

ANALYSIS, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON GENDER AND TOURISM IN BANAUE, IFUGAO*

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Abstract

How the transformation from a subsistence to cash economy partly brought about by the tourism industry has impacted on the different spheres of life in Poblacion, Banaue is subjected to feminist analysis. Recommendations for responsible and gender sensitive tourism and respect for indigenous people's right to self-determination are proffered.

The narratives of those interviewed for this study show that both women and men (particularly the adults and the youth) are directly involved in tourism work. Women are in lodge management and services, and the selling of handicrafts

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The thesis is an exploratory study which endeavored to examine the effects of tourism in Banaue, Ifugao. In-depth interviews were conducted among 11 women and 10 men respondents representing the different stages of life: the elder, adult and youth. From their respective narratives, insights and themes were drawn and then subjected to gender analysis. Also brought into the study were the authors' personal experiences and reflections as Cordillera women: Remedios Mondiguing is an Ifugao who once worked as a Project Evaluation Officer of the Ifugao Terraces Commission and Juline Dunuan is a Kankanay married to an Ifugao who presently works at the UP Asian Institute of Tourism as a teacher, researcher and trainer.

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and occasional farm produce. Men, on the other hand, are into transport operations, woodcarving, and tour guiding. This is only true however for Banaue Poblacion, our study area. It must be noted that there are no rice terraces in the Poblacion. The rice terraces are found in the 28 barangays surrounding Banaue. In these localities, a majority of the people rely mainly on their farms for their food, which presently no longer suffices. It is therefore important to bear in mind that Banaue is primarily a terraced wet rice farming community and not a mountain resort built for tourism purposes. For this reason, a gender analysis of tourism as it affects Ifugao women and men across ages must also take into consideration terraced wet rice farming activities. This traditional farming system is interlinked with the traditional system of water conservation, the watershed or *muyong*, where trees are grown and protected. Integrated with each farming activity are rituals which call on the ancestors and the elements of nature to help produce healthy crops and abundant harvest. The integration of the terraces, their forests, and their rituals manifests the Ifugao's deep sense of ecology and spirituality observable in their day-to-day life, which bespeaks of their religion in practice.

Farmwork in this type of farming system means not only planting, weeding and harvesting, which are done by women. It also means maintenance of terrace walls, dikes, irrigation canals and the watersheds, which are done by men.

The activities involved in this type of subsistence farming is done by hand with the help of simple hand implements. The non-mechanized nature of the work necessitates cooperation, rather than competition between the sexes. Both women and men realize that their survival depends on their capacity to cooperate with one another, not to mention cooperation with their physical environment.

It is to be noted that while there is a distinct gender division of labor in farmwork, there is none in reproductive work. Up to now the feminization of domestic work that is a hallmark of the patriarchal household has not reared its ugly head in Ifugao society. As in the days of yore, women still work in the farm while the men stay at home to cook and look after the children or vice-versa. Furthermore, child-rearing is not seen as the sole responsibility of the parents but by the whole village which is mainly composed of families/clans related to one another. As observed by the early chroniclers of Ifugao life:

In Ifugao, "either the men or women look after the children." (Perez 1902: 247).

From the time he is physically independent (4-7 years old), a child sleeps in a dormitory for the unmarried, "the *agamang*." This may be a vacant house, or the house of a widow, widower or unmarried person. The "*agamang*" for boys contain only boys and bachelors, the girls, "*agamang*" is always mixed, the inmates being little girls and their lovers, old women, widows (including divorcees) and their lovers if any . . . (Barton 1938: 11).

In terms of access to resources, women are equal to men. This is manifested by customary laws on inheritance which do not discriminate on the basis of gender. Furthermore, inherited property is kept separate even during marriage which allows Ifugao women to enjoy autonomy.

To the Ifugaos land is the most valuable possession and the terraces of which they are all guardians are deemed "sacred" – their source of life. However, land, on which traditional social position is based, is not deemed private property, but a guardianship. Those who inherit are not only given the responsibility to care for it but also to share the harvest

with siblings or relatives who have not inherited any, with the siblings helping to till in exchange. This is part of Ifugao customary law which is still observed up to the present. Primogeniture, however, is currently being questioned by the present generation, and there have been adaptations in the area of inheritance rights, particularly for those who no longer live in Ifugao. In such cases, ricefields are no longer given to the eldest but to the child (whether male or female) who decides to remain in Ifugao and/or is married to a co-Ifugao.

