

## The Festivals of the Historic City of Vigan

*Richel Royce T. Chan, Ph.D.*

Instructor, College of Business  
Administration and Accountancy  
Head, Culture and Arts Program  
University of Northern Philippines, Vigan  
City, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

### ABSTRACT

*The study mainly sought to trace the development of the festivals in the City of Vigan through its historical background, relevance of the festivals, the dimensional features, the promotional programs and the problems and concerns encountered by the city government of Vigan in the conduct of the festivals. Historical method of research was utilized. Results revealed that the festivals in the city are the following: the Vigan City Fiesta highlights the well-renowned product of the Bigueños which is the Vigan Longganisa as well as the divine intervention of Saint Paul as patron saint and the rebirth of Vigan into city; the Viva Vigan Binatbatan Festival of the Arts wherein this is commemorated under the burning heat of the sun during summer season; the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival, through this event, a deep sense of patriotism are cultivated to everyone's consciousness to continually shield the beauty of Vigan's historical remnants; and the Raniag Twilight Festival emphasized the concept of reminiscing the memories of their deceased love ones and to radiate the positivity of staying vibrant and enthusiastic in the middle of woes, pains and struggles. Thus, certain recommendations were articulated to further enhance the organization of the city's festivals*

**Keywords:** festival, history, Vigan, culture, Bigueño.

### INTRODUCTION:

Entrenched within the very core of culture and tradition, fiestas are so loved by the Filipino people. Throughout the entire archipelago, fiestas abound in correlation with the medieval tradition of exalting and venerating a barangay, town, city or province's patron saint. Thanksgiving ceremonies are wholeheartedly offered by the people during these momentous occasions to their respective patron saint whose guidance and protection from both human and natural calamities never ceased during the previous year. Hence, town or city festivities are predominantly religious in nature for the past centuries but has now revolutionized into a more civic commemoration.

A festival is a series of performances of music, plays, films, and movies usually organized in the same place once a year, a series of public events connected with a particular activity or idea (Irshad, 2011) and it is viewed as a means of sharing the history, identity and values of the place and people to others and the younger generations (Luna, 2015) and the most exciting and fastest growing industry related to leisure, business and tourism. (Calopez, et.al 2011).

The development of festivals increases cultural tourism and provides tourist destinations with economic and cultural benefit and offer tourists a glimpses of the uniqueness and diverse cultural experience (Magpantay, et.al, 2014).

Festivals and other events that attract visitors (Light, 1996) compensate for the seasonality of ordinary tourism (Higham & Hinch, 2002), promote a city's image (Roche, 1994), and contribute to the development and sustainability of the urban economy (Bramwell, 1997). Therefore, it is in the best interest of those public, private, and non-profit organizations that wish to promote the image and "brand" of their city to

support special events (Gursoy et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004).

There are many festivals celebrated throughout the world and the Philippines is no exception. Often, a province, town, or municipality celebrates a festival in the Philippines.

The Heritage City of Vigan as capital of the Province of Ilocos Sur celebrates four major festivals each year: The Vigan City fiesta on January 25, the Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts which is celebrated on the first week of May, the celebration of the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival held every September, and the *Raniag* Vigan Twilight Festival on the last week of October.

The uniqueness of the historic City of Vigan could be traced from the significant past. The different events that took place truly changed Vigan's history and the *Bigueños* destiny. As former City Mayor Eva Medina said "the richness of the legacy and the wealth of our culture that our forefathers left shall be enjoyed and valued by this generation and those yet to come." Whatever treasures that Vigan has today and will have in the future, it is all because of its unique and rich roots. Filipinos from the different owners of the land already consider these very festive cultural activities apart and a "must-see" events.

The festivals in Vigan has become one of the city's tourist drawers, along with its century old houses and buildings, historical monuments, churches, landmarks, and beaches. Through the undeniable impact of the local products, the city's tourism industry and economy is continuing to attract more tourists and even investors.

For a lucid view and explanation of this major annual events in Vigan City, the researcher would like to look in to its origin, development, and details of the four prestigious festivals.

Being able to trace the festivals in Vigan City from its origin to its full features will give the practitioners and the academicians, tourists, the *Ilocanos* and the *Bigueños* in particular, and future researchers a complete and compact information about the renowned festivals. Thus, this will also create the unique historic identity and authenticity of the majestic culture and traditions of the *Bigueños*. Finally, the information and data gathered are important historic contribution that will serve as database of facts vital in tracing these activities.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

Generally, this study sought to trace the development of the festivals in the historic City of Vigan. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following:

1. What are the historical background of the festivals in Vigan City in terms of:
  - a. Etymology and creation, and
  - b. Evolution?
2. What are the relevance of the festivals to the City of Vigan?
3. What are the dimensional features of the festivals in Vigan City?
4. What are the promotional programs conducted by the city government to promote the festivals?
5. What are the problems and concerns encountered by the city government of Vigan in the conduct of the festivals?

#### **SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:**

This study sought to trace the historical background of the festivals in terms of the etymology and creation, its evolution, relevance, the dimensional features, promotional programs and the problems and concerns encountered by the city government in the conduct of the festivals.

#### **Theoretical Framework:**

This section presents a review of literature and researches related in the study which will deepen ones understanding with the subject hand.

Etymologically the term festival derives ultimately from the Latin *festum*. But originally Latin had two terms for festive events: *festum*, for "public joy, merriment, revelry." And *feria*, meaning "abstinence from work in honor of the gods. Both terms were used in the plural form, *fasta* and *feriae*, which indicates that at that time festivals lasted for many days and included many events. In classical Latin, the two terms tended to become synonyms, as the two types of events tended to merge (Fallasi, 1987).

The Philippines is a country of many famous festivals. Every province and town of the country has its own cultural activities that all have to know and love.

A festival is an occasion for feasting or celebration, especially a day or time religious significance that recurs at regular intervals. Festival, of many types serves to meet specific needs as well as to province

entertainment. These times of celebration offer a sense of belonging for religious, social or geographical groups. Modern festivals that focus on cultural or ethnic topics seek to inform member of their traditions. In past times, festivals were times when the elderly shared stories and transferred certain knowledge to the next generation. Historic feasts often provided a means for unity among families and for people to find mates. Selected anniversaries have annual festival to commemorate previous significant occurrences. Most festival is either free or very low cost and that is very purposeful so the arts can be accessible to as many people as possible. Festivals also support economic prosperity of the vendors and shops around the festival. (Rosino, et. al., 2013)

American historian John Leddy Phelan claims that the Spaniards had instituted the fiesta in Philippine towns in order to draw the people (who at the time lived in scattered kin group clusters) into one central area, creating a forum for Christianizing the populace. In support of the viewpoint is the colorful and elaborate pageantry associated with the fiesta, which takes various forms (Roces, A and Roces, G., 2013).

### **Fiesta: Kinship Group Convention:**

There is a Philippine fiesta going on somewhere in the archipelago practically throughout the year. Some town fiestas are famous nationwide: *Ati-atihan* in Kalibo, Aklan, the *Pahiyas* of Lucban, Quezon, the fluvial fiesta of Bocaue, Bulacan, the Christmas eve lantern festival in San Fernando, Pampanga, the *Carabao* festival in Gapan and the feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, Manila, to name a few. Town fiestas are usually celebrated during the feasts of the patron saint of the town. In the dim past, some of these fiestas were probably ancient rites associated with prayers for rain and good harvest or for the rivers and seas to yield bountiful fish. Among the *Tagbanwa*, a cultural minority group from the island of Palawan, three-day festivities are held during the clearing of a forest area for planting.

