



From barangay to town: Transformation of San Vicente, Camarines Norte

Agnes N. Ibias, * and Daryl I. Quinito

Graduate School, University of Saint Anthony, Iriga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2026, 19(03), 270-275

Publication history: Received on 22 April 2026; revised on 01 June 2026; accepted on 03 June 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2026.19.3.1237>

Abstract

This study documented and analyzed the transformation of San Vicente, Camarines Norte, from its early formation as Barrio San Antonio and a visita under Talisay into a recognized municipality with distinct political, socio-cultural, and economic identity. The study employed a qualitative historical research design using document analysis, interviews, oral narratives, local records, and field observations. Key informants included local government officials, community elders, long-time residents, and individuals with relevant knowledge of the municipality's history and development. The findings show that the historical transformation of San Vicente was shaped by religious beginnings, community petitions for local autonomy, the development of municipal and parish institutions, infrastructure improvement, strengthened governance, cultural preservation, tourism activity, and livelihood expansion. Politically, the municipality's development was associated with more organized local governance, improved public services, and stronger citizen participation. Socio-culturally, festivals, religious activities, bayanihan, education, and local identity remained central to community life. Economically, the growth of small businesses, agriculture, fisheries, transportation, public services, and tourism contributed to livelihood opportunities and improved quality of life. Based on the findings, an educational and informational material on the transformation of San Vicente was proposed to support local-history preservation, instruction, and community awareness.

Keywords: Barangay; Camarines Norte; Local History; Municipality; San Vicente; Transformation

1. Introduction

Local historical research provides a way of understanding how communities develop their identity, governance, traditions, and economic life over time. In the case of San Vicente, Camarines Norte, the town's transformation from its early barangay origins into a municipality reflects a long process of religious, political, socio-cultural, and economic development.

San Vicente originated as Barrio San Antonio, located southwest of Daet. The manuscript traces its beginnings to 1771 during the expansion of Franciscan missions in the area, its reopening as a mission in 1783 under the jurisdiction of the Parish of Talisay, and its later association with Saint Vincent Ferrer. The local narrative also records the role of religious devotion, the establishment of the visita, and the later development of the parish as important elements in the town's identity.

The historical account further indicates that the principales and naturales of San Vicente and neighboring visitas sought separation from Daet and Talisay. The development of local institutions, the construction and consecration of the stone church, the confirmation of San Vicente as a parish, and the continuing celebration of religious and cultural traditions demonstrate how local history, faith, governance, and community identity became interconnected.

* Corresponding author: Agnes N. Ibias

At present, San Vicente is a fourth-class municipality in Camarines Norte with nine barangays. The Philippine Statistics Authority lists San Vicente with a 2024 POPCEN population of 11,774 and barangays consisting of Asdum, Cabanbanan, Calabagas, Fabrica, Iraya Sur, Man-Ogob, Poblacion District I, Poblacion District II, and San Jose [1,2]. These current demographic and administrative details provide context for understanding the municipality's continuing development.

This study aimed to explore the historical development of San Vicente, Camarines Norte, with particular emphasis on its transformation from barangay to town. Specifically, it examined the historical transformation of San Vicente as a barangay, analyzed the significance of its development in political, socio-cultural, and economic terms, and identified the material that may be developed based on the findings.

2. Materials and Methods

The study employed a qualitative historical research design. This design was appropriate because the study required the systematic documentation, interpretation, and analysis of past events, local narratives, historical documents, and community experiences related to the transformation of San Vicente, Camarines Norte.

The key informants were selected through purposive sampling. They consisted of local government officials, community elders, historians, long-time residents, and other individuals who had direct knowledge of the municipality's political, socio-cultural, and economic development. The selection was based on residence or direct knowledge of San Vicente, familiarity with its historical and developmental changes, and willingness to participate in the study.

Data were gathered through document analysis, semi-structured interviews, a researcher-made questionnaire, observation, and field notes. Historical documents such as municipal records, local archives, ordinances, photographs, and related historical narratives were examined. Interview guides were used to obtain oral accounts from selected participants, while observation and field notes helped document relevant community structures, cultural practices, and historical locations.

The gathered data were analyzed using qualitative chronological analysis, thematic analysis, and content analysis. Chronological analysis was used to organize the historical development of San Vicente. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns in the participants' responses, while content analysis was used to examine documents and textual materials relevant to the study. Ethical safeguards were observed by obtaining informed consent, explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring voluntary participation, and protecting the confidentiality of participants.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Historical transformation of San Vicente, Camarines Norte as a barangay

The findings show that the transformation of San Vicente began with its historical origin as Barrio San Antonio and its later development as a visita associated with Saint Vincent Ferrer. The municipality's early history was shaped by religious expansion, community settlement, local devotion, and the gradual emergence of social and administrative structures.