In the past social position in the community was defined by the number of ricefields owned by either male or female. Those who now own the biggest ricefields are the descendants of the first couple who started carving out terraces in the village which their children and their children's progeny have expanded through the ages. Indeed, if the terraces could speak, they would have so many stories to tell about the succession of generations that have contributed to their present grandeur, which UNESCO has rightfully acknowledged when it proclaimed them as one of the world's heritage sites.

While areas of the terraces privately owned varied, this does not translate into perceptions of "class." Owners of the biggest ricefields cannot be distinguished from those with small landholdings. Like the rest the former work on their own fields side by side with their poorer relatives. (During my summer visits to relatives, I never really could distinguish the rich from the poor. Kinship relations, rather than economic relations, were the more important to consider.) Besides, under customary law a ricefield can not be sold. It can only be mortgaged and, even then, only to the landholder's relatives. This shows that social position only served to delineate social responsibilities. To acquire prestige in the

community one must have the resources for feeding everyone in the community during thanksgiving feasts. This practice serves as a social mechanism for preserving a non-hierarchical society. No doubt the consumption of goods and utilization of valuable resources in the feasts prevent the accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals thus preventing the emergence of capitalist relations.

Nowadays capitalist inroads are slowly eroding the traditional practice of social status assignation based on social responsibilities rather than economic positioning. High status is now accorded to those who have money and are formally educated. These are usually the owners of big ricefields. However, while accorded a high status in society, they may lose it if they cannot gain the people's respect by doing something good for the community.

Not only is the practice of social status assignation undergoing change. So is the customary practice related to land ownership. In the past ricefields cannot be sold because, as mentioned earlier, there is the concept of guardianship over land deeply inscribed in Ifugao culture.

Nowadays land can be purchased for a price. However there is a restriction on the sale: It can only be sold to a person who is related to the seller.

Changes are also taking place in the system of political governance. Banaue has a local government unit that is part of the national government system. From way back it has been male-dominated. It is to be noted, however, that customary law, rather than national law holds sway in many areas of concerns such as cases involving property rights, inheritance, and offenses involving the breaking of taboos. The family or clan council as the major decision-making body in the deliberation of appropriate penalties based on custom law

is preferred over the local government judicial system. During family and clan councils, gender equality is observed: both women and men participate and their voices are equally heard.

INSIGHTS

Tourism began as an exchange of knowledge which led to new economic activities, values and needs.

As surfaced from the narratives, Banaue Poblacion used to be ricefields where only a few structures existed. When outsiders started to visit the place changes gradually took place. Local residents became exposed to other ways of life. While in the past people were content with small dwellings, soon they started to entertain the thought that it “was nice to have bigger houses.” Thus before long ricefields were sold and bigger and modern houses erected on them.

Ricelands were also sold to finance the education of children. Not a few of them graduated from college and became professionals. The practice of their profession compelled them to live outside their community of origin. However they sent money to their families back home. A good part of the remittances was used to finance the construction of modern and bigger houses.

The exposure of the inhabitants' children to other forms of culture was also a source of acculturation to those they left behind. Information about other ways of life would come from the educated children. Additional sources of information would be the regular influx of visitors from all over the world who come as tourists.

Tourism has turned Banaue's subsistence economy into a capitalist economy. The leasing of rooms to visitors, the sell-

ing of handicrafts, the tour guiding, and the transporting of people and merchandise to and from the locality slowly but progressively transformed an economy where subsistence farming was the main economic activity to one where the exchange of goods and services became monetized. Rice produced from the terraces no longer sufficed to feed an increasing population, partly because of the decrease in ricefield acreage as a consequence of the selling of this major means of production to finance the education of children, and the construction of bigger and modern houses. Customary law pertaining to inheritance is also partly to blame: Younger siblings are rendered landless or sometimes assigned just a few marginal fields that do not produce much (which was the case with my father). To enable such individuals to earn a living they have to capitalize on their skills and resources other than land.