Early catholic missionaries harnessed some of these community practices towards religious ends by introducing Catholic reasons and rites. On the other hand, water-dousing events during fiestas today appear to be linked to Buddhist rites in the past similar to the celebrated Songkran (Thai New Year) celebration in Thailand's Chiang Mai.

Everyone is welcome at a fiesta. There could be one in your neighborhood in the city. A fiesta revolves around the parish church, and could be limited to only a city district (such as the fiesta in Quiapo), just one *barrio*, or it could embrace the whole town. It is usual for a fiesta to last three days. At fiesta time, the entire community participates; in Kalibo's *Ati-atihan*, all the townspeople, from the mayor to the street beggar, spill out into the streets in the thousands to dance in a procession honouring the Holy Child. The tables of practically every house are laden with food and there are all sorts of pubic entertainment and activities (Roces, A and Roces, G., 2013).

### **Facets of the Fiesta:**

A town fiesta builds up several days beforehand. There is usually a *novena* which takes place nine days before the feast day of the town saint. People work to make their homes as presentable as possible, with fresh paint, new curtains or simply well-scrubbed and polished floors and windows. The streets are decorated with bamboo arches and brightly-colored paper buntings. The town plaza is made spic-and-span, and a dance is usually held the night of the fiesta. Entertainment in the form of amusement booths, and pavement stalls selling trinkets, toys and food add noise and color. Carousels, Ferris wheels and sideshows occupy a section of the plaza near the church.

A fiesta is also a homecoming for all those studying or working away from their hometowns, and of course those returning sons and daughters bring friends with them. Everyone in town has labored to prepare food; the pig that has been fattened all year is made ready for the table. *Lechon* (roast pig) is as important a fiesta food as turkey on Thanksgiving Day for Americans, or ham at Christmas for Europeans. Some foods were exclusively fiesta fare in earlier time, like *pastillas* (carabao milk fudge), wrapped in special colored Japanese tissue paper with intricate hand-cut designs for displaying fiesta motifs or messages, and served to guests at the fiesta of San Miguel, Bulacan. The social importance of food to Filipinos is evident at fiesta time.

In a seaside or riverside town, the religious procession which highlights the fiesta will very likely be a fluvial one, with the image carried in a bamboo structure, called *pagoda*, atop a barge. In Angono, Rizal, the fluvial procession is followed by a land procession through the main streets of the town with a lot of water-dousing among participants and onlookers as well. The procession in land-locked towns, on the other hand, usually starts from the church and winds through the main streets in a circular route that leads back to the church. People carrying candles accompany the image of the patron saint which stands on a *carroza*, a special pedestal on wheels.

In Sariaya, Quezon, as soon as the image of the patron saint passes by, children scamper for cookies and other goodies hung on bamboo poles along the street. In Pakil, Laguna, the men and womenfolk perform a curious dance called *turrumba* as they march in procession. In towns where San Isidro Labrador, the patron saint of farmers, is venerated, processions may be composed of gaily decorated bull-carts or, as in Pulilan, Bulacan, of hundreds of massed *carabaos* decked with flowers.

Another traditional fiesta entertainment was a folk play called *moro-moro* or *comedia*, which acted out in poetry and music mythical tales of kings and princesses, and the conflict between Christians and Moors, an ancient theme from Spanish history. Nowadays, this theatrical form is rarely seen except in small towns with a strong tradition; and in its place one is regaled by amateur singers, or a variety show featuring prominent cinema and television personalities.

To be invited to the home of a prominent member of the town at fiesta time is a signal honour. First a ball is organized by the prominent families of the community. This is an occasion for celebrants to be dressed to the nines. By tradition, the *rigodon* dance which opens the ball calls for the participation of the most important members of the community. In this social happening, the less privileged folk are mere spectators, watching outside the enclosed area, the contrast between the two socio-economic classes of Philippine society clearly underscored. Tickets to the ball are sold either to finance the ball itself, for some other activity of the town fiesta, or to support a civil undertaking. There are various spectacular and important fiestas in different parts of the country. Included in some of these rituals are Lenten rites which are not 'celebrations' but pageants commemorating Christ's crucifixion, a Christian period of mourning. Nevertheless, Filipinos are a gregarious lot, and even these events end up with much food and camaraderie, resulting in a fiesta (Roces, A and Roces, G., 2013).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

This section presents the research design, the population, data gathering instrument, and data gathering procedure.

Historical research was employed in this study. Historical research is a method used to trace facts and events regarding the subject matter. Furthermore, the historical approach also gives a fuller view of the past in order to make connection with the present.

The primary data came from the City Planning and Development Office, City Information Office, City Tourism Office, and the City Event Promotions and Protocol Office. Furthermore, reading pamphlets and thorough scrutiny of records from concerned offices are executed. Vivid and intense observation and experiences of the researcher was also used as a source of data.

The researcher asked permissions from concerned officers and individuals. Pictures and videos were taken to prove the existence of the things mentioned by the respondents to who know the history behind the festivals. Specifically, unstructured interviews were also undertaken about the origin and background of the city's festivals, its relevance, promotional programs, dimensional features and the problems and concerns encountered by the city in the conduct of the festivals.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

### **Historical Background:**

#### ***The Vigan City Fiesta***

##### **a. Etymology and Creation:**

Vigan City, capital of Ilocos Sur, retrogressed into a component city on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2001 under Republic Act No. 8988 or "an act validating and recognizing the creation of the City of Vigan by the Royal Decree of September 7, 1757 issued by Fernando VI, King of Spain." It lies on Northern Luzon's west coast part and has a total land area of 28, 86085 square km of which 40% are agricultural domains. Vigan has nine (9) urban and thirty (30) rural barangays.

Indeed, Vigan's rebirth and transfiguration over the previous decades are endowments that every *Bigueño* should be grateful for. This is the very core of its annual celebrations being commemorated every January 22<sup>nd</sup> (the Cityhood day, otherwise known as the "*Longganisa Festival*") and January 25<sup>th</sup> (the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle, the city's patron saint), respectively. Saint Paul's conversion is as well being celebrated on these occasions; hence, thanksgiving ceremonies and divine offerings are done concomitantly.

### **b. Evolution and Description:**

Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January each year, the 7-day fiesta celebration of Vigan City is predominantly characterized by carnivals, parades and the *Longganisa Street* dancing competition which is primarily participated by the different neighboring provinces of the northern region. Melodious and lyrical extravagance and nightly cultural and artistic shows celebrating the anniversary of Vigan's conversion into a city on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and the Feast of St. Paul, the city's Patron Saint on January 25<sup>th</sup> are also included on the list of wonderful happenings.

During these successive events, *Bigueños* across the entire Philippine archipelago as well as across the board return to Vigan to customarily join their families and friends in commemorating the said festivities as this is one unique trait which is deeply rooted from Filipino culture and tradition. Along with these proud *Bigueños* are the thousands of other Filipino people from all around the world which transforms the cultural shows, parades and street dancing prepared by the local government with the help of the local industries and communities even more enticing, remarkable and fun.