The local historical narrative identifies 1771 as a significant early point in the formation of Barrio San Antonio and 1783 as the reopening of the mission under the Parish of Talisay. Later developments included the construction of the stone church, the consecration of the church in 1864, and the approval and confirmation of San Vicente as an independent parish in the 1870s. These events indicate that religious institutions and local leadership contributed to the formation of San Vicente's civic and cultural identity.

The transformation of San Vicente from barangay to municipality also reflected the growth of community organization. As roads, schools, churches, public facilities, and local leadership systems improved, the community became more capable of managing its own affairs. The municipality's nine barangays became important administrative units in delivering services, maintaining community organization, and sustaining local culture.

3.2. Significance of the development of San Vicente, Camarines Norte

3.2.1. Political development

Political development in San Vicente was reflected in the strengthening of local leadership, improved public services, infrastructure initiatives, and more organized municipal administration. The findings indicate that the transformation

of San Vicente enabled local officials and residents to participate more directly in governance, development planning, and community programs.

Participants associated political development with better service delivery, improved infrastructure, increased community participation, and stronger coordination between municipal and barangay officials. These findings suggest that the political transformation of San Vicente was not limited to administrative status; it also involved the development of local capacity, leadership accountability, and participatory governance.

Table 1 Significant development of San Vicente along political

Theme	Codes	Frequency	Sample Responses
Increased Business Establishments	Growth of small businesses, opening of stores, and market expansion	8	"More stores and businesses were established in San Vicente, which created livelihoods for the people and encouraged more businesses to invest, increasing opportunities for employment and income, and the political development of San Vicente shows the importance of unity and the active participation of citizens in improving and developing their community."
Development of Infrastructure	Roads, bridges, public market, transportation	7	"The roads and bridges greatly contributed to the improvement of trade and the transportation of people."
Agricultural and Fishery Improvement	Better farming, fishing livelihood, and product distribution	4	"Tourism greatly helped increase the income of the people, especially those who own small businesses."
Expansion of Public Services	Access to services, municipal programs, and community support	5	"More projects and services have been provided by the local government after San Vicente became a municipality."
Tourism	Resorts, tourist attractions, and visitors increase	6	"The number of tourists increased because of the resorts and beautiful tourist attractions in San Vicente."

The table shows the participant-identified themes associated with the political development of San Vicente. Although several entries also relate to economic activity and public services, the responses indicate that local governance became linked with business growth, infrastructure development, agriculture and fishery support, service expansion, and tourism promotion. These themes show that participants viewed political development through its practical effects on community services and livelihood opportunities.

3.2.2. Socio-cultural development

The socio-cultural development of San Vicente was reflected in the preservation of traditions, active religious participation, cultural celebrations, bayanihan, educational opportunities, and the strengthening of local identity. Participants emphasized that modernization did not erase local practices; instead, festivals, church activities, and community celebrations remained important expressions of unity and belonging.

The findings suggest that San Vicente's transformation helped deepen residents' pride in their municipality. Community members described stronger social relationships, greater participation in church and cultural programs, and continued appreciation of the town's history and traditions.

Table 2 Significant development of San Vicente along socio-cultural

Theme	Codes	Frequency	Sample Responses
Preservation of Culture and Traditions	Fiesta celebration, traditional practices, community values, local identity	7	"The traditions were not lost; instead, they were further enriched."
Strengthened Community Unity	Bayanihan, cooperation, participation in community activities	8	"People become more united whenever there are projects and celebrations."
Improvement in Education and Awareness	Access to schools, educational programs, and cultural awareness	6	"The youth were given more opportunities to study and continue appropriate education, which increased the number of professionals."
Growth of Religious and Cultural Activities	Church activities, festivals, cultural programs, and social gatherings	5	"People became more active in church and cultural activities."
Development of Social Relationships and Identity	Sense of belonging, pride in municipality, stronger social interaction	5	"We are now prouder of San Vicente as our own town."

The socio-cultural themes indicate that the transformation of San Vicente was experienced by residents through continuity and enrichment of culture. The responses point to the importance of fiesta celebrations, traditional practices, community values, religious participation, education, and local pride in sustaining the municipality's identity.

3.2.3. Economic development

Economic development in San Vicente was anchored on the transition from a primarily agricultural and fishing-based community toward a more diversified local economy. Participants identified the growth of small businesses, livelihood programs, infrastructure, transportation, employment opportunities, tourism, and public economic support as major indicators of development.