Thus from a traditionally subsistent farming economy, Banaue's economy gradually entered the capitalist mode of production. Women's economic activities extended from work in subsistence agriculture to monetized tourism work— jobs such as lodge management, housekeeping services, tour-guiding and selling farm produce and handicrafts, and transporting tourists to the various scenic spots around Banaue. In fact a majority of the adult resource persons involved in this study now solely rely on income from activities such as selling handicrafts (for women) and woodcarving (for men) as their main source of livelihood since many of their children no longer help in farmwork, but wait for tourists to guide or drive around for instant cash. It must however be noted that although many are now engaged in various tourism related work, most do not depend mainly on tourism for their income. For example, women who are lodge managers and workers are also employed as government employees or teachers

while the youth are students enrolled in some school. The women who are connected with tourism by selling vegetables, fruits and woven products are also working in their farms. Most of the men however are solely engaged in tourism work which has led to the decline in terrace maintenance and watershed management, traditionally considered men's work. As one male resource person mentioned, the main problem now faced by men is the dilemma on where to focus — woodcarving, tour-guiding and driving or terrace maintenance. Most would rather focus on the former, not only because it provides more money, but it is also easier work. Besides, according to an elder male informant, "stonewalling is an art," and members of the new generation no longer want to learn it from the elders. This is to be expected for, compared to other economic activities, stonewalling is hard work. Further aggravating the lack of manpower for supplying the demand for stonewallers is the fact that men who know how to stonewall will only do it if their asking price for the job is met. Usually, this is found unaffordable by a majority of those in need of the service. Consequently, men who ought to work the land are increasingly working in tourism-related activities.

New economic activities reinforce gender division of labor thus making women multiburdened in farmwork.

As in the traditional subsistence economy which exists side by side with tourism related activities, there is an apparently distinct gender division of labor as mentioned earlier. Women are engaged in lodge management and services and selling, while men in transport management, tour guiding and woodcarving. This gender division of labor however does not seem to subordinate women to men or vice-versa. The reason for this is the community's recognition and valuation

of both production and reproduction work. Another reason is the recognition of women's autonomy: Men generally do not interfere in the decisions made by women involving the latter's work. Furthermore there is no strict delineation of functions by gender in tourism work; there is work sharing by both sexes (except in driving and tour-guiding); and doing work is dependent mainly on who has the time for it.

The problem as far as women across ages are concerned however is the double burden: Women working in the tourism industry are also engaged in farmwork activities except for those who have sold their farms or those with adequate resources for hiring labor or those with relatives to do farm work for them. Men, on the other hand, do not work in the farm, except for the older men who cannot do much because terrace maintenance entails much physical strength. Because of lack of men to maintain the terraces many areas have become unarable and eroded. Women who are left to do the farmwork have to contend with fields that can no longer be planted with rice unless they themselves do the formidable tasks of fixing the dikes and building/repairing stonewalls. Tourism has thus indirectly inflicted the oppressive multiple burden on women, majority of whom are farmers whose only resources are their farms and/or their labor.

Social position, education and skill facilitates access to tourism resources

While the gender division of labor in tourism work has not led either sex to gain ascendancy over another, what can be gleaned from the study is that involvement in tourism-related work is directly linked with one's traditional class/social position. For example, women with ricefields, large

houses, are educated, and themselves have educated children are engaged in lodge management while those who do not have the former's resources are engaged in services, selling, and farming. The same holds true for men: Those with the aforementioned resources are into politics (such as mayor who implements tourist-related projects), big business (such as owning and running a hardware store which entails a large amount of capitalization), and transport management where most of the drivers are also owners of their vehicles. Men without the aforementioned resources are into woodcarving, driving vehicles not their own, and tour-guiding. None of them are involved in terrace maintenance. This kind of work is left for older men to do and those from other villages who hire themselves out for a fee.

While no doubt tourism has brought about employment and other economic opportunities to the community, this did not redound to the economic upliftment of all the people in the community. The major beneficiaries are the few rich, not the many poor. This was confirmed by members of the community and barangay council in Batad (the most publicized terrace cluster in Banaue frequented by tourists) when, as leader of the project evaluation team of the ITC in 1995, I went around the villages with my technical staff consulting with the people. They informed us that only 10% of the community has benefitted from tourism. These are the owners of lodging houses and/or restaurants (who more or less are also those who have the biggest ricefields in the community). We were further informed about the majority's preferred form of assistance:— access to resources that would increase village food production and other livelihood activities rather than the boosting of tourism as the major economic activity of the locality.