Along with other native products like *Empanada* and *Bagnet*, *Longganisa* has been a trademark of Vigan which is internationally well-renowned. Vigan *longganisa*, a native version of Mexican salami or sausage that has a distinct garlicky taste, has become a favorite of both Filipino and foreign palates. What distinguishes Vigan *Longganisa* from all other imitating external manufacturers is that almost all of its ingredients are sourced from the city itself. The city's garlic and sugarcane vinegar are said to be more strongly flavorful, hence it is also a great take-home gift after partaking on the said festivities. In fact, the city once attempted to set a record for having the longest *longganisa* ever made in history. For this reason, the city government has put some other activities during these remarkable occasions and one of which is the *longganisa* cook-fest showdown competition. Setting unforgettable experiences alongside with the street dance contest, *longganisa* cook-fest is becoming a historical facet during these festivities. Different educational institutions as well as hotels and restaurants of Vigan participate to showcase their passion for the arts and cooking.

Furthermore, Vigan *longganisa* was as well recognized as the city's One Town, One Product during the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The *longganisa* was incorporated in the annual city fiesta in 2002 with the longest *longganisa* making challenge and *Longganisa Street* dance competition spearheaded by the former city Mayor, Ferdinand Medina.

*"The longganisa reflects our passion for hard work and our unique ability to endure life's struggle; the longganisa is our lifetime identity as Bigueños and this will make us even prouder of our race."* former Mayor Eva Marie S. Medina once said. Indeed, the festival has been very effective in promoting the authentic Vigan *longganisa*.

### **Relevance:**

Vigan City fiesta or most commonly known as "Vigan *Longganisa* Festival" is a unique and well-celebrated festivity of the said metropolis. It is a combination of two individually distinct yet religiously and culturally relevant occasions which strongly manifest the luxurious heritage of *Bigueños*.

Its relevance to the development of the city and to its people is remarkable because it firmly emphasize the root-traditions of each local. The said festivity highlights the well-renowned product of the *Ilocanos* which is the *longganisa* as well as the divine intervention of St. Paul as their patron saint.

Its occurrence on an annual basis does not only bring joy and excitement to the locals but to all other foreign visitors most across the board. People will always remember Vigan by its food, its beautifully giving people and its timeless festivities.

### **Dimensional Features:**

Antecedent to 2001, Vigan memorialized the annual feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle, its patron saint, every 25<sup>th</sup> of January. When it repossessed its standing as a city on January 22, 2001 by virtue of the plebiscite that corroborated Republic Act 8988, the reason for the thanksgiving celebration became two and are usually arranged and constructed several months earlier with a long line-up of activities to last from the second to third week of the first month of the year. Every day is dedicated to the city's prime concerns such as agriculture, education and sports, and is sponsored by different sectors like the education sector, government sector, Chinese chamber, and many more.

More popularly known as "*Conversion*", the city fiesta is entrenched by Vigan's main church, the Metropolitan Cathedral which is inscribed to Saint Paul the Apostle. This picturesque old architectural building stands at the core of the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia. A novena is usually done nine days before

the feast and ends with a series of Holy Masses on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January. On the day of feast, a well-attended parade commences the celebration with the day's reigning muses in artistic and colorful floats and participants from the sponsors walking alongside. To cap the day-long activities, city folks are treated to cultural presentations of traditional Philippine and Ilocano folk music and dances at night.

Started in 2003, the street dance contest is celebrated every 22<sup>nd</sup> of January to promote the *longganisa*-making industry. Dressed in colorful costumes, participants from various areas of northern region dance blissfully on the main streets of the city. Aside from the dance, there is also cooking contests on the ravishing roads of the city where residents and visitors have are free to indulge on the mouthwatering *longganisa* of Vigan.

Miss Vigan's coronation night that happens on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January is the climax of this specific fiesta. Here, the sponsoring groups attempt to outdo one another with their grand firework displays and the gorgeously crafted gowns of the muses. Although the coronation ceremonies and the ball that follows usually last until dawn, Miss Vigan grand winner is paraded around the *poblacion* (town proper) a few hours later on a splendidly ameliorated float unique to this city's culture and heritage.

Also, a carnival and a flea market are set up just outside the *poblacion* to allure local residents and visitors as early as the last week of December up to the end of January. Activities are replicated on an annual basis but are modified to adapt to varying taste of people and some other standards. Nevertheless, culmination activities during this week-long festivity still ensue. The following are the traditional activities conducted during the week-long celebration of the city fiesta:

*DZNS Night*. The Archdiocese's radio station joins, welcomes and opens the week-long fiesta celebration.

*Education Day*. This is subsidized by public and private schools of Vigan. A foot parade and an academic and cultural contest happens in the morning which is followed by cultural activities the evening thereafter.

*Quiz "V"*. A battle of the brains among government and private institutions; and an inter-school quiz contest at the same time.

*Marching Band Competition*. Participated by private and public high school students in the city.

*Agriculture/Balikatan sa Vigan Day*. A day for Vigan farmers, fishermen, and women kicked off with a parade featuring *kuligligs* (traditional farm vehicle) which are vibrantly decorated with local agricultural and fishery products to compete in the Agri-float competition.

*Vigan Cityhood Day*. Popularly known as the *Vigan Longganisa Festival* (January 22), this event highlights the Vigan *Longganisa* cooking fest with participants from different hotels/restaurants and schools of the said place. They cook recipes using *longganisa* as their primary ingredient. In the afternoon, the *longganisa* street dance troupes fill the streets to the beat of the drums using the music: "*San Pablo, Kamang ti Ili*" as their main musical background. Each group performs their unique dance steps while this native song is being played by large amplifiers.

*Coronation of the Vigan Infantile King and Queen*. After culminating the street dancing at Plaza Burgos, this coronation is highlighted concomitantly. Dancing continues all night as the contingents of *Longganisa Street* dancing competition duel in the main showdown.

*Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Night*. Participated by young leaders of the thirty nine (39) barangays of Vigan.

*Metro Vigan Dancesports and Ballroom/BalikVigan Night*. The Metro Vigan Dancesports club together with the *Balik-Bigueños* dance the night away on this annual Ballroom/*Balik-Vigan* night. This highlights the people who have leaved Vigan as their mother hometown yet found it indispensable to go back and celebrate their unique identity as *Bigueños*.

*Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and ABC/Ms. Vigan Night (January 25)*. The main event begin with the Holy Mass at St. Paul Metropolitan Cathedral officiated by the Parish Priest of Vigan. City Mayor leads the city officials, employees, and other parishioners in thanksgiving and in imploring the blessings of God. This is followed by a typical breakfast of *longganisa* and *lomo-lomo* with *tsokolate* and *torta* which is hosted by the Parish of St. Paul Clergy right after the thanksgiving mass.

*Fiesta Grand Parade*. As soon as this parade is on its way around the *city proper*, the City Mayor and his officials aboard trucks with loads of candies and other sweet childish delights followed successively by numerous municipal sectors to radiate the merriment even better. Among these sectors are the city employees, barangay officials/*tanods*, national/provincial agencies, non-government organizations, schools, the media, business establishments and also the fiesta beauties.

