

A SITUATIONER ON THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NEGROS ORIENTAL¹

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THE THREE INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES (ICCs) in this study--the Negritos in Canggohob, Mabinay and the Bukidnons in Tayawan, Bayawan, and in Cabatuanan, Basay--do not live in isolation from other cultural groups in their respective settlements. This is so because through the years, more and more lowlanders have come to invade the areas traditionally belonging to these ICCs. Records culled from the National Census Office show that as of 1995, out of 700 households in Barangay Tayawan, 666 (95.14%) are Cebuanos while only 34 or a mere 4.85% are Bukidnons. The figures presented in the census have not substantially changed when this particular study was conducted in July to November of 1996. This lopsided ratio is also reflected in the two other study sites: Cabatuanan has 98 (74.24%) Cebuano and Capizeño and 34 (25.75%) Bukidnon household population while Canggohob has 182 (79.82%) Cebuano as against only 46 (20.17%) Negrito households.

Still these figures do not reflect the fact that a few of the so-called indigenous households are actually just "half-indigenous" in that only one of the spouses is an authentic member of the recognized indigenous cultural communities. Alarmingly, these dwindling indigenous household numbers seem to indicate that the Negrito and Bukidnon cultures in Negros Oriental are doomed to extinction if integration, acculturation, and other contributory factors are allowed to run their natural courses.

Nonetheless, these relatively small numbers have enabled the research team to get more than half of the total Bukidnon household

¹ The data in this paper have been culled from the results of the baseline survey using a set of questionnaires and conducted through structured interviews during the period July to November 1996 by the Silliman University-DENR Task Force on Ancestral Domains. We wish to thank the three indigenous cultural communities, through their respective tribal associations, for permission to publish these data.

population and practically all of that of the Negritos as sample size, enough numbers to come up with a definitive profile of the indigenous peoples (IPs) in Negros Oriental today (see Tables 1-2).

Table 1: Data On Indigenous People's (IPs) Households Surveyed and Not-Surveyed Per Research Area

No. of Respondents	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggojob (Mabinay)
Interviewed IP Household within the community	23	22	43
Not Interviewed IP Household within the community	11	12	3
Total No. of IP Households in the community	34	34	46

In addition, some indigenous peoples outside of the identified ICCs have also been interviewed since it was established that "they are descendants of the original inhabitants of the specific lands they relate to, although [they] will not now be living on their original land" (Calvert & Calvert 1996: 246). But these "indigenous outsiders" have relocated in neighboring barangays and thus are still near their original cultural communities.

Table 2: Breakdown of Respondents per Research Area

No. of Respondents	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggojob (Mabinay)
Interviewed			
Residents	23	22	43
Non-Residents*	17	21	8
Total No. of Respondents	40	43	51

* Refer to a Bukidnon or a Negrito living outside the Research Areas

The data in Table 3 below show that all the three ICCs are relatively young communities since the general age range is 1-40. If this

fact is seen in light of the earlier observation that the Negritos and Bukidnons are diminishing in number and may soon go the way of other vanished cultural groups, such information is positive in that it at least gives an assurance of the continuation of the indigenous lineage.

Table 3: Age Bracket of Indigenous Household Members

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)		Cabatuanan (Basay)		Canggojob (Mabinay)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Less than 1 year old	4	2	2	2	1	2
1 - 4	11	17	20	15	13	12
5 - 9	15	11	18	15	8	23
10 - 14	17	15	18	23	20	2
15 - 19	16	17	17	15	11	20
20 - 24	19	13	13	19	16	19
25 - 29	13	13	15	15	10	21
30 - 34	12	9	11	11	12	9
35 - 39	12	12	4	13	6	5
40 - 44	8		9	7	3	5
45 - 49	4	3	3	4	5	2
50 - 54	4	7	11	2	2	2
55 - 59	4	2	3	1	7	4
60 - 64	3	4	2	2	2	1
65 - 69	5		5	3	1	2
70 - 74	1	1			7	5
80 - 85	1	1				
Not Sure	5		11	8	1	1
Total	154	127	162	155	125	35

Further, this young population indicates that most of the IPs are still dependent on the household heads for their survival since close to one

half of the entire population in this study (385 out of 858) are 19 years old and below. Understandably, then, the burden of responsibility weighs heavily on the household breadwinner who normally has to support an average of 4-8 family members mainly by tilling the land (see Tables 4-5).

