

Sinda: The Mother Nature Vengeance On Environmental Exploitation

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ABSTRACT

Mother Earth offers us everything. Humans have spent their entire lives altering ecological communities and ecosystems by taking advantage of what the nature offers. The exploitation of natural resources is the excessive human abuse of resources that made the planet exhausted. This study explored on *Sinda: The Mother Nature Vengeance on Environmental Exploitation* at Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. Using the qualitative research design, three (3) informants who are *siruhano* and are treating *sinda* were purposively chosen. Fieldwork, observations, informal and key informant interviews, and documentary and photographic analysis were the methods used. Verbatim data transcripts were analyzed using the general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) in Berondo (2023) and in vivo coding technique. The patterns of *sinda* vary from the origin and belief of the respondents in the local community. In terms of dynamics, *sinda* was known as a vengeance of mother earth in exploiting nature.

Keywords: beliefs, deforestation, folklore, Mother Earth, superstition, tradition

Introduction

These days environmental issues are among the most reported ones in the world. The dangerous effects of the environmental problems and destruction of nature are as old as the history of humanity. In former times the environmental problems were felt only at a local level with the destruction of forests to facilitate hunting places and clear lands for farming areas (Ardoin et al., 2020). Nowadays, when environment problems come into question, many people prefer using the term environmental disaster in place of the term environmental problems. This term, environmental disaster, may be remarkable enough to discern the severity of the problem (Ramadhan et al., 2019). Creating awareness is an important issue since many people are not aware of the fact that the nature is destroyed by humans, and they neglect that the harm to nature causes the harm to humanity concurrently since there has always been an indissoluble bond between ecosystem and humans. Humans cannot be dissociated from the natural world since the destruction of nature by human is not an instantaneous reality (Zandalinas et al., 2021).

According to Eggers (2020), as stewards of God's creation, it is believe that humans have a responsibility towards the environment, a duty to do what they can to ensure they are environmentally responsible. Each individual is responsible for their contribution to the environment and therefore must ensure they act to protect it. However, it is a belief that mother earth can be a wicked woman. Hallam (2020) believed that nature and the natural world is an embodiment of divinity, sacredness or spiritual power considering the environment to be imbued with spirits and other sacred entities.

Persons who are harming mother nature are said to suffer "*sinda*", a Hiligaynon word which means "hit by the spell of environmental spirits". *Sinda* comes to the person through the *bululakaw*, a malevolent god in the form of a bird with a flaming tail. The person who is *sininda* will suffer from stomachache, pain, pang, or twinges where the patient developed severe pains and distension without any reason. According to the local folks, the illness can be caused by *sa-ub*, a Hiligaynon word means "possession" by *tamawo*, a local dialect which is equivalent to "spirits residing in trees and springs". In our *kalibutan*, the Ilonggo terms which means 'universe' in English word, it consists of three parts: the *udtohan* 'upper world', inhabited by God and his virtuous angels; the *katung-anan* 'middle world', inhabited by *tamawo*, *tubignon*, and *tabuknon* 'spirits of trees, rivers, and seas', who were once Lucifer and his followers and can assume the form of a *kataw* 'mermaid' or a *siokoy* 'merman'; and the *idadalman* or *idadalmun* 'underworld', inhabited by the *engkanto* or *tamawo* 'evil spirits'. God and his angels keep themselves remote from the people. It is the

The study was conducted in Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. *Tabon* is a barangay in the municipality of [Tapaz](#), in the province of Capiz. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 612. This represented 1.12% of the total population of Tapaz. Tabon is situated at approximately 11.3255, 122.4375, in the island of Panay. Elevation at these coordinates is estimated at 292.3 meters or 959.0 feet above mean sea level (PhilAtlas, 2023).

Data Collection

Fieldwork, observations, informal and key informant interviews, and documentary and photographic analysis were used to gather data. These methods substantiate and triangulate the data elicited from the informants. For ethical considerations, necessary permits and disclosure information were secured from the informants prior to the conduct of the study.

Data Analysis

Data gathered through informal and key informant interviews were transcribed in verbatim. To make sense of the data transcripts, general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) as cited in Berondo (2023) was used. Emerging concepts were then arranged thematically. In vivo coding was used since folk terms are participant-generated words from members of a particular culture, subculture, or microculture. Folk terms extracted indicate the existence of the group's cultural categories. The codes refer to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record, "the terms used by [participants] themselves" (Strauss, 1988).