Exposure to tourism and its lucrative income has led to the breakdown of Ifugao terraced wet rice farming values leading to the disadvantage of poor and elderly women who now do the farm work alone and to the deterioration of the terraces which used to be "lovely and clean."

Exposure to tourists and the income brought about by tourism has enabled those directly involved in it to have their children educated and exposed to new ways of knowledge and values. While this may be seen as a sign of progress, it has serious implications on the life of the people. For one, the traditional value and belief system which used to provide "coherence" or unity in the community since it provided guidelines for all community activities which preserved both the material and non-material culture no longer holds sway the way it used to do. For another, while ricelands used to be considered sacred and seen as placed in trust on its holder and therefore never to be sold, now they are bought and sold just like any other commodity. As a matter of fact, not a few ricelands have been sold to finance the construction of modern houses and the education of children. This is not the only change that has taken place. Change is also taking place in the attitude, as well as capacity for doing traditional work. Those with formal education no longer show interest in working the ricefields and, in fact, have not received training in planting rice, stonewalling, etc. Many educated children now prefer to work in the city or abroad thus leaving only the elders and those who have not been educated (the poor) behind. Increasing tourist-related activities have also resulted in mendicancy and truancy particularly among male children who now prefer to learn how to drive or wait for tourists to guide. All these leading to the disadvantage of poor and elderly women who have to do farm work alone without help from their children and to

the deterioration of the rice terraces which used to be “lovely and clean.”

Another value that is on its wane leading to the disadvantage of women and the deterioration of the terraces is the loss of traditional cooperative farm labor exchange where women used to work together without monetary compensation. Nowadays women and children will only help in the farm if they are paid in cash for it. Men, on the other hand, have shown preference for the production of commodities that tourists are likely to buy. Since farmers are now busy in woodcarving or producing things to sell to tourists, there is no more time to religiously adhere to the agricultural calendar, an age-old mechanism used to make cooperative farmwork possible by synchronising the different activities. The cash incentive brought about by tourism has thus disrupted the regularity of farmwork activities which used to maintain unity, cooperation and gender complementation in the community.

Influx of tourists has led to the problem of garbage and water distribution

The tourism industry has spawned environmental problems which if left unsolved can very well lead to environmental degradation. The influx of tourists necessitated the building of houses, lodges and other accommodation facilities without the benefit of rational planning. Consequently, sewage, waste disposal, and water distribution problems in the community have arisen. They are likely to remain unsolved since regulatory and control measures being effected in the community are primarily for the benefit of tourists. To insure the comfort, safety and satisfaction of tourists and increase tourist inflow, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the

local government unit (LGU) have taken measures towards these goals. As per DOT rules, a tourist guide has to get a license for tour-guiding, get accreditation, and agree to the set standardized fees. The LGU, on the other hand, has issued ordinances to ensure peace and order in the locality. So far, as of this writing, it has not addressed the zoning problem created by the conflict between customary law and statutory law regarding land use and property rights and obligations.

Modernization and education facilitated by increased income from tourism has led to the gradual cessation of the role of elders in the transmittal of culture.

Tourism has also led indirectly to the modernization of houses, modern mode of dressing, new ways of gathering information, and entertainment. Before the advent of television women, men and children would gather around outdoor after working in the farm to listen to the stories related by the elders. This activity was a way of transmitting knowledge to the young while providing them entertainment. Nowadays, with the advent of modern houses that are equipped with the usual amenities like television sets, music components and VHS, people can access information and be entertained without leaving their abodes. In fact, it can be said not without truth that the living room of such houses has become the arena of war between two contending value systems — the traditional/indigenous and modern/foreign.

The high status of elders is rapidly being downgraded since they are no longer the major sources of information and transmitters of Ifugao culture. As a matter of fact, they no longer have listeners for their tales since most in the community are busy entertaining tourists during the day and by night have television sets to entertain them. Clearly the tra-

ditional way of transmitting culture which was one of the roles of the elders is shown to be slowly disappearing to the detriment of the production and reproduction of a traditional society. Children nowadays grow up ignorant about the traditional culture which placed a premium on cooperation and harmony in group living, consequently, they trend to embrace the values of individualism and competition engendered by the capitalist system.