Table 4: Occupation Of Respondents Per Research Area

Occupation	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Farming	35	39	49
Housekeeping	5	4	2
Total	40	43	51

Table 5: Number Of Persons In IP Households (Including Respondent) Per Research Area

No. of Persons	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
One	None	None	None
Two	1	1	8
Three	2	2	8
Four	3	5	8
Five	7	3	6
Six	5	6	5
Seven	4	4	4
Eight	6	8	6
Nine	7	5	4
Ten	13	4	1
Eleven	2	1	None
Twelve	1	3	1
Thirteen	1	None	None
Fourteen	None	1	None
Total	40	43	51

Although there are those who are fortunate to have other members of the household help the heads of families eke out a living or to receive help from nonhousehold members, the extra income does not really help much in alleviating their poverty. This is really not surprising considering that the additional income comes from rendering menial jobs--laborer, househelp, welder, and the like. The same situation holds true to the heads of families who augment their earnings by occasionally working for other people. Thus, predictably, most respondents said that the total earnings of the household members (and assistance received, if any) are not sufficient for the household's needs. Table 6 lists the reasons why the family's total earnings are deemed meager by the respondents:

Table 6: Reasons why earnings are not adequate

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggehob (Mabinay)
Many Children	6	3	
Farm is too small	3		
High cost of commodities	2	9	
Money not enough	5	6	
Very low salary		5	
Lack of fertilizer		3	
No permanent work		5	
Soil is no longer fertile		2	46
Reasons not specified	15		
Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggehob (Mabinay)
Total	31	33	46

It is noteworthy that the Negritos are one in saying that this economic insufficiency is mainly caused by a land that is no longer fertile. On the other hand, around half of the Tayawan Bukidnons also claimed to be financially burdened but, interestingly, did not want to state specific reasons for saying so. This reluctance to discuss one's finances especially to people who are virtually strangers might be attributed to cultural considerations.

The data gathered corroborated by personal observations show that economically the Bukidnons and the Negritos are unquestionably severely underprivileged. This conclusion is reinforced by the information yielded on the IPs' housing and facilities. A typical IP house is a one-room affair that mutely stands as witness to the day-to-day life of all the household members, but is hardly adequate in providing the barest essentials of a proper shelter. An exception, however, are the Cabatuanan IPs who live in the vicinity of the former Construction and Development Corporation of the Philippines (CDCP) Mining Company in houses owned by the company. These houses have usually two or more rooms other than the sala but many of them are in a desperate state of disrepair. Consequently, this situation cannot be made an indication of economic stability. Moreover, these so-called rooms are practically the size of matchboxes barely able to accommodate six people comfortably. Partly for this reason, most houses are devoid of the clutter caused by over-stuffing of furniture that characterizes most Filipino lowland houses today.

Nonetheless, evidence of exposure to either the Cebuano or the Ilonggo ways of life is now becoming quite marked among the Bukidnons in Cabataunan as slowly their houses begin to showcase various amenities of modern living such as plate racks and radios, and in one household, even a wall clock. If one investigates more closely, however, it is not surprising to find that these houses happen to be "half-indigenous" since one of the spouses does not belong to the ICC but most probably a lowlander.

Still, it comes as no surprise that not a single one of the IP houses enjoys electric and water services from the government. Instead, light to these people means a recycled bottle filled with kerosene with a strip of old



Fig. 1: Negrito houses in the hillsides of Canggehob, Mabinay
(photo: Ceres E. Pioquinto • digital imaging: Christian K. Schales)

cloth for wick, known as *moron*, or a burning wood that fuels their improvised stove since most of the houses are so structured that the kitchen is part of the area that also doubles as bedroom, dining room and sala.

But despite being denied basic amenities, life goes on for these indigenous peoples. At this stage, their main concern is not to avail of basic services but instead to look for the most basic of human needs--food. And for them, food is found primarily in the land they farm. Hence, it is not uncommon to find in every Negrito house and most of the Bukidnon abodes the so-called necessities of farm life such as the bolo and the hoe. Yet, the plow which is also important in traditional farming is not found in every house since it is more expensive than the bolo or the hoe. The



Fig. 2: Negrito children in front of their hut
(photo: Ceres E. Pioquinto • digital imaging: Christian K. Schales)

inclusion of the plow in the list of the most coveted possessions of both groups of IPs provides one of the clearest gauges of the indigenous peoples' economic status .

