

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

-Teribe, Teribe, Chibchan Language Family (Chibchan A)

-Other alternative names include the Naso, Norteno, Térraba, Tiribi, and Tirribi

-Quotations from outside sources included below may refer to the Teribe Indians using any of these alternative names.

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

-ISO 639-3

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

-The Teribe society can be located through Panama and Costa Rica. A majority of this group however is located in the Boca del Toro region of Northwest Panama, either within the city Changuinola or along the Teribe River.

1.4 Brief history:

-The Teribe Indians were among initial groups contacted by Spanish explorers. They have managed to keep their native language and monarchical political organization to this day despite contact with missionaries and other peoples through their history. (2) (4)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

-Currently, government pressures of an encroaching hydroelectric dam construction project threatens the Teribe people, culture and land. The project would cause mass flooded areas, which would destroy native farming lands and threaten the balance of surrounding ecosystems. (4)

-“The project would displace people who have lived in the area for more than 500 years, destroy indigenous land and greatly affect local biodiversity...The Costa Rican Electricity Institute (Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad – ICE) approved the Diquís dam (or Diquís Hydroelectric Project), which would create a 27-square-mile lake flooding 10 percent of Térraba-titled land. Because the dam would flood farmland, it would displace much of the tribe, drown or destroy access to sacred sites, and devastate a culture that has independently sustained itself for hundreds of years.” (4)

1.6 Ecology:

-The Teribe Indians are generally surrounded by a mountainous jungle terrain that has in part allowed them to stay removed from the outside world. (3)

-The Teribe-Changuinola Watershed is known for its diverse population of birds, plants, and wildlife. (3)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

-Population size of 3,805 (2)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

-Plantains, yucca, and other root vegetables that are grown by the Teribe. (2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

-They also hunt, fish, and raise chickens, ducks, and turkeys. (2)

-“Teribes practice horticulture (e.g. corn, rice, beans, tubers, fruits), hunting, fishing and raising chicken, ducks, turkey for family consumption. The collection of wild fruits, edible plants and medicinal plants is still very important. (2)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: No data found

2.4 Food storage: No data found

2.5 Sexual division of production: No data found

2.6 Land tenure:

-The Teribe practice subsistence agriculture through large tracts of land supporting the growth of plantains, yucca, citrus fruits, cacao, pifa, and other root vegetables. (2) They also hunt, fish, and raise other sources of protein such as chickens, ducks, and turkeys. (2)

-“They cultivate tracts of land with plantains, yucca, citrus fruits, cacao, pifa (peach palms) and other root vegetables.” (3)

-“Teribes practice horticulture (e.g. corn, rice, beans, tubers, fruits), hunting, fishing and raising chicken, ducks, turkey for family consumption. The collection of wild fruits, edible plants and medicinal plants is still very important. (2)

2.7 Ceramics: No data found

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: No data found

2.9 Food taboos: No data found

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? No data found

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f): No data found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f): No data found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f): No data found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f): No data found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f): No data found

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f): No data found

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f): No data found

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: No data found

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: No data found

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: No data found

4.9 Inheritance patterns: No data found

-There does not seem to be any particular inheritance pattern among the common Teribe Indians. (2) However, the monarchical family may pose a variation to this characteristic.

-“...the inheritance of property is cognate with men and women having equal rights.” (2)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: No data found

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals: No data found

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

-The Teribe practice exogamy because of taboos against close cousin marriages.(2)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? No data found

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) No data found

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)? No data found

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape No data found

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin):

-Cross cousin marriages are prohibited among the Teribe. (2)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms? No data found

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring No data found

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? No data found

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females: No data found

4.22 Evidence for couvades: No data found

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older): No data found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect? No data found

4.24 Joking relationships? No data found

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations: No data found

4.26 Incest avoidance rules: No data found

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? No data found

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? No data found

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

-Marriage is preferred to be exogamous because of a taboo against close cousin marriages. (2)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? No data found

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who: No data found

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: No data found

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death: No data found

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: No data found

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): No data found

4.18 Cannibalism? No data found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: No data found

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality): No data found

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

-The Teribe group functions with a monarchy at its core, still to this day. Both men and woman may hold the king position, however only one woman has been king in the history of the Teribe. If the people are unhappy with their ruler, they are able to vote the ruler out of power in order to be replaced. (3) One source suggested that the origin of monarchy within the Teribe culture was because of contact with the monarchical Spaniards. (2)

-“The Naso reserve the right to switch kings if they become unhappy with him. They can vote him out, but the replacement has to come from the royal family.” (3)

-“The social organization of the Teribes is based on a monarchy, whose origin stems from an attempt by the Teribes to imitate the Spaniards during the colonization...Evidence indicates the existence of 18 kings, among them, a woman: Rufina Santana in 1986. In order to access the throne, the candidate must come from the Santana family and must be recognized by the people.” (2)

