino	10	7	8	6	3		34
Cervantes	5	6	3	8	9		31
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>456</b>

**Table 2.** Distribution of Respondents by Tribal Group and Their Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Bago	Itneg	Igorot	Ibaloi	Kanka-na-ey	Ting-guian	Total No.	%
<b>Age Distribution</b>								
20 - 29	32	28	22	14	12		108	23.68
30 - 39	44	52	21	14	8	6	145	11.80
40- 49	30	39	17	7	13		107	23.46
50 - 59	29	25	15	3	5		77	16.89
60 & above	5	5	4	4	1		19	4.17
<b>Civil Status</b>								
Single	18	23	9	2	3	2	57	12.50
Married	109	118	61	38	34	5	365	80.04
Widowed	13	8	9	2	2		34	7.46
<b>No. of Children in the Households</b>								
1- 4	52	63	34	19	15	1	186	40.79
5-8	43	28	14	10	14	1	110	24.12
9 & more	31	38	20	10	7		106	23.25
No response	14	20	11	3	3	3	54	11.84
<b>Specific Location of Residence</b>								
Poblacion	29	31	16	9	6	2	93	20.39
Rural Farm	48	52	38	12	10	2	162	35.53
Fishing Village	5	3	2	2	1		13	2.85
Mountain Area	58	63	23	19	22	3	188	41.23
<b>Household Dependency</b>								
0- 14 yrs.old Dependent	98	95	63	32	28	3	319	69.96
15 & above Independent	79	80	49	32	23	11	274	60.09
60 & above Independent	36	76	63	30	16	6	227	49.78
18 & above	67	76	63	30	16	6	258	56.58
60 & above	16	18	19	12	5	3	73	16.01
<b>Reason for Migration</b>								
Economic	21	18	10	7	3		60	13.16
Political misunderstanding w/ other tribes	8	14	6	3			32	7.02
Calamity	12	8	5	3			29	6.36
Marriage	62	69	42	21	26	4	224	49.12
No response	10	11	4	2	5		32	7.02

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Bago	Itneg	Igorot	Ibaloi	Kankana-ey	Tingguian	Total No.	%
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>								
Roman catholic	47	49	<b>18</b>	12	9	3	138	30.26
Protestant	14	6	5	2	3		30	6.58
Aglipayan	12	10	6	4	6	2	40	8.77
Iglesia ni Cristo	23	23	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	7		79	17.32
Methodist	<b>11</b>	12	12	3	5		<b>44</b>	9.65
Born Again	7	20	9	<b>4</b>	6		46	10.10
Jehovah's Witnesses	14	22	<b>11</b>	9	3		60	13.16
Others	7	4					<b>11</b>	2.41
No response	5	3					8	1.75
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
No schooling	5	12	9	5	3	2	36	7.89
Didn't finish elementary	27	16	12	9	9	3	76	16.67
Elem. graduate	19	29	10	6	4		68	14.91
Didn't finish high school	25	23	10	8	4		70	15.35
High school graduate	18	27	8	5	3		61	13.38
Didn't finish college	12	12	9	2	2		37	8.11
College grad.	11	13	9	1	2		36	7.89
Voc'l graduate	10	12	6	2	1		32	7.02
No response	13	5	6	4	<b>11</b>		40	8.80
<b>Dialect Spoken</b>								
Pure Ilocano	5	3	3	<b>1</b>			12	2.63
Ilocano, Bag	66	20	4	3			94	20.61
Ilocano, Bag Lineg	12	4	4	2	2	2	26	5.70
Ilocano, Itneg	8	40	2	2			52	11.40
Ilocano, Itneg. Igorot	3	4	14	3	3		27	5.92
Ilocano, Igorot Bago. Igorot.	10	8	25	1			45	9.87
Ilocano, Itneg	12	34	<b>11</b>	2	2		61	13.38
Ilocano, Ibaloi	7	10	2	20	1		41	9.00
Bago, Ibaloi, Igorot	6	3	7		1		17	3.73
Kankana-cy, Ilocano	1	2	1	2	21		27	5.92
Ibaloi, Igorot.								
Kankana-cy	1	3	2	2	4		14	2.63
Ilocano, Tingguian	2	4	1	2	1	3	11	1.41
Tagalog. English	4	7	1	2	1		15	3.29
No response	3	7	2	2	2		16	3.51