The findings show that improved roads, bridges, transportation networks, and public facilities made travel, trade, and delivery of goods more efficient. Tourism-related activities, including resorts and natural attractions such as Mananap Falls, also generated opportunities for local income, small enterprises, food services, transport, accommodations, and other forms of community-based livelihood.

Table 3 Significant development of San Vicente along economic development

Theme	Codes	Frequency	Sample Responses
Growth of Local Businesses and Livelihood	Small businesses, entrepreneurship, fishing, farming, and market expansion	8	"There are now more job opportunities and small businesses in the town."
Improvement of Infrastructure and Transportation	Roads, bridges, transportation, and public facilities	7	"The roads have become better, making travel and business transactions faster."
Increase in Employment Opportunities	Job creation, local hiring, municipal projects, labor opportunities	6	"There are now more job opportunities compared to before."
Development of Tourism and Local Economy	Resorts, tourist attractions, income generation, and economic activities	5	"More tourists are visiting, which is why people's income has increased."
Improvement in Public Services and Economic Support	Government assistance, livelihood programs, agricultural support, and financial aid	6	"It is now easier to receive assistance and support for livelihood."

The table indicates that participants understood economic development as a combination of livelihood expansion, improved access, employment, tourism, and government support. These results suggest that the transformation of San Vicente contributed to more stable income opportunities and improved access to economic resources for residents.

3.3. Developed material based on the study

Based on the findings, the study proposed the development of educational and informational material about the transformation of San Vicente from barangay to town. The material may include an interview guide, local historical narrative, thematic summary, and community-based reference material for students, teachers, local officials, researchers, and residents.

The developed material is appropriate because the study focuses on local history, oral narratives, community memory, and the political, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions of transformation. It may support the preservation of San Vicente's historical identity and may also serve as a supplementary instructional resource in teaching local history and community development.

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that the transformation of San Vicente, Camarines Norte, from barangay to town was shaped by a combination of historical, religious, political, socio-cultural, and economic developments. Its early formation as Barrio San Antonio, its association with Saint Vincent Ferrer, the growth of parish and municipal institutions, and the continuing participation of residents all contributed to the municipality's distinct identity.

The significance of the municipality's development is evident in stronger local governance, improved public services, preserved cultural and religious traditions, expanded educational awareness, stronger community unity, and broader

livelihood opportunities. Political development supported more organized governance; socio-cultural development preserved identity and unity; and economic development improved livelihood, mobility, tourism, and public support.

The proposed educational and informational material is an appropriate output because it presents the historical transformation of San Vicente in a form that may support historical preservation, classroom instruction, civic awareness, and community appreciation of local heritage.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The researcher expresses heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to those who supported the completion of this study. Sincere thanks are extended to Jose B. Ballesteros, PhD, historical research writing professor, for his guidance and expertise; to Daryl I. Quinito, PhD, thesis adviser, for his continuous guidance and valuable insights; and to the members of the panel, Delia V. Mendoza, PhD, Marilou D. Tino, PhD, and Lisette Ong, PhD, for their recommendations and scholarly feedback. Appreciation is also given to the researcher's family and friends for their moral encouragement and spiritual support; to Marilou D. Tino, PhD, for checking the grammatical aspects of the study; and to all respondents and employees who contributed to the study on From Barangay to Town: Transformation of San Vicente, Camarines Norte. Above all, the researcher gives thanks to Almighty God for strength, wisdom, spiritual enlightenment, and guidance throughout the completion of the research.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

References

- [1] Philippine Statistics Authority. Province of Camarines Norte: Philippine Standard Geographic Code. Quezon City: Philippine Statistics Authority; 2025. <https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/citimuni/0501600000>
- [2] Philippine Statistics Authority. Municipality of San Vicente: Barangays in the municipality of San Vicente. Quezon City: Philippine Statistics Authority; 2025. <https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/barangays/0501609000>
- [3] Cheema GS, Rondinelli DA, editors. Decentralization and development: Policy implementation in developing countries. Beverly Hills (CA): Sage; 1983. ISBN: 9780803919884. https://archive.org/details/decentralization0000unse_e5e8
- [4] Rostow WW. The stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1960. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/stages-of-economic-growth/9CB46055035A1915509CE15A57848A07>. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511625824
- [5] Ostrom E. Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1990. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/governing-the-commons/7AB7AE11BADA84409C34815CC288CD79>. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511807763
- [6] Sen A. Development as freedom. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1999. <https://sen.scholars.harvard.edu/publications/development-freedom>