*ABC/Ms. Vigan Night and fireworks display*. Unfolded at the Plaza Burgos in the evening with the *Awards Ceremonies* for the *Bigueño* of the Year, Employee of the Year, Police Officer of the Year, Jail Officer of the Year, Teacher of the Year, NGO of the Year, School in a Garden Award, the Best in Barangay Governance, Young Achievers, Top 10 Business Tax Payers, the Earliest to pay Real Property Tax and the

First to Secure a Business Permit and Ms. Vigan grand coronation.

*Gay Pride Day.* The Gay Pride parade draws local audience along its route. It is a magnificent show of itself. During this event, the LGBTQ community is accorded with the attention and distinction they truly deserve. An opportunity to proclaim their individuality, their dreams and their personal rights are given to them during this momentous event. The cheerfulness of this sector in the community explodes the streets up with happiness, color and brilliance because this day is dedicated for them. A float parade ends in Plaza Burgos followed by a free haircut activity dubbed as “*Alay Gupit*”. This is the sectors gift of service to the community. Other Highlights are the following: 3<sup>rd</sup> world dancesports competition and a traditional showcase of production numbers from the two cities of Ilocos Sur (Vigan and Candon) plus national television artists live performances.

*Non-Government Organization (NGO) Day.* An event for the various non-government organizations in the city.

*AVQ Production Night.* The performing troupe presents an *Ilocano* variety show. It showcases singing, dancing, acting, humor and fashion all at one stage performance. AVQ is a private group which has been cooperating with the city government to promote the *Ilocano* performing arts. It is home to local artists and managed by Mr. Jerome Vaquilar.

Moreover, the following are some of the activities which were also undertaken during city fiesta on various years: Mrs. Vigan/ABC/Cooperative day; DWRS Commando Radio Night; DZVV *Bombo* radio night; NCCA exhibit; Arts exhibit at Café Leona; San Miguel beer night; Solid North dramatic troupe night; Heritage race; Vigan Click and Smile photographers *Foto* contest; Baby wackiest smile *foto* contest; PMA silent drill; Folk dance contest; Battle of the bands; *Ilocandia* singing idol; *Longganisa* challenge (longest *longganisa* prepared, *longganisa* eating contest); Social Services night; *Siglat Ilocandia* variety show; Talents unlimited night; Ilocos Sur inter-denominational churches night; *Lola Diva's* and theatre show of *Follies de Mwah* of Club Mwah during Gay night; *Talentandong Bigueño*; and *Babae ng Digmaan*.

In summation, the city festivity's concept is *longganisa* itself. There is no specific theme for the entire activity. From the time it started, the Vigan Fiesta only had themes for the year 2003, 2011, and 2012 which are as follows: (Rosino, et al., 2013)

2003 – “*Ciudad ti Vigan, Buklenna't Pamilya a Rangtay Panag dur-as*”

2011 – “*Sangapulo a tawen a Panangsingindaan, Dekada ti Pangtimpuyog Pudno Nga Panagserbi*”.

2012 – “*Dangay Sagot ken San Pablo*”

In an effort to augment public understanding of Vigan as a distinctive historic place to be conserved and secured, the city government pursues to spearhead new and unique activities for the city fiesta. Encouraging public response has made this fiesta a yearly activity. Also, community participation has transformed not only around Vigan but also the entire Ilocos Province as evidenced by the wide participation of people on the various activities undertaken. Aspiring cooks and budding as well as distinguished businessmen engage in the cook-fest and food exhibit which both patronize and promote *longganisa* as the “*One Town, One Product*” of the city. Significantly, this event does not only add tourists visit, but becomes an avenue especially to *Bigueños* to strengthen their camaraderie and cooperation as noteworthy citizens of the province and of the Philippines as a whole.

## **Historical Background:**

### ***The Viva Vigan Festival of the Arts:***

#### **a. Etymology and Creation:**

Vigan is accorded by foreign architects and conservation connoisseurs as “A place like no other.” It is the only surviving colonial town in the entire Philippine archipelago.

In 1992, solicitous owners of ancestral houses worked hand-in-hand and structured the Save Vigan Ancestral Homes Association, Inc. (SVAHAI) whose long-term objective is to appropriately rehabilitate Vigan's cultural resource for contemporary uses. In order to attain this goal, SVAHAI embarked on a diplomatic crusade on the historical and cultural values of Vigan's patrimony. The group initiated the 1<sup>st</sup> Viva Vigan Festival of the Arts in May 1993 in an effort to foster public cognizance of Vigan as a one-of-a-kind historic town worthy of preservation. The festival has become one of the most well-renowned cultural events in the north celebrated annually.

### **b. Evolution and Description:**

Sculptured in 1993, this summer festival is goaled to cultivate the pride of *Bigueños* on their unique and historic city. It is one of the grandest and most vibrant allurements in the North drawing crowds from both local and international audiences who come together to celebrate in a setting abounding history, cultural treasures and reminiscence.

The Viva Vigan Festival of the Arts is predetermined not only to provide entertainment to guests but also to bolster pillars on education, culture, cooperation, co-existence and on peaceful relations between among its beautiful people. Visitors are stimulated to squeeze into their six-day Viva Vigan experience for the watching of the *calesa* parade, *ramada* or traditional games, *comedia* or stage drama, Santa Cruzan parade, *abel* fashion show and house decoration, singing contests and beauty pageants and other enticing events like the Amazing Heritage Race. They can also participate in religious activities or visit exhibits, garden shows, as well as trade and food fairs. Indeed, the activities are endless leaving each audience in awe and amazement.

### **Relevance:**

Viva Vigan Festival of the arts is one of the most sought-after events of Vigan City specifically commemorated under the burning heat of the sun during summer season. The said festivity is a conglomeration of artistic and well-planned activities for both local and foreign visitors.

Its relevance to the development of the City and its people is strongly emphasized within the dance movements, the arts and the crafts, and the resilience of each *Bigueño* celebrating joyfully hand-in-hand with each other. The unparalleled preservation of its splendid heritage over the years is something that is worth celebrating. The architectural designs which can be dated back as early as the Spanish regime coupled by the ravishing remnants of ancient natives are the true treasures of this modern era. Hence, in a world where everything is becoming fast-paced and dynamic, a well-grounded efforts of preserving the rich culture and heritage of the past is remarkably challenging yet fulfilling.

For Vigan City, such treasures are imperative to protect. Not only because these mark the uniqueness of the metropolis but because the children of tomorrow are so loved by its people that such richness is deserving to be passed on from generation to generation.

### **Dimensional Features:**

The yearly Viva Vigan Festival of the Arts is an efficient manner of crafting popular consciousness on local heritage and attracting tourists to come and sojourn in Vigan.

Viva Vigan's week-long festivities have both religious and secular significance. It starts on the 1st of May when the entire country celebrates Labor Day and Vigan remembers its own Isabelo de los Reyes who founded the country's first federation of labor. The catholic faithful also remembers on this day St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers. The first day commemoration is consequently followed by the *Binatbatan* Festival celebrations which include a street dancing competition in the afternoon and the showdown competition performed during the night.