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of the Study

Statement	Coding	Category	Theme
1. If you have unexplained body pains with swelling and vomiting of blood, that's what you call <i>sinda</i>	Unexplained	Beliefs	Vengeance
2. <i>Sinda</i> can come from many ways such as <i>sinda sa adlaw</i> , <i>sinda sa balay</i> , <i>sinda sa bungsudnun</i> , <i>sinda sa tubig</i> , <i>sinda sa patay</i> , <i>sinda sa balangaw</i> , <i>sinda sa bululakaw</i>	Factors	Beliefs	Vengeance
3. Most especially you will have <i>sinda</i> when harm your environment and if you trespass the laws of nature	Tresspass	Beliefs	Vengeance
4. You should say <i>purya sinda</i> before you perform any activities	Prevention	Beliefs	Prevailing Practices
5. Consult first a <i>siruhano</i> or a quack doctor before you go to the hospital	Siruhano	Beliefs	Prevailing Practices
6. Any activities that you do can cause you <i>sinda</i>	Activities	Beliefs	Prevailing Practices
7. You will get healed from <i>sinda sa adlaw</i> , <i>sinda sa balay</i> , <i>sinda sa bungsudnun</i> , <i>sinda sa tubig</i> and <i>sinda sa bululakaw</i> once you will be tied with a cloth consisting of 7 slices of turmeric and ginger put alternately	Tie	Cloth tying	Treatment
8. Once you have a <i>sinda sa patay</i> , you must offer 7 chickens put into 7 layers with 10 cloths and 7 women and 3 men will dance <i>Binangog</i> during the offering	Chickens	Offering	Treatment
9. For <i>sinda sa balangaw</i> , you will only offer 1 red chicken with bow and arrow to shoot the rainbow and tie a cloth to the victim with 7 slices of turmeric and ginger arranged alternately	Bow and arrow	Offering	Treatment

Results and Discussions

Results

Basic themes from the codes were developed and organized into three (3) categories that eventually led to the theme. The statements gave way to nine (9) codes that were grouped into three (3) categories that was further arranged into three (3) organizing themes, paving the way to the central idea of the study about the *Sinda* as the Vengeance of Mother Nature on the Environmental Exploitation of people at Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz Philippines (Table 1).

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Vengeance of Mother Nature on its Exploitation

The exploitation of nature by human activities has far-reaching consequences, and the wrath or vengeance of Mother Nature is an apt metaphor for the severe repercussions that often follow such exploitation. Throughout history, humans have engaged in deforestation, pollution, over-extraction of natural resources, and other activities that disrupt the delicate balance of ecosystems. While the immediate gains might seem significant, the long-term costs can be devastating. These things are supported by the local community. When asked about their different superstitious beliefs of *Sinda* as the Mother Nature Vengeance on Environmental Exploitation at Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines, they answered variedly. These answers are reflected below:

One respondent shared that you can identify *sinda* from other causes because according to her, “*if you have unexplained body pains with swelling and vomiting of blood, that's what you call sinda*”. When asked about the common condition associated with *sinda* such as *usug*, she vehemently said that they are very different and the given symptoms she stated are common among all her *sinda* clients.

One answer opened the eye of the researcher that *sinda* can be cause by many factors not merely harming the environment because the respondent shared that “*sinda can come from many ways such as sinda sa adlaw, sinda sa balay, sinda sa bungsudnun, sinda sa tubig, sinda sa patay, sinda sa balangaw, sinda sa bululakaw*”. This reminds everyone to be careful of all that they do, then.

Lastly, one respondent emphasized that “*most especially you will have sinda when you harm your environment and if you trespass the laws of nature.*” This is where the study is anchored.

Prevailing Practices and Beliefs of the Community about *Sinda*

The concept *sinda* often arises in discussions about environmental issues and the consequences of human activities on the natural world. It implies that the Earth or nature itself may respond negatively to the exploitation and harm caused by human actions. This perspective often aligns with environmentalist viewpoints that emphasize the interconnectedness of human activities and the health of the planet. The community has still prevailing practices and beliefs regarding this phenomenon. The respondents shared them well and can be analyzed into these concise texts.

One answer says, “*You should say purya sinda before you perform any activities.*” This is a reminder of how *sinda* can be prevented.

