

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ROLE IN THE PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN THE PHILIPPINES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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As Indigenous Peoples (IPs) own 20% of the world's land and defend 80% of the environment's biodiversity, they play a vital role in the preservation of key species.

THESIS: IN THE PHILIPPINES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN THE PHILIPPINES BECAUSE OF THEIR DEEP CULTURAL AND TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE AND THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM.

Why is biodiversity important?

Biodiversity is the wide range of different forms of life in an ecosystem, from the various types of flora, fauna, to even the microorganisms that populate an area. These forms of life interact and depend on each other with each species playing a role in maintaining a stable ecosystem.

1. The health of ecosystems that humans rely on for food, water, and production goods depends on the existence of a variety of wildlife.
2. Biodiverse ecosystems are key in the climate change crisis.
 - a. They reduce emissions by storing carbon or acting as carbon sinks;
 - b. Protect communities from extreme weather events (Ex. Flood, Typhoons);
 - c. Are more resilient to the effects of climate change

Why is it important to preserve biodiversity?

Preserving biodiversity should be a main priority for nations as these ecosystems are vital in providing for humanity's needs, and play a key role in addressing the climate crisis.



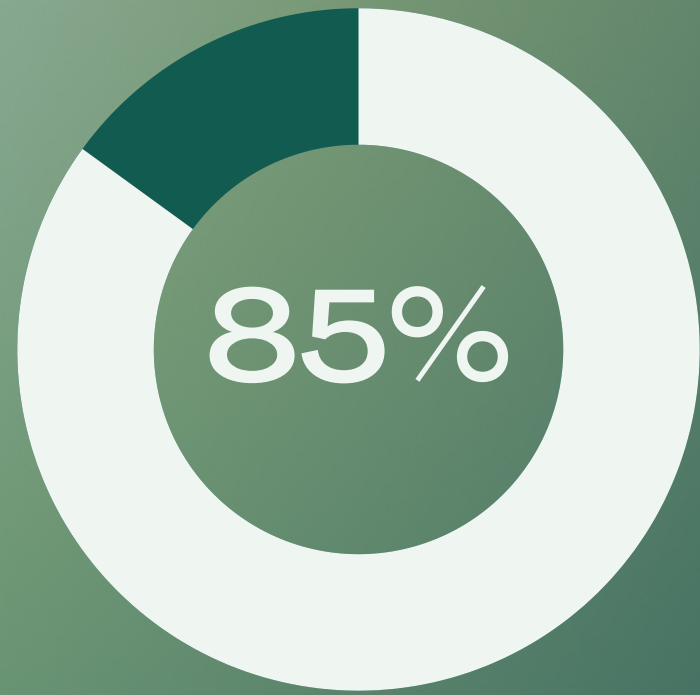


INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Indigenous People make up from 10 to 20% of the national population who belong to 110 ethno-linguistic groups (*UNDP, 2013*). Majority of IPs reside in the southernmost island of the Philippines, Mindanao.

Examples of IPs in the Philippines:

- Isneg
- Ata
- Bagobo
- Matik
- Manobo



of key biodiversity areas in the Philippines are IP protected

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite being a small part of the population, IPs protect approximately 85% of the Philippines' key biodiversity areas, as these lands are their ancestral domains. Indigenous people's lifestyles are respectful to the environment, living sustainable lives that preserves water and soil, reduces erosion and other risks of disasters.

A. Belief System

- The Isneg's sustainable agricultural traditions allow biodiversity to thrive within their local agricultural lands. This is reinforced by beliefs in different spirits who interfere with crucial stages in the agricultural cycle.

B. Traditions

- As an example, the entire body of a pig is put to good use by the tribe. The owner shares and dines on the killed pig with the community to ensure none of it is left over, and the blood of the pig is used in rituals for healing and good fortune.

CHALLENGES

Threatened Land

The land owned by the Indigenous people are taken away or exploited by corporations and governments, to be used for economic purposes.

Lack of Resources

Indigenous people and ethnic minorities face marginalization and economic inequality within the Philippines due to lack of proper representation in government data. Due to the lack of support from the government, the quality of the IPs education and healthcare services can also fall under the low quality to poor bracket.





POVEDA'S SCHOOL WIDE APPROACH

Integration of IP Lessons into Poveda's Curriculum

Through subjects such as Understanding Culture Society and Politics, Community Engagement, Christian Living Education, and even their Science classes, the students are more equipped as servant leaders who can make a difference in the IPs lives through the next level.

Integration of IP Lessons into Co-curricular Activities

Through outreaches and programs held by the Spirituality and Social Action offices tied in with the Josefa Segovia Foundation that closely works with Indigenous People, the school forms well-rounded students that promote immersion and partnership with the said communities.

Poveda Forest

A program where donations are collected to rebuild worn down or land-grabbed plantations to protect the land, environment, and biodiversity in the schools' partner communities.

Month Long Activities

Celebrations of the Season of Creation and Indigenous People's Month ensure that the Povedan students are exposed to these topics even in their day-to-day activities.





SDGS

With this analysis on the lives of the Indigenous Peoples, the researchers aim to uphold SDG 14 and 15 or Life Below Water and Life on Land respectively.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

IPs are major contributors to the protection of biodiversity in the Philippines.

As a lot of biodiverse land falls under the ancestral domain of the Indigenous People, more than ever, it is important for the government and the community to support and protect the areas under the IPs jurisdiction.

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