Loss of respect for women, elders and village freedom attributed to cultural insensitivity of tourists.

Modernization facilitated by tourism has also brought about an emerging loss of respect for women as manifested by the incidence of rape and incest, crimes quite uncommon in the culture. Both women and men involved as resource persons in this study attributed this phenomenon mainly to the exposure of children to tourists who are ignorant of the culture or are not sensitive to it as well as to exposure to VHS shows which are not monitored for children's viewing.

Children's exposure to tourists has also resulted in loss of respect for elders. No longer does the youth listen to the advice of their elders, as evidenced by truancy and the sale of antiques without permission from them.

Male children who guide tourists have also started experimenting with marijuana which although grown in the community for commercial purposes for lack of other livelihood were never smoked by the natives.

Tourism promotions depict Banaue as a unique mountain resort because of the Ifugaos and their culture. This, the elders think, is tourist intrusion into a culture with specific historicity. Tourism, to the elders, is an encroachment on the tranquil life and freedom of the natives. While tourism has

capitalized on the lives and culture of the Ifugaos, it has not come up with measures to really help them.

Government tourism programs are gender-blind and biased for tourists

The thrust of tourism is clear as stated in the DOT mandate "to generate foreign currency and employment; spread its benefits to a wider segment of the population; and assure the safe, convenient and enjoyable stay of and travel of both foreign and local tourists in the country."

Guided by its mandate which is gender blind and biased for tourists, the DOT has come up with master plans which are the blueprints of tourist development in the Cordillera Administrative Region. One is the CAR tourism master plan which is the general guide for tourism development implementation in the Cordillera and the Ifugao Terraces Commission 3- and 6- year master plans exclusively evolved for the protection and preservation of the Ifugao rice terraces. Both plans, however, are mostly into the development of resources, i.e., tourism sites, roads and enhancing the capability of women and men to serve the needs of tourists. While the ITC master plans are comprehensive and holistic, giving special consideration to tourist regulation and cultural enhancement, the "overriding goal is to preserve, conserve and enhance the area's natural environment and its rich tribal culture for people and visitors to appreciate, enjoy and learn from." (Note that there is nothing for the Ifugaos)

As surfaced from the narratives however, the main support being provided by the DOT is tourist promotions in terms of the "Imbayah" festival; brochures and seminars for tour guides, tricycle drivers and lodge management and services; and the creation of the Banaue tourism council which

is responsible mainly for implementation of tourist-related activities. While these were welcomed by both women and men involved in tourist-related activities in the sense that it helped generate income, some responded critically. Both women and men think that it has led to the commercialization of the culture, erasing the sanctity and authenticity of rituals which are deemed integral to the Ifugao culture. Brochures which were not prepared in consultation with the people (promotional brochures are usually prepared in Manila by artists and writers who are not familiar with the place, thus providing false impressions to tourists) have also left the people in the area to contend with tourists' expectations based on inaccurate, if not totally false information about the place and its people. Some seminars conducted are also not appropriate to the area since they lack integration with Ifugao culture and thus do not directly address the needs of the participants. Furthermore, while the ITC is mandated to protect and preserve the Ifugao rice terraces, the only major activity mentioned by the resource persons, both male and female is the painting of the roofs of houses and other structures in red in order to comply with what the ITC thinks the terraces need in terms of "scenic beauty" which is to give the houses a uniform kind of color to blend with the terraces. Red, however, was not what the people wanted, they wanted cogon brown. Other ITC efforts mentioned was the repair of irrigation canals in some priority areas, but which still has to be implemented and the contest as to who can build the best native house.