*Binatbatan* Street dancing is anchored to Vigan's *abel-iloco* craft. The dance elucidates how cotton pods are beaten with bamboo sticks to release the cotton fluff called *batbat* from its seed. *Binatbatan* is an Ilocano dance depicting the foremost step in the *abel-iloko* weaving process. Commenced in 2002, this festival showcases the traditional weaving craft that is said to predate the Spaniards' arrival. Moreover, this festival aims to push the reawaking of the *abel* (hand woven fabric) as a means of livelihood and as a traditional art especially with the inscription of Vigan as World Heritage Site. Thus, this week-long festivity is popularly known today as "**Viva Vigan Binatbatan Festival of the Arts.**"

The Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts is celebrated from May 1 to 5 or even more to concur with *Tres de Mayo*. The latter festivity is celebrated with the "*Pabitin*" and merry-making activities in almost all corners of *poblacion* (urban barangays) while most of the barangays outside this area commemorates their patron saints' anniversaries which conventionally last for three days. Sports competition like basketball has always been an indispensable facet on all of these happy gatherings.

One of the key commemorations is the Feast of Black Nazarene or the "*Apo Lakay*" on May 3. In 1882, a deadly cholera epidemic ceased only through the intercession of *Apo Lakay*, the Miraculous Black Nazarene. Since the year after, *Bigueños* have been celebrating May 3 as a religious fiesta in honor of *Apo Lakay* enshrined in front of the *Simbaan a Bassit*. Traditional games are played underneath richly decorated *ramadas* erected in various *poblacion* barangays. In the afternoon, devotees join a Holy Procession of *Apo Lakay* that weaves through these *ramadas* while in the evening, *zarzuelas* and other cultural shows are

staged beneath the *ramadas* as well.

One more significant activity within the Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts is the *Karbo* Festival. Derived from the Indonesian term for *Carabao*, Vigan City's *Karbo* is the fusion of *carabao* and *bokel*, an Ilocano term for seeds, which were the main features of the *Karbo* festival. This was first inaugurated in May 1996 in a small village of *Magsaysay, Barangay Tamag*, Vigan City. It was subsequently reintroduced 9 years thereafter as part of the Viva Vigan Festival of the Arts. This activity is conducted to expose and parade the natural bounty of the city's flora and fauna artistically showcased through the seeds of life and the *carabaos'* industrious pageantry. It is also aimed at providing essence to the people behind Vigan's agricultural industry and to their societal contribution. This art showcases the unique spirit of support and cooperation among the stakeholders in community building through the arts. The event has now become a crowd-drawer of the festival because of its unique display of colorful history of Vigan painted through paints and brushes.

Other activities include a parade and contest of artistically decorated *calesas* (horse-drawn carriages) adorned with *burnay*, *abel* cloth and other indigenous products. The *calesa* is emblematic to Vigan. As in the past, about 200 sophisticatedly adorned *calesas* were paraded around the streets of Vigan to celebrate the spirit of this festival.

Furthermore, other part of the festivity is the *abel* design contest. It is conducted to uphold product development and competitiveness in the manufacture of *abel iloco*. It acknowledges loom weavers who demonstrate exceptional ingenuity through their products and accolade their dexterous and noteworthy workmanship. This design contest is as well geared to inspire loom weavers to aggressively pursue product design development and educate the youth as well to the importance of such local products.

Another event is the *abel* house decor which is participated by residents and establishments of the city's historic core. Homes and establishments are fascinatingly decorated with colorful *abel* clothes reliving the spirit of the unique art of *abel iloco* weaving industry. Ordinance No. 06, series of 2005 was in fact promulgated to declare the celebration of the Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts or also as the *Abel Iloko* week.

One more highlight is the so-called *Santa Cruzan*. It is a novena procession commemorating Saint Helena's mythical finding of the cross. Saint Helena was the mother of Constantine the Great. *Santa Cruzan* is among the many processions and probably the most popular one in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Also, Chinese opera is one important event. This is the presentation of a traditional form of Chinese entertainment called "Kao'kak" which has been a yearly act of thanksgiving of the local Filipino-Chinese community. To date, said activity were also performed and showcased during the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival.

Next on the list is the *Comedia* Street dancing which is a traditional form of *Ilocano* stage entertainment consisting of verses and movements revolving around the *moro-moro*. The *moro-moro* depicts the conflict between Christians and Muslims. The *comedia* has been adapted into a choreographed form of street dancing spectacle that is never seen elsewhere in the whole Philippines.

*Letras y Figuras* is another event to watch out for. This displays the craftsmanship and artistry of budding local artists through paint and brush.

Aside from cultural events designed to preserve Vigan's precious heritage, trade fairs and food courts are also set up in the vicinity of Plaza Burgos or at the parking lot of Vigan convention center to further boost the market of conventional iloco products.

Other activities to enumerate are the *Pasagad* dressing painting contest, mosaic art contest, *bangkathon* (*Bangka* which means boat marathon), *rakithon* (*rakit* an Ilocano term for raft), GMA (national television channel) *Kapuso* day, Ilocano cultural show and the World costume festival. As of the year 2017, new activities are added in this festival which includes the regional dance competition (contemporary, hip-hop and dance-sports category) and the regional media art and chorale competition.

In June 2008, the city organized a dance festival production workshop. The workshop's output were the official choreography (unison step) for the *Binatbatan* and *Longganisa* Street dance. This is the continuation of the Festival Management Seminar which aims to develop further the city's system of conducting its festivals.

A detailed scrutiny of yesteryear records were undertaken to enumerate some of the activities of the festival. Dasmariñas (Cavite) Marching Band; DFA Chorale; Philippine Male chorale; dog show; piglet catching contest; Tattoo arts; amazing heritage race; project Venus cultural show by the Cultural Center of the Philippines; disco *sakalye*; beach volleyball tournament at Mindoro beach; cross country mountain bike race; Mocha concert; garden show; *Kislap ng mga Tala* cultural show; beauty pageants; Ilocandia singing

idol; ancestral house and traditional industry tours and exhibits of antique furniture, abel blankets and old photographs; *tsinelas* and *taking party*; the *Mardigras* live concert; *Avante Vigan*, an international conference on the development and conservation of Vigan; the *Tilbury* race, this event is participated by *cocheros* vying for cash prizes and prestige; marching band exhibition; "*riri ken tiri*" zarzuela; *ules* exhibit/craft demo, during the galleon trade era, the Ilocano handwoven *abel* was an important export item which competed successfully with woven textiles of Mexico and Spain. The exhibit showcases a wide variety of antique *abel* blankets that are kept as treasured heirlooms in *bauls*; *Kaw-es iti Kallabes*, this exhibit showcases the clothes and fabrics our grandfathers wore, particularly on special occasions. As costumes reflect the characteristics of the period and the individuality of the wearer, this exhibit is a peck into the ethos of yesterday's Vigan. Complementing the old costume exhibit are antique jewelry such as the *haveras*, *tamborin*, *pienetas* and *alfilleros*; and, *santacruzán* religious imagery, the exhibit features religious images that used to be brought out from private collections during the *Tres de Mayo* Holy Procession;

On this special occasion, the City of Vigan was declared as New 7 Wonder Cities of the World at 3:00am Philippine time on December 8, 2014 and inaugurated last May 7, 2015 by Mr. Bernard Weber, Founder and President of the N7W Foundation in front of the Saint Paul Metropolitan Cathedral.