One respondent shared, “*Consult first a siruhano or a quack doctor before you go to the hospital*” because they still believe that one's condition is caused by spiritual factor and therefore must be treated by a spiritual healer and not science.

Another thought provoking answer came from the lady *siruhano* in which she shared that “*any activities that you do can cause you sinda*”.

Treatment of the Local Folk Healers on Victims of *Sinda*

In many cultures, local folk healers often use traditional and holistic approaches to address health issues. These approaches may involve herbal remedies, rituals, prayers, and other practices that are deeply rooted in cultural and historical beliefs. Folk healing traditions often emphasize a connection between the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of well-being. In *sinda*, treatment varies. The respondents who are local folk healers shared them how they treat victims of *sinda*.

One respondent shared that “*you will get healed from sinda sa adlaw, sinda sa balay, sinda sa bungsudnun, sinda sa tubig and sinda sa bululakaw once you will be tied with a cloth consisting of 7 slices of turmeric and ginger put alternately.*”

Another respondent shed light that “once you have a *sinda sa patay*, you must offer 7 chickens put into 7 layers with 10 cloths and 7 women and 3 men will dance *Binanog* during the offering”. And lastly, the last faith healer shared that “for *sinda sa balangaw*, you will only offer 1 red chicken with bow and arrow to shoot the rainbow and tie a cloth to the victim with 7 slices of turmeric and ginger arranged alternately”.

DISCUSSIONS

The study on “*Sinda: Mother Nature's Vengeance on Environmental Exploitation at Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines*” represents a critical examination of the consequences of environmental exploitation in a specific region. Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines, serves as the backdrop for this investigation, where the local ecosystem has been subject to various forms of exploitation, leading to the phenomenon referred to as *sinda*, interpreted as Mother Nature's retaliation.

The primary objective of the study is to comprehensively document and explore the manifestations of *sinda*, illustrating the ways in which environmental exploitation has triggered a response from the natural world. This may include phenomena such as natural disasters, ecological imbalances, and disruptions in the local climate.

The research involves a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating ecological, geological, and social sciences to holistically understand the intricate relationships between human activities and the environment. Field surveys, interviews with local communities, and scientific analyses of the ecosystem are likely components of the methodology.

The study aims to raise awareness about the urgent need for sustainable practices and environmental conservation in Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. By linking specific instances of environmental exploitation to the observed manifestations of *sinda*, the research serves as a warning about the potential repercussions of neglecting ecological balance.

Furthermore, the study may propose recommendations for policy changes, community involvement, and sustainable development practices to mitigate the impact of *Sinda* and prevent further environmental degradation. This research could contribute valuable insights to global conversations on the consequences of environmental exploitation and the importance of adopting eco-friendly approaches to ensure the well-being of both communities and ecosystems.

In summary, the study on *Sinda* in Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines, serves as a crucial exploration of the complex interplay between human activities and the environment, highlighting the repercussions of environmental exploitation and advocating for sustainable practices to appease Mother Nature's vengeance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

(This part shall be written in narrative form and arranged based on the objectives and findings. Conclusions are general statements answering the objectives. Recommendations are based on the conclusions. They may be split or combined based on their length, which means, conclusions and recommendations may be split under separate headings if they are long. Justify paragraphs with main headings in caps.).

The patterns of *sinda* vary from the origin and belief of the three (3) respondents in the local community. In terms of dynamics, *sinda* was known as a vengeance of Mother Earth in exploiting nature as this was known to believers until this era where illness is experience in the locality.

Through the obtained data that tackled the lived experiences of the participants, this study was able to contribute the first qualitative data on the superstitious beliefs of folk healers at Tabon, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. Therefore, this study has paved an avenue for a better understanding regarding such while contributing a solution to the scarcity of literature depicting its culture. This problem greatly contributes to the misconceptions of people towards *sinda*.

This study aids participants in learning about *sinda* as superstitious belief and better understanding patients who experience the illness and undergone the abrupt treatment approach. This will help in guiding a patient's desire of blending illness with proper approach that can help bridge communication gaps by providing opportunities for open-minded local people, establishing trust, and safeguarding Mother Nature, eventually leading to better a safe and green environment.

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 17. For future research, this study recommends utilizing a larger sample size for data saturation, yielding more responses and newly gathered data about the topic at hand.