As mentioned earlier, the lives of the Bukidnons and the Negritos are practically tied to the piece of land they till. Interestingly, despite avowals of poverty, a majority of the respondents say they own the land they presently cultivate (see Tables 7 - 9).

Table 7: Do you cultivate a piece of land in this area?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	37	37	49
No	3	3	2
Don't cultivate any piece of land		3	
Total	40	43	51

Table 8 Do you own the land you are cultivating?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	32	31	31
No	5	6	18
Total	37	37	49

Table 9: Size of Land Owned by the Respondents

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Less than 1 has.	2	4	7
1 -2 has.	16	6	12
3 - 4	9	4	16
5 - 6	5	4	14
7 --8	1	3	
9 - 10	2	9	
13 - 14	1		
15 up	1	3	
Can't Estimate		4	
Total	37	37	49

One can thus comprehend why these people have stopped being migratory and have instead grown roots in their respective places. Like their ancestors before them, these IPs have grown crops such as corn and rice primarily for their own consumption; only the surplus yields are sold. Yet, because the entire piece of land is generally not fully cultivated, the income derived from these products remains insignificant. Most of the respondents in Tayawan have pegged their yearly income to be just around P10,000.00 with only two respondents giving a higher estimate of P50,000.00. On the other hand, 13 of these landowners did not give an estimate of the annual earning from their piece of land. An even bigger figure in Cabatuanan--18 out of 37 respondents--also claim their inability to estimate their land's yearly income. Such hesitation to openly discuss one's finances could be read as a culture-bound response engendered by the community attitude towards money as a personal affair. On their part, the Canggehob folks have mentioned seemingly exaggeratedly low amounts for their yearly earnings (amounts cited were between P4,000.00 to P7,000.00) but they could not very well be accused of deliberate undervaluation since the pittance which is passed off as an income just happens to be a stark reality.

The generally poor state of farmlands nowadays does not really give much hope to farmers. It is then not surprising if the people themselves feel uncertain over the ability of their land to still provide for their needs in the near future since the "fatta da land," as Steinbeck memorably put it in *Of Mice and Men*, seems to have evaporated with each passing year leaving not even a trace of grease in the soil today. In spite of this, it is interesting to note (see Table 10) that 18 of the Tayawan group, and 21 of the Cabatuanan group maintain that their land will still yield good harvest in the near future. In this instance, one can say then that the Bukidnons are a more optimistic group than the Negritos. But if one were to consider the data that most Negritos do not own the land they till, such bleak view of the future becomes comprehensible.

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Table 10: Do you think your land will still give you a good harvest in the near future?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggojob (Mabinay)
Yes	18	21	2
No	14	7	46
Not sure	5	9	1
Total	37	37	49

For those who till other people's lands, of course, expect even lesser since they need to share whatever they harvest with the owner of the land. Seen from this perspective, the estimated P1,000.00-P1,500.00/year from more or less a hectare of land ceases to be ridiculous. In the meantime, the family members keep growing which means more mouths to feed from the same land that unfortunately is not growing in size. And with the quality of soil getting more inferior each year, it will be difficult even to imagine that the Negrito situation will drastically improve soon. In a way then, unless these people start looking at the land from a different perspective and not see it as their sole means of survival, their unrelenting cycle of poverty will remain unbroken for generations. This change in perspective, however, still seems a distant possibility if the data in Table 11 below are to be used as basis.

Table 11: Are you willing to convert your farmland into an orchard or to be planted with other trees of economic value?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggojob (Mabinay)
Yes	33	11	7
No	6	27	42
Not Certain	1	2	
It Depends		3	2
Total	40	43	49

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No t Certain	1	2	
It Depends		3	2
Total	40	43	49

As can be gleaned above, an overwhelming majority of the Negrito respondents are not willing to convert their farmlands (or their imagined farmlands for those who do not own a single parcel) into orchards for more commercial viability. Only seven were adventurous enough to answer affirmatively. On the other hand, the Bukidnons in Tayawan exhibit more adaptability to change as evidenced by the 33 out of 40 respondents who registered their willingness to convert their farmlands into orchards. Meanwhile, 27 Cabatuanan Bukidnons share the opinion of the Negrito majority while 11 out of the 43 respondents agree with the view of their kinsmen in Tayawan.