### **Historical background:**

#### ***The World Heritage Solidarity Cultural Festival:***

##### **a. Etymology and Creation:**

The Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) was established on September 8, 1993 in Fez, Morocco. The headquarters are in Quebec City in Canada. "World Heritage Solidarity Day" was then declared following two more years thereafter. OWHC invites cities from all over the world to commemorate this day in a special day. The OWHC persuades every member city administration to focus on the obligation the city has recognized, to protect and promote its heritage and also on the privilege of having a part of the heritage within its local community.

On December 2, 1999, the historic city of Vigan, then still a municipality, was inscribed in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The historic city of Vigan was inscribed for it symbolizes a unique conglomeration of Asian building design and construction with European colonial architecture and planning. It is an excellently intact and well-preserved example of European trading town in East and East Asia. In addition, it is inscribed in the World Heritage List because it met the Test of Appropriate and Adequate Management.

Vigan City, the only Heritage City in the Philippines, celebrates Solidarity day every 8<sup>th</sup> of September simultaneously with all heritage cities of the world to renew the commitment of heritage conservation. This global celebration of the World Heritage Cities solidarity day is a manifestation of how committed *Bigueños* are in conserving their distinct heritage. The celebration also reflects how dedicated the past and present governance in the city is in protecting such legacy which continues to benefit its people.

##### **b. Evolution and Description:**

From September 1 to 8, World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival features a potpourri of activities which focuses on the *Bigueño* culture and heritage. These include the concelebrated thanksgiving mass; *tagilako ti Yloco* which showcases Ilocano products from region 1 and II; *Comidas de Ayer*- a unique street dining treat of the delectable *Ilocano* cuisine; the *comidas de ayer* offers savory exotic Vigan foods namely *sinanglao*, *papaitan*, *salapusop*, *pipian*, *chicharon* dipped in *dinardaraan* (pork blood), the ever famous *bagnet* and *longganisa*, *miki* (rice noodles), *empanada*, *okoy* and a lot more satiating delicacies to satisfy one's craving appetite. The food fair lasts for a week and is an attraction for both the tourists and locals of the Heritage City.

Other amusement activities are the following: Open house for Vigan museums; Vigan River cruise; *historia oral*- a literary contest where the elderly of Vigan narrate stories of the past to be documented by students through essays; *Fotografias y Recuerdos* (photographs of Vigan's memories)- a photography contest on Vigan's undiscovered sounds and sights; a fun run; the 1<sup>st</sup> *Bigueño* cultural festival (2009); *Repazzo de Vigan*- an interactive street parade of colorful costumes depicting the different era in the history and development of Vigan; a cultural show; *visita museo ken balbalay* (museum and ancestral house visits) which is an inter-active and informative free tour of the famous and historical Vigan houses and museums; inter-barangay family singing contest and cultural show; after the pledge of commitment a practice of releasing the blue, yellow and white balloons followed. The balloons symbolize the city's limitless thrusts

for peace, progress and unity for its people.

**Relevance:**

The World Heritage Solidarity Day is timely and always relevant to the development of the city and its people. Such celebration ignites the fervent feeling of each *Bigueño* to continually work harmoniously with other historical cities around the world in preserving the gems of their respective places. The historical site of Vigan City is a dedicated part of this organization because they truly believe that it is in preserving the past that molds the present and shapes the future.

Vigan City is not alone in this battle cry. Its loving people are always supportive and appreciative of its distinct spectacle and memories. Through this festivity, a deep sense of responsibility and patriotism are cultivated over and over again to inculcate in everyone's consciousness, including that of the future protectors, to continually shield the beauty of Vigan's historical remnants. It is via this manner that people will try to continually uphold the richness of their traditions as well as the uniqueness of their identity.

**Dimensional Features:**

The City Government of Vigan celebrates annually the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival every September. Vigan City joins the entire heritage cities of the world in this celebration. This is an annual tradition of the city celebrating its being a cultural property of the world since December 1999. In this event the *Bigueños* renew their pledge of commitment to heritage conservation.

In the year 2009, the celebration takes a twist with a cultural festival participated in by all Vigan schools both public and private and the 39 barangays clustered into five (5). All clusters contended in cultural events to showcase their talent in dances, music and literary arts like the *historia oral*, *repazzo de vigan*, folk dance competition, *sabayang pagbigkas*, *daniw*, vocal chorus, vocal duet, vocal solo, *kinnantaran*, *dallot*, dancesports, *fotografias y recuerdos* and *zarzuela ilocana* which main objective is to rejuvenate and strengthen cultural activities for the appreciation of local residents and visitors.

The winners are determined through point system. In each category there are earned points for each cluster depending on their rank. In the year 2009 cluster 3 tops the first cultural festival. Furthermore, this event is now known as **Solidarity Cultural Festival**. In here, schools and barangays merge into five clusters and compete through different cultural events such as:

*Historial Oral*. This is a historical-literary contest that taps the young and potential writers of Vigan. Tales and stories of the ancient Vigan are told by the elderly and retold by the young in writing. The winning piece is chosen based on some criteria in presenting Vigan's way of life and culture. The competition in three categories: elementary, high school and college, is Vigan's way of reactivating and reliving the glory of its past through oral and written literature. "This activity is a very significant time in the lives of these pupils because they were able to witness and feel through the stories they heard the great history of their ancestry. The pupils got the chance to travel back and were awakened to the realities that what enjoy now are the priceless inheritance rooted from their great ancestors and that they should nurture and conserve these possessions as *Bigueños*," Former Mayor Eva said.

*Fotografias Y Recuerdos*. This is a photography contest which centered on Vigan's intangible heritage as a subject. Contenders are from the city's public/private elementary and secondary schools, college students and professionals. After capturing, the photographs are displayed at the Vigan Culture and Trade Center.

*Zarzuela Ilocana*. A lyric-dramatic genre that alternates between spoken and sung scene.

*Daniw*. An Ilocano poem interpreted by a senior citizen.

*Vocal Solo*. A formal singing of a tagalog Kundiman.

*Dallot*. A traditional Ilocano pre-wedding, wedding and post-wedding chant. It concerns the old Ilocano practice of the party of a bachelor trying to gain acceptance into the party of a maiden which would result in marriage.

*SabayangPagbigkas*. It is a group oration, where a group of people all speaking or reading at the same time. All cluster are given uniform piece of contest.

*Folkdance competition*. A popular Filipino traditional dance, considered as part of the tradition or custom of a particular people

*Dancesport latin*. The five latin dances are the samba, cha-cha-cha, rumba, pasodoble and jive. With their heritage in latin American (samba, cha-cha-cha, rumba), Hispanic (pasodoble) and American (jive) cultures, they each have their distinguishing traits but coincide in expressiveness, intensity and energy.

*Dancesport standard*. The five modern standard dances are the slow waltz, classical tango, viennese waltz, slow foxtrot and quickstep. Somewhat more formal than their latin counterparts – and not just in terms of

the athletes attire, they are generally dance in a closed-hold position throughout the dance. Relative thereto, the dancesport competition is now part of the Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts.

*Repazzo de Vigan.* The uniqueness and color of Vigan's history is also showcased through the Repazzo de Vigan, an interactive street parade participated by pupils, students and the local community, garbed in colorful and nostalgic costumes. The parade reflected the different periods of Vigan's history from Pre-Spanish era to the present time. Vigan's unparalleled history is wound back depicting its significant metamorphosis, a showdown after the parade will performed by each cluster.

*Kinnantaran.* A man and a woman argue on a certain matter through singing, indicating the pros and cons.