5.4 Post marital residence:

-Post marital residences are usually matriarchal. (2)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): No data found

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

-The Teribe Indians hold a woman’s’ status equal to that of a man’s, if not valued more. The women keep the groups’ knowledge alive by passing down information through the generations about all different aspects of life including agriculture and medicinal plant uses. (4)

-“...Térraba consider themselves matriarchal. Women are entirely equal to men, and in some instances valued more. They are the most knowledgeable about the agriculture, medicinal plants, and providing food for their families. Women are the teachers and take their responsibly for passing that information down through the generations seriously.” (4)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships: No data found

5.8 Village and house organization:

-Typical house structures:

-“Traditional Naso homes are generally built on stilts from a type of palm known as jira with roofs thatched with another kind of palm known as palenquilla. Modernization in the area has made wooden planks for walls and floors, and zinc roofs common for newer homes.” (3)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses): No data found

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? No data found

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: No data found

5.12 Trade:

-The Teribe society sustains itself through subsistence agriculture. However, they also produce and sell other items and foods to be traded with the outside world. (2) (3)

-“They also harvest cacao and raise cattle, pigs and goats, which allows cash flow and thus complements their subsistence agriculture. They also weave souvenirs like baskets and hats, which are sold in two major cities, Panama City and David.” (2)

-“Any additional income generally comes from the sale of crops, animals, handicrafts and native lumber. The majority of these goods are transported downriver to the relatively nearby city of Changuinola.” (3)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

-The Teribe monarchy indicates a certain level of social hierarchy. However, I found no evidence of different social stratifications other than being a member of the royal family or not. (3)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: No data found

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

-The Teribe Indians are well known for their knowledge of medicinal plants, even today. They use natural occurring plants to cure or treat many ailments including colds, headaches, body aches, vertigo, cramps, diarrhea, furunculosis, leishmaniasis, and snakebites.” (1)

-“The use of medicinal plants is very common in this group, and the passing of this knowledge is the responsibility of the elders. The most common applications for medicinal plants were in the treatment of colds, headache, body aches, vertigo, cramps, diarrhea, furunculosis, leishmaniasis, and snakebites.” (1)

-NOTE: Many sources scientifically document the Teribe's use of specific plants and their medicinal uses. Reference number 1 and 3 below both focus on this topic if further information is desired.

6.2 Stimulants: No data found

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): No data found

6.4 Other rituals: No data found

6.5 Myths (Creation): No data found

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): No data found

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: No data found

6.8 Missionary effect: No data found

6.9 RCR revival: No data found

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: No data found

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people? No data found

6.12 Is there teknonymy? No data found

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

-The Teribe culture participates in a form of deism in which the Teribe River is thought to be their ‘giver of life and guiding spiritual force’. In this way, they orientate themselves around the Teribe River, both physically and spiritually.

-“The basis of Naso life, both historically and today, is the Teribe River. Although called the Teribe by the Spanish, the original Naso name for the river is Tjër Di. ‘Di’ means ‘water’ and Tjër is the “Grand-Mother”, the giver of life and guiding spiritual force of the Naso ancestors.” (3)

-“The Térraba do not practice a specific religion, but rather consider themselves deeply spiritual people with a connection to Mother Earth and the Térraba River.” (4)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: No data found

7.2 Piercings: No data found

7.3 Haircut: No data found

7.4 Scarification: No data found

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

-“Braided hair and necklaces of beads are also traditional for Naso women and girls.”

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

-Ceremonially, woman often wear their hair braided, beaded necklaces, and colorful dresses with floral designs. (3)

-“Women wear unique dresses, with long puffy blouses and full skirts often in bright colors with small floral patterns.” (3)

-Men's traditional clothing, which is also used in ceremonies, is a simple white, collarless shirt worn over dark pants. (3)

-“The traditional clothing of men is less ornate with a white collarless shirt with $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves and dark trousers.” (3)

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

-Men and women now wear modern clothes on a typical basis. Traditionally, woman wore bright, full-skirted dresses with braided hair and strings of beads around their necks. Men's attire was more subdued and generally consisted of white, collarless shirts and dark pants. (3)

7.8 Missionary effect:

-The Teribe Indians generally wear modern clothes except for ceremonial or cultural events, in which traditional attire is displayed.

(3) See section 7.6 above for specifics of traditional attire.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment: No data found

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: No data found

8.2 Sororate, levirate: No data found

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.): No data found

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

1. Caballero-George, Catherina; Gupta, Mahabir P. A Quarter Century of Pharmacognostic Research on Panamanian Flora: A Review.
2. Medical Ethnobotany of the Teribes of Bocas del Toro, Panama. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 96(3) 15 January 2005: 389–401.
3. Naso History and Culture. Soposo Rainforest Adventures. 2007. http://www.soposo.com/Naso_History_and_Culture.html.
4. Teribe Indigenous Cultural Association. 2013. <http://terraba.org/en/home.html>.