Table 3 represents their economic characteristics and gleaning from table, the most common primary sources of income are service jobs, as per 18.42%, which include domestic help, either domestic or abroad, transportation, beauty shop assistants, and housekeeping; next is sales, followed by agricultural work or farming as per 17.54%. Others are engaged in clerical or related work as per 14.91% 12.94% are professionals who compose the teaching groups and other white collar jobs. For those who retired, their pension is the main source of their income which can also provide support for their grandchildren going to school.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Respondents by Tribal Group and Their Economic Characteristics

Economic Characteristics	Bago	Itncg	Igorot	Ibaloi	Kanka-na-ey	Ting-guian	Total No.	%
<b>Primary Occupation</b>								
Professional	16	20	12	6	3		59	12.94
Tech'l & Rel. work	10	13	5	3	1		32	7.02
Adm./Mgr./ Executive	5	5	2				12	2.63
Clerical and rel. work	22	20	9	7	8	2	68	14.91
Sales	23	24	12	10	8	2	79	17.33
Agricultural Production	25	24	13	9	7	2	80	17.54
Service	5	6	4	2	2		19	4.17
Pension	28	29	16	5	6		84	18.42
Retired	2	3	2		2		9	1.97
	4	5	3		2		14	3.07
<b>Secondary Source of Income</b>								
Handicraft	5	6	3	2	2		18	3.95
Domesticated animal raising	47	46	15	12	9	3	132	28.95
Poultry	23	20	12	8	3	1	67	14.69
STL	4	3	4	3	3		17	3.73
Sales	18	23	16	6	6		69	15.13
Beauty Shop helper	3		4	2			10	2.19
Pension (ret.)	7	12	4	2	3		28	6.14
Aid from relatives abroad	7	4	2	2	2		17	3.73
Help Neighbor	20	24	18	5	7	3	77	16.89
Transport	6	3	5		3		17	3.73
No response		4					4	0.87

Source of Income of Other Household Members	Father	Mother	Children	Total	
				No.	%
Handicraft	9	18	20	47	10.31
Domesticated animal raising	47	59	42	148	32.46
Poultry	10	18	16	<b>44</b>	<b>9.65</b>
<b>S TL</b>	<b>11</b>	9	32	52	<b>11.40</b>
Sales	19	43	38	100	21.93
Beauty Shop Helper		16	34	<b>50</b>	10.96
Transport	15		20	35	7.68
Service(neighbor)		56	49	105	23.03
Pension (retiree)	16	18	12	46	10.09
Gift Abroad	18	21		39	<b>8.55</b>

Above table also shows the secondary sources of income for the tribal Filipinos reflecting that 28.95% raise domestic animals; 16.89% render paid services, 15.13% engage in sales, 14.69% own poultry and 6.14% receive retiree pension. Likewise, other members also help augment the family income. Parents of household heads or respondents raise domestic animals. Children render paid domestic service as per 23.03% and engage themselves in sales as per 21.93%. Other family members are STL collectors.

**Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Tribal Group and the Type of Existing Government in Their Municipality**

Tribal Group Type of Government	Total	
	No.	%
Democracy	401	<b>87.94</b>
Aristocracy	8	1.75
Communism	7	1.54
Socialism	3	0.66
Capitalism	7	1.54
Others	30	6.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The stock of information along government concepts and issues had also been studied and table 4 shows the kind of existing government in the respondents' locality. There are 87.94% who have democratic forms of government and insignificantly few have other forms. Relative to this stock of information their preference for national leaders is also reflected as follows: 36.40% are for the late President Marcos; 25% are for Magsaysay, 12.06% for Macapagal; 6.58% for Quirino; 4.82% for Ramos and 3.29% for the late Pres. Roxas.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents by Tribal Group and Their Preferences to National Leaders

Tribal Group National Leaders	Total		
	No.	%	Rank
Elpidio Quirino	30	6.58	4
Carlos Garcia	6	1.32	10
Sergio Osmcna	9	1.97	9
Ramon Magsaysay	114	25.00	2
Diosdado Macapagal	55	12.06	3
Manuel Roxas	15	3.29	7.5
Ferdinand Marcos	166	36.40	1
Manuel Quezon	15	3.29	7.5
Corazon Aquino	5	1.10	II
Fidel Ramos	22	4.82	5
No response	19	4.17	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Along election matters, there are also officials to be elected in the locality of the respondents and they are ranked as follows: tribal chief or head as per 44.96%; barangay captain as per 25.44%; barangay councilman as per 20.17% and the tanod as per 9.43%.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents by Tribal Group and the Officials Elected in Their Locality