When asked to explain why they were unwilling to convert their land into orchards, most of the Negritos said that the land is their "only source of livelihood" and thus they could not afford to "experiment" with it. This unwillingness to undertake something new or to try something different could also help explain the fact that 35 of the Atas expressed no desire to move out of their places in case they are given an offer by the government to relocate (see Table 12).

Table 12: If promised a titled farmland somewhere and some assistance by both private and government sectors, would you relocate to the area?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggothob (Mabinay)
Yes	30	21	16
No	10	17	35
Not Certain		5	
Total	40	43	51

The foregoing table proves that the Tayawan Bukidnons are consistent, too, in their willingness to gamble on a new life. A greater number of the respondents said that an offer of a titled farmland is enough reason for uprooting hearth and hoe to try to establish somewhere else but a few expressed the same sentiments as the Atas who thought that "*anugon*

mobiya sa yuta" ("It'll be a waste to leave the land") or "*kapuy ug balhin-balhin*" ("moving is tiresome").

Health Profile

Aside from their dreams and aspirations, the physical manifestations of so-called civilization have also gained entry into the IPs' lives. An illustration are the Barangay Health Centers put up in these remote sites. Nonetheless, the information that about half of the Bukidnon respondents and their respective families and practically all of the Negrito respondents and their families have not yet availed of the centers' services is particularly noteworthy (see Table 13).

Table 13: Have you and members of your family ever availed of the services of the Barangay Health Center?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	19	23	4
No	17	18	47
Not Certain	4	2	
Total	40	43	51

But this nonuse of an existing institution could be explained by the fact that many of the respondents consider the health centers' facilities and resources to be woefully inadequate (see Table 14).

Table 14: Would you consider the Barangay Health Center facilities in your area adequate?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	7	13	3
No	14	21	41
No t Certain	19	9	7
Total	40	43	51

In the follow-up interviews done by the research team, both the Bukidnons (or *Tumindoks/Tumandoks*) and the Capizeños in Cabatuanan claim that in the past, some health personnel used to go to their barangay at least twice a month. However, such visits became less often until the residents only got to see the former once a month; then once in two months. The latest news according to one Capizeño mother is that the midwife will now be visiting the area just once every three months. Meantime, nurses and doctors have completely stopped visiting. So the midwife is now the only health personnel still traversing the very badly damaged roads going up their place. How can health centers be serviceable then without personnel? On the other hand, not going to the health centers could be ascribed to the fact that the people usually self-medicated or went to a traditional healer when having fever, cough, colds and diarrhea or other minor illnesses which are the only illnesses these health centers could adequately attend to anyway (see Table 15).

Table 15: What do you do when you or members of your family have minor illnesses?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
See the community indigenous healer	20	18	34
Go to the Barangay Health Center	9	11	2
Go to the hospital	2	4	
Treat family members by oneself	9	10	15
Total	40	43	51

In case of more serious illnesses, the Bukidnons, unlike the Negritos who still keep faith in their community healers, endeavor to bring their sick member to a hospital though this is located quite far from their sitios. When a seriously-ill IP is brought to the Barangay Health Center, this is because it just happens to be nearer than a hospital.

For those who do not avail of hospital services, neither the rootedness to traditional ways nor the distance to a hospital is the overriding reason for this decision, but rather the financial aspect entailed when going to one. Follow-up questions asked during the administration of the questionnaires made this fact evident. Most of the respondents were absolutely terrified of the prospect of not being able to pay hospital bills and thus do not place the hospital on top of their priority list even when faced with a serious illness in the family. As a result, various IP lives have been unnecessarily lost, further decimating the dwindling ICC members in Negros Oriental at present. In such cases, families instead depend on traditional healers, not because their services are absolutely trusted, but because they also have the great merit of being much cheaper than hospitals.

One aspect of health that always generates interesting information from researches is Family Planning. In this particular study when the respondents were asked whether s/he and his/her spouse practice birth control methods to plan their number of children, 33 of the Tayawan group, 36 of the Cabatuanan group, and 50 of the Canggohob group said no (refer