*Vocal duet.* A man and a woman interprets an Ilocano love song

*Vocal chorus.* A mixed chorale ensemble done in a cappella or accompanied with music.

*Puppetry competition.* This is a form of theatre or performance that involves the manipulation of puppets. Puppetry takes many forms but they all share the process of animating inanimate performing objects. Participants should come from the community.

To date, said festivity is a month-long celebration participated by the Filipino-Chinese and Indian community residing in Vigan and those International students enrolled both private and public educational institutions.

Below is the Pledge of Commitment read aloud publicly by the people of Vigan during the Solidarity Day celebration held every September 8.

### **Pledge of Commitment:**

I am proud to be a Bigueño, living in the World Heritage Site of Vigan. I am proud of my hometown Vigan which has given sustenance through the years. I am proud of our local heritage, which provides our symbol and identity, and link to our past. I am proud of our patrimony for it is the basis of our economic development and the key to our future.

In return, I pledge to support and assist in the preservation of our old ancestral houses and historic buildings, in memory of our ancestors who built them. I pledge to play an active role in preserving the values for which my hometown Vigan was inscribed in the World Heritage List.

I pledge that my family, particularly my children, will endeavor to preserve what we have today for the benefit of our children's children. I pledge to pass on to my children, the values and traditions of our ancestors, that have molded our lives and made us survive. And finally, I pledge to assist our leaders in ensuring Vigan is clean, safe and livable. So help me God.

These events aim to reactivate and strengthen cultural activities as well as promote and establish the young generation's role in the conservation of our tangible and intangible heritage.

### **Historical Background:**

#### ***The "Raniag" Twilight Festival:***

##### **a. Etymology and Creation:**

On a simultaneously manner, Halloween, All Saints and All Souls day in Vigan are celebrated every November by remembering departed love ones in prayers, thanking God for the gift of life and imploring His mercy for the living. *Raniag* means light. This symbolizes the light that *Bigueños* offer to the Lord in thanksgiving as well as the beacon that depicts their love for departed kin and the warmth of the bonding renewed in reunions during All Saints day.

##### **b. Evolution and Description:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> *Raniag* festival was held last October 29, 2010 to November 2, 2010 with the following activities being undertaken up to date:

*Dance-fest and Halloween street party.* This is staged at the Vigan Plaza hotel on October. There is a community gathering in the afternoon of October 30 at Plaza Burgos.

*Raniag Street Dancing.* On this event, hip hop groups dons battery- operated illuminations that are danced to the beat of an Ilocano song "*Di Kanton Malipatan*" (I will not forget you) followed by the showdown competition right after.

*Parade of fantasy floats.* This is sponsored and participated by different city government departments with their employees garbed in vibrant costumes.

*Trick and treat.* In here, *Bigueño* children wearing Halloween costumes visited business establishments for playful of sweets such as chocolates and candies on October 31 and internationally acclaimed University of the East Chorale entertained *bigueños* with a night of songs in front of the Archbishop palace before

Mayor Eva Marie S. Medina.

*Lighting of the 252 sky lanterns.* These lanterns are to the skies in gratitude for the 252<sup>nd</sup> year of Vigan as the Seat of the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia and the establishment of Vigan as a city by a royal decree issued by Ferdinand VI on September 7, 1758. Also, these lanterns are signs of gratitude for God's blessings as well as prayers and love for their departed.

*Candle floats.* Candle that are lit are made to drift along the Mestizo River on November 1 signifying the cleansing of the community from misfortune and pessimistic vibrations and as a manner of gratifying God for the bounties from the rivers and the sea.

*Acoustic playing and singing competition* for folk and country singers are also held at Celedonia garden during this event.

### **Relevance:**

*Raniag* Festival is unique in Vigan City. Although there are a lot more similar celebrations across the archipelago during this month, Vigan holds the grandest of all. Lights of various colors and features plus music that are traditional to Ilocano's identity rejuvenate each audience spirit of both thrill and bliss.

This festivity is remarkably relevant to celebrate because it does not only emphasize the concept of reminiscing the memories of their deceased love ones but also to radiate the positivity of staying vibrant and enthusiastic in the middle of woes, pains and struggles. Also, this celebration gathers family from all around the world to be together as one and to enjoy themselves as they give prayers to their lost family members.

### **Dimensional features:**

The week-long *Raniag* Twilight festival activities begin on the last week of October with a candle floater activity held at the Vigan Heritage River Cruise Dock at Beddeng Laud, Vigan City followed by the Acoustic competition at the Celedonia Garden.

The celebration have more exciting events because of the participation of residents and officials from the thirty nine (39) barangays of the city in which they creates their own fantasy floats paraded on the streets of Vigan. The city employees, Non-Government Organizations and the Provincial government also join the colorful float parade and the street dancing competition.

Other highlights and activities of the festival are the following: Halloween and costume party; *Raniag* Electric Street parade; *Raniag* Street Dancing; Free concert at Plaza Burgos; Halloween Concert and Band Presentation; World costume festival; GMA Kapuso Day; cosplay: international students day and lighting and unveiling of the Christmas displays in Vigan City.

### **Promotional Program:**

Vigan remains highly regarded through various programs, projects and activities to maintain its impression as a tourist friendly city. These activities also helped to generate revenue/income from tourism related services, to develop new tourist attractions, and to entice investments. Fortunately, the tourism and trade sector of the city government registered these gains.

The chronicles of Vigan continuously spread to all municipalities and cities of Ilocos Sur including schools, business establishments, banking institutions, hotels and restaurants and all barangays of Vigan. For this reason, there has been an increase of 40% from 600 to 1000 recipients (*Source: Vigan City Fiesta Book 2015*). Press releases are given to the members of the Vigan City Press Corps every Mondays of the week. The press release includes write-ups, schedule of activities, advisories and other important city projects and programs of the week. Text messages and phone calls are also done for instant advisories.

Moreover, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are regularly updated to promote city's activities, schedules and other advisories. The city's account is an immediate feedback platform, photo gallery and autograph site in which more people are readily being reached out locally and internationally. TVigan Channel 9 which is the official network of the City Government of Vigan is also being broadcasted in two major cable networks in Metro Vigan that is able to reach out all Bigueños and Ilocanos in the Ilocandia Region (including nearby towns of Ilocos Norte and La Union). This television station produces a total of nine shows: 1) Vigan Life – lifestyle show, 2) Ciudad Vigan News Patrol – News program, 3) TK2 – Agriculture and Livelihood, 4) K-Vigan – Youth oriented show, 5) Check-up – Health and wellness show, 6) Walay 101 – Vigan Tourism and History, 7) *Pagsapulan, Raniag ti Masakbayan* – Livelihood show, 8) *Sarita ti Aglawlaw* – Talk show, and 9) *Kailokoan* – Ilokano comedy gag show. All are maintained airtime at UPS Channel.

Vigan has also covered and documented the city festivals and activities such as awarding, graduation and turns over ceremonies, national and international conventions held at Vigan Convention Center. Audio-visual presentation of Hotel Luna, National Training for Culture Based Governance and all city festivals including the World Costume Festival were also produced. Along with these was AVP Presentation for the City Mayor in international conferences and exhibits. Finally, 12 additional promotional videos for the city's campaign for new 7 wonder cities of the world and assisted national media during their coverage of city activities were as well covered and documented (*Source: Vigan City Fiesta Book 2015*).