Officials Elected Tribal Group	Brgy. Captain	Brgy. Councilman	Tribal/ Chief/Head	Tanod	Total
Bago	40	<b>28</b>	62	10	140
Itneg	36	30	66	17	149
Igorot	<b>24</b>	20	30	5	79
Ibaloi	10	10	19	3	42
Kankana-cy	6	4	21	8	39
Tinguian			7		7
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>456</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>25.44</b>	<b>20.17</b>	<b>44.96</b>	<b>9.43</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As for the system of electing their officials, 55.70% expressed as done by secret balloting and 44.30% by appointment usually done by the tribal chief.



Table 9. Distribution of Respondents by Tribal Group and Their 'Awareness to Government Development Issues

Tribal Group Government Issues and Development.	Bago	Itneg	Igotot	Ibaloi	Kanka-na-ey	Ting-guian	Total No.	%
Peace and Order	20	10	6	3	2		41	8.99
Injustice	29	8	9	2	4		52	11.40
Graf & Corruption	54	70	26	21	15	4	190	41.67
Unemployment	16	9	8	3	5		41	8.99
High Prices	8	14	12	7	6	2	49	10.75
Crime/Murder		6	3	3			12	2.63
Poor Leadership	4	9	5		3	1	22	4.82
Drug Problem			2				3	0.66
Gambling	1						1	0.22
Kidnapping	5	3	3				11	2.41
Poverty	3	20	5	2	4		34	7.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**FINDINGS**

Data on the Demographic Characteristics of the Tribal Filipinos in the Province of Ilocos Sur revealed that:

- a) Most respondents are between ages 25 to 41 with 23.68% at ages between 20 to 29; 31.80% at 30 to 39; 23.46% at 40 to 49; and 16.89% at 50 to 59 and 4.17% are at age 60 and above.
- b) Their specific location is mostly at the mountain areas as per 41.23%, followed by 35.53% on rural farms, and 20.39% in the poblacion.
- c) The average number of children is 4 as per 40.79%, followed by 24.12% as 7, the 23.25% have 9 or more. There are however 11.84% who abstained from responding.
- d) Majority of the respondents 80.04% are married: with only 12.50% single and 7.46% as widowed. So far, none is neither divorced nor separated.
- e) Household dependency among respondents is between 0 to 14, with 69.96%; 15 years and above with 60.09% and at 60 years of age and above in 49.78%. The economically independent are of age 18 and above as per 56.58% and 60 years old and above as per 16.01%.
- f) Among migration factors, marriage ranks first as per 49.12%, the political reasons and economic factors. Some move to other places due to misunderstandings with other tribes and due to calamity reasons.

Data on the Socio-Cultural Characteristics shows that:

- a) 16.67% did not finish elementary course. 15.35% did not finish high school and 14.91% are elementary graduates. However, 13.38% finished high school and 7.90% have no schooling, but 7.90% are college graduates; 7.02% are vocational graduates and 8.11% did not finish college degrees.

- b) Majority (30.62%) are Roman Catholics by religious affiliation; 17.33% are Iglesia ni Cristo; 13.16% are Jehovah's witnesses; 10.09% are Born Again.
- c) The most widely spoken language/s are Ilocano-Bago as per 20.61%; Bago-Itneg-Igorot as per 13.38% and Ilocano-Itneg as per 11.40%.
- c) Other household members are also engaged in activities for helping in the family expenses, which are as follows:
  - 1) Hog and other domestic animal raising by parents of household heads as per 10.31% and 12.94% for fathers and mothers of respondents;
  - 2) Children work as housemaids both domestic and abroad as per 10.75%;
  - 3) Both parents and children keep stores or engaged themselves in small and medium scales of sales/business to augment the family income as per 9.34%;
  - 4) Other parents of household heads raise poultry as per 7.45% while others weave baskets and make ceramics for sale. Others, as per 6.25% receive pensions as retirees or as gifts from children abroad.

By tribal group, it is found out that 47.14% of Bagos speak Ilocano-Bago; 26.85% speak Ilocano-Bago-Itneg among the Itnegs; 31.65% of Igorots speak Ilocano-Igorot and so on, showing that most of the tribal groups speak Ilocano in combination with their tribal language.