It is worth noting however that the people, in particular the men who are involved in tourism activities, have initiated group as well as individual efforts to protect their interests as well as those of their culture and environment which helps address their need to earn income from tour-

ism without necessarily compromising their culture and their environment. Women too have established associations/cooperatives to help them in the sale of their crafts. Nothing, however, is being done at the national, local and individual levels to address the needs of women farmers.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The changing economy from subsistence to cash that has impacted in almost all spheres of the life of the people in Banaue, has created an imbalance in terms of workload between the sexes leading to the overburdening of women. It has also led to exposure to new values which now prioritize cash to the cultivation of ricefields leading to the latter's deterioration and the values that go with it. The fact that women however are still engaged in farmwork activities, continuing to nourish and cultivate their ricefields is perhaps the reason why I think that conditions supportive of women's autonomy and relatively equal rights and status with men, continue to exist. That the women continue tilling and nourishing their farms on which the traditional Ifugao culture is grounded is, I think, the only remaining hope for the survival of their culture. Without the Ifugao women who continue to till their farm, the terraces will cease to exist and so will all the values that are integral to it.

As pointed out in the ITC master plan,

"the uniqueness of the Ifugao culture, its artifacts and cultural symbols are attractions to the outsider, who barely realizes that each functional element is intertwined with nature and culture. Remove one functioning element and the system can collapse. Alter the functioning element that sustains the rice terraces and the structure collapses. Remove the rice from the terraces, and the system of terracing have

to be changed. Alter lifestyles and livelihood without integrating the rice terracing and the Ifugao, as a community, can deteriorate fast." (ITCMP: 1994)

Yet, while it is the women who are currently sustaining the terraces, their needs are not being addressed. Women continue to toil in the fields while at the same time try to earn from tourism. The men and children, due to increasing cash needs no longer work in the farm, leaving all the work to the women and old men, thus creating a situation wherein women are getting more and more relegated to unpaid farmwork and men to paid employment thus creating inequality in terms of work and its benefits which might eventually lead to women's subordination and dependence on men.

Recommendations

1. Tourism is currently in place and the only available alternative source of income to augment insufficient rice production from the terraces, thus it has to be sustained. There is however, the need to reconceptualize it not solely as an economic activity, but as a reciprocal cultural exchange between hosts and guests that is based on mutual respect.
2. For a reconceptualized tourism to be sustained however, the terraces must also be maintained and nourished so it could continue giving sustenance to the people, while at the same time preserving its wonder and beauty.
3. Terrace maintenance needs both women and men to work in complementation with each other and the preservation of traditional farming practices and the belief system that is integral to it.
4. In order to prevent disruption of subsistent farming activities and maintain the sanctity of rituals that go with it, the LGU should impose an ordinance about the ap-

appropriate time when tourists can come in, such as during times when the people are not busy in farm work. Perhaps, the people can come up with a calendar of activities indicating appropriate time for visits. It should be the people who should impose when the tourists can come and not the DOT or other outside entities who are not familiar with community activities.

5. For continued terrace maintenance and sustainable cultural exchanges, traditional values and knowledge must continue to be transmitted to the younger generation, at the same time guests should also be oriented about the culture.
6. The DOT should depict the place as a farming community where people live and thus are entitled to freedom and privacy, in order to protect and preserve the people's dignity and for tourists to understand the community they will be visiting.
7. Maintenance of the terraces had always been done by the community without outside support. At present because of the current situation wherein men are in tourism work because of the more lucrative income it promises, and women being overburdened because of lack of male labor, perhaps something should be done to look into how to provide compensation for the farmers in exchange for maintaining the terraces, which after all is now a showcase of Filipino culture. Perhaps tourists, before entering the villages, should pay a certain kind of fee that will go for terrace maintenance. By providing them compensation, their need to augment the lack in subsistence production will be addressed. This will also ensure that farmers who are mainly responsible for terrace maintenance and cultivation will also benefit, thus ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources and benefits and main-

taining traditional egalitarian values and gender complementation in the community.

Given the above considerations and the fact that tourism is now in place, there is a need to address the issues raised by coming up with a new model for tourism that would allow both women and men to equally earn and benefit from tourism and still maintain the terraces in terms of traditional farming practices, without burdening the women and compromising traditional egalitarian values and belief systems.