Vigan has also assisted in the staging of City festivals particularly the Longganisa Cookfest showdown, carabao and *boklan* Arts competition, Solidarity Cultural Festival and the *Raniag* Float parade.

A total number of 6,414 coordinated tours with different people's organizations in the country were also conducted (*Source: Vigan City Fiesta Book 2015*). Tourism Development Support Facilities, Participation to national and international food exhibition, Construction of display showroom at Villa Fernandina in Taguig City, and the invitation of the street dancing competition grand winners to perform in Metro Manila were all conducted accordingly.

### **Problems and concerns encountered by the City Government of Vigan:**

Admittedly and as expected, there is the usual traffic congestion in the city's main roads because of domestic and foreign tourist arrival in the city during these festivities. On the other hand, though there is a budget allocated for the festival, the budget is still limited because the whole allocated budget for tourism festival management is distributed to the four major festivals and other cultural events and activities in the city. There is also a need to introduce and create new activities within the festival and make minor improvements of the existing features of the festivals. With too many festivals being conducted in the city there is the difficulty to conduct such activities because of the limited personnel to manage the festivals. A successful festival needs good planning and proper implementation.

### **FINDINGS:**

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in this study.

The historical background of the festivals in Vigan City. For Vigan City Fiesta, a week-long fiesta of Vigan held every third week of January portrays by carnivals, promenades, the *longganisa* street dance competition, melodious and lyrical extravagance and nightly artistic shows celebrating the notable Vigan's revival into a city on January 22 and the Feast of saint Paul the Apostle, the city's patron saint on January 25.

The Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts a summer festivity, crafted in 1993 to cultivate and nurture the pride of *Bigueños* in their unique, meaningful and historic city, is one of the grandest and most colorful attractions in the North, drawing crowds from all over the Philippines and abroad who come to celebrate in a setting replete with history and cultural treasures and reminiscence. A weeklong celebration of Arts Festivities which includes *Binatbatan* Street Dancing, *Calesa* Parade, *Karbo* Festival, Traditional games, Religious Rituals in honor of the Black Nazarene, *Santacruzán*, *Abel* Fashion Show, Exhibits, trade/food fairs and exciting events.

Another festival is the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival wherein this is held the whole month of September, participated by private and public schools, the Chinese and Indian community, international students and the thirty nine barangays clustered into five highlighted by significant and historical events like *Repazzo de Vigan*, *Historia Oral*, *Visita Museo ken Balbalay*, Folk dance competition, *Comidas de Ayer*, *Fotografias Y Recuerdos*, exhibits and cultural shows.

The *Raniag* Twilight Festival. This is celebrated by remembering departed love ones. This is also a means of prayer and thanksgiving to God for the gift of life and imploring His mercy for the living. *Raniag* means light which connotes the light offered to the Lord in thanksgiving, the beacon emblemizes the love for the departed kin and warmth of bonding. The festival features candle floaters activity, sky lanterns, fantasy floats parade and *raniag* electric float competition and *Raniag Street* dancing.

Each festivals has its own significance and relevance to the development of people and to the city. The Vigan City Fiesta highlights the well-renowned product of the *Bigueños* which is the Vigan *Longganisa* as well the divine intervention of Saint Paul as patron saint and the rebirth of Vigan into city.

The Viva Vigan *Binatbatan* Festival of the Arts wherein this festival is commemorated under the burning heat of the sun during summer season. The festivity is emphasized within the dance movements, the arts and the crafts, and the resilience of each *Bigueño* celebrating hand-in-hand with each other. The

unparalleled preservation of its splendid heritage over the years is something worth celebrating. Celebrated during the month of September is the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival. Through this significant event, a deep sense of responsibility and patriotism are cultivated to inculcate in everyone's consciousness, including the future protectors, to continually shield the beauty of Vigan's historical remnants, be it tangible or intangible.

The *Raniag* Twilight Festival does not only emphasize the concept of reminiscing the memories of their deceased love ones but also to radiate the positivity of staying vibrant and enthusiastic in the middle of woes, pains and struggles. Also, this celebration gathers family from all around the world to be together as one and to enjoy themselves as they give prayers to their lost family members.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The city festivals represents a rich and meaningful culture and tradition of Vigan set at different times of the year. These festivals express the blissful and vibrant lifestyle that the Bigueños exemplify and a way to preserve the variegated and grand heritage of the city that are inherited from the past, maintained in the present and bestowed for tomorrow's generation.

The city government of Vigan to continuously promote and make innovations within the activities of the city's festivities. The City Events Promotion and Protocol Office to organize a sing and dance festival workshop and trainings for the community, school trainers and choreographers for the city's system of conducting its festivals. For a greater impact, the City should partnered with national and international agencies in promoting and for improvement of the festivals particularly the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Cultural Festival and the *Raniag* Twilight Festival. Intense planning, implementation and execution of traffic management to solve traffic congestion in the city. With the limited budget allocated, the City government of Vigan to initiate request of sponsorship to private or public agencies to augment incidental expenses in the conduct of these festivities, thus the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Vigan should also give financial assistance to participating schools or barangays. Moreover, the LGU of Vigan should hire additional personnel that are knowledgeable and skillfully ready to handle such culture and arts programs and activities. Finally, all activities, modifications or changes in the conduct of the city's festival should be properly documented and recorded.

### **REFERENCES:**

- Ande M. Luna. (2015). A Festival's Impact: The Case of the Bañamos Festival. *International Refereed Research Journal*. www.researchersworld.com Vol. – VI, Issue – 1, January 2015 [49]
- Bramwell, B. (1997). Strategic planning before and after a mega-event. *Tourism Management*, 18, 167–176.
- Calopez, et al (2011). The Ati-atihan Festival: It's Impact to the Economy and Tourism Industry in Kalibo, Aklan. *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Journal*. Vol. 6. May, 2011. ISSN 20123981.
- Fallasi, A. (1987). *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*. University of New Mexico Press, 1-10.
- Gursoy, D. et. Al. (2004). Perceived impacts of festivals and special events by organizers: an extension and validation. *Tourism Management*, 25, 695-707.
- Higham, J. & Hinch, T. (2002). Tourism, Sport and Seasons: The challenges and potentials of overcoming seasonality in the sport and tourism sectors. *Tourism Management*, 23, 175–185.
- Irshad, H. (2011). Impacts of Community Events and Festivals on Rural Places. *Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development*, June 2011.
- Lee, C.K, Lee, Y.K. & Wicks, B.E. (2004). Segmentation of festival motivation by nationality and satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 25(1), 61-70.
- Light, D. (1996). Characteristics of the audience of event at a heritage site. *Tourism Management*, 17, 183-190.
- Magpantay, et. al. (2014). Socio-Cultural Effects of Festivals in Batangas, Province, Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Sept. 2014.
- Roces, A & Roces G. (2013). *Culture Shock. A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette in the Philippines*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. 2013 Marshall Cavendish International (Asia) Private Limited.
- Roche, M. (1994). Mega-events and urban policy. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21, 1–19.
- Rosino, et al (2013). *The Longganisa Festival in Vigan City: Retraced*. Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis. Divine Word College of Vigan. Vigan City, Ilocos Sur.

----