Data on the Socio-Economic Systems Among the Respondents show that:

- a) 18.42% are engaged in service jobs which include transportation, communication and domestic services, beauty shop assistance, and police work while 17.54% either raise domestic animals or engage in agriculture; 17.33% are engaged in sales in large and small scales; 14.91% do clerical jobs both in private and government agencies; 12.94% are engaged in technical and related work and 7.02% are professionals who are engaged in teaching in private and government institutions.
- b) The secondary sources of income of the tribal groups include:
  - 1) Hog and other domestic animal raising among 28.95%;
  - 2) Housekeeping or rendering paid domestic service among 16.89%;
  - 3) Sales or keeping stores among 15.13%.
  - 4) Poultry raising among 14.69%;
  - 5) Receiving pensions as either retiree or from children who are working abroad.

Data on Political Systems show that:

- a) The most common form of government the tribal groups have is democracy as per 87.95%, although the rest still perceive aristocracy, communism and capitalism and the primitive form.
- b) There are only two political units to which the respondents belong: the barangay to 84.16% and the tribe to 15.84%.
- c) Majority of respondents (93.20%) exercise suffrage or participated in local and national elections.
- d) Only 6.80% do not exercise suffrage mainly due to not having been a registered voter as per 45.16% of them and also for being incapacitated by age and illness as per 25.81%; while 16.13% are lazy and 9.68% lack interest in election matters.

**Data on Socio-Political Systems and Their Stock of Information About Politics show that:**

- a) 87.94% believe in democratic forms of government;
- b) Others as per 6.57% have still forms that are primitive/traditional:
- c) Few believe in aristocracy (1.75%) while some believe in communism as per 1.54%.
- d) The most preferred national leaders in rank are:

Marcos as per 36.4%; Magsaysay as per 25% and Macapagal as per 12.06%. Relative to these findings, their educational attainment has nothing to do with their choices or preferences for national leaders. This also holds true for their age/s.

- c) Majority exercise suffrage:
- f) Officials selected in their localities include: the tribal chief/head (44.96%); the barangay captain, 25.44%; barangay councilman, 20.18% and the tanod, 9.42%.
- g) Majority of the tribal groups as per 55.70% exercise secret balloting and by appointment as per 44.30% in choosing their officials/leaders;
- h) The source of information they have about government issues include: the radio for 23.9%; personal visits for 21.93%; newspapers for 21.49% TV for 16.67% and programs for 14.47%.

**Data on Progressive Systems on Development and Government Issues show that:**

- a) There are 23.9% who are aware, interested and involved in youth development programs; 16.45% on

cooperatives; 13.38% on health programs; 11.18% on cleanliness and beautification; and 10.75% on environmental development.

- b) The most common issues of their concern in rank are: 41.67% on graft and corruption; 11.40% on injustice; 10.75% on high prices of basic commodities; 8.99% on both problems of unemployment and peace and order. Likewise, 7.46% are concerned about poverty and 4.83% on poor leadership of officials especially on implementations of projects.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on above results and findings, it can be concluded that:

1. Most of the cultural characteristics of the tribal Filipinos in the province of Ilocos Sur have gradually been disappearing due to development thrusts and programs extended to them. Such are those relative to modes of dressing, modes and systems of government, ways and practices on planting and harvesting, ways of dealing with the sick and dead. Superstitions still persist among the many although some have already been superseded by scientific ideas and knowledge.
2. The preferences of the tribal groups for national leaders are not affected by their age and educational attainment.
3. The awareness of the tribal groups of development issues is not affected by their age and educational attainment.
4. The issues of concern among the tribal groups are graft and corruption, injustice, high prices of basic commodities and unemployment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations conceived by the researchers were based on their actual observations about some of the respondents' ways of living and on the results of their study.

- I. Rich in potentials along almost all areas of endeavor, more privileges must be granted to the tribal groups in our province. This can perhaps be done by both government and non-government agencies/organizations through more functional and realistic goals and objectives relative to cultural minority groups.
2. The government must establish more extensive linkages for rural development thrusts emphasizing on socio-economic development.
3. Transportation means especially roads and bridges must be extensively improved especially those going to interior towns of the province.
4. Lastly, government and non-government authorities as well as lay people must join hands in minimizing the problem of cultural indoctrination.

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