For this to come about however there is a need to feed-back our findings and recommendations to the women and men from all sectors in the community, particularly the farmers, not only to validate them, but for the community to be made aware of the issues so that they themselves can decide on what to do about it. [Based on my personal experience and as noted by one of our women resource persons, it is useless to implement anything in Ifugao without consulting the people first. This has been proven by the success of the liquor ban in Hapao (one of the barangays in Hungduan, Ifugao) because the mayor consulted with the people who decided about the imposition which is now strictly being implemented and monitored by the people themselves]. This will also be an awareness-raising activity for the community so they can realize that women are getting overworked and for the women to raise their needs and concerns about it. Both sexes can then come up with plans for action about what they can do, what they need as support from both the national and local governments and other concerned institutions like the UP-AIT. Perhaps the UP-AIT can initiate change by developing courses on culture and gender-sensitive tourism, using this study as take-off point as well as develop training modules to raise the consciousness of policy makers and implementing agencies such as the WTO, UNESCO,

DOT and other private and non-governmental institutions engaged in tourism promotions and development.

Reflections

As I mentioned in my part of the introduction, I wanted to do this study because I felt that something had to be done about the current tourism promotions and activities going on in Banaue. I had never been especially concerned before about my origins. Actually, it was only when I enrolled in the WD Program in 1990 and met Sario, who is our thesis adviser, that I was conscientised to go back to my roots. Here was someone who is not even from the place and yet was very much interested and concerned about it. Sario's interest and concern about Ifugao started my personal journey into going back to my roots. Where before I went to Ifugao just like a local tourist, detached and uninvolved, I started to ask questions and more questions which began a marathon search for what is there in Ifugao that culminated in the realization and appreciation of the richness of our culture, particularly its consultative processes and socially egalitarian relations where women were assertive and enjoyed equal rights with men, children roamed the fields and forests without fear of getting hurt and where elders were cared for and respected by everyone in the community. Everyone, with or without ricefields, were given equal portions of food during ritual gatherings, everyone getting food from the same rice basket and drinking from the same cup. While I used to consider this unhygienic, I realised that this was one way the community preserved unity and connectedness with each other.

In 1995, when I worked with the Ifugao Terraces Commission (ITC) as project evaluation officer, I realized that there was something wrong about the way the Ifugao terraces

were projected—"as a sight to be conserved, preserved and enhanced for tourists to enjoy and learn from," which evidently showed that they were more concerned about preserving the terraces not for the sake of the people who needed it for survival but for tourists' leisure and enjoyment. This led me to think about how to make tourism practitioners become more concerned about the people living in the sites that they are promoting and to come up with strategies that are more people-centered. I then proposed that the ITC technical staff go around the villages and find out the actual living conditions of the people living in villages which were being promoted as tourism sites. And that was when I realized that majority continued tilling their farms, making do with eroded farms and dried up rice ponds because of lack of water and that the women were doing all the work in the farm. Asked why the men did not fix the dikes, they said that "it was hard and laborious work and the effort spent for it is not worth the rice that the ricefield produced." They earned more money and thus could buy more food if they worked outside. Yet, if someone could help them in terms of resource materials like stones and food, they would be willing to work for free.

The sight of the deteriorating and abandoned terraces, the plight of women, the insufficient food production and parents needing money to educate their children haunted me to no end, which led me to give my recommendations after our consultations with the Ifugao farmers whose villages were being promoted for tourism. My primary recommendation to the then DOT Secretary Eduardo Pilapil who was also the chair of the ITC was for the DOT to look into the situation of the rice terrace farmers and to allocate money to subsidize them or to collect entrance fees before entering the villages, so the men will go back and help the women maintain the

terraces. And later when I was unjustly terminated, to write an article about "Saving the Terraces . . ." and finally to do my thesis about it, together with my friend from the UP Asian Institute of Tourism, in the hope of conscientising the UP-AIT to reconceptualize tourism and pioneer in developing courses and training modules on tourism development planning that are gender responsive and sensitive to people's cultures and rights to self-determination.

I guess this is the only way I can help now. Nothing that surfaced in the narratives is new to me. I have lived it and seen it, and have tried to do something about it, in whatever way I can. I cannot go back to work in the ricefields, since my father, an Ifugao, was the youngest and inherited just one ricefield. We are eight siblings and when my father died, the clan composed of my mother and all my father's relatives (my mother is an Ilocano and thus only a few of her relatives were present) consensually decided to hand it down to the most deserving —my younger brother who had the most children and the least income among all of us. While the usual practice is to hand it down to the eldest, it was during this time that I realized that Ifugao customary law is flexible and can adapt to the times without compromising socially just and democratic processes which remains embedded in their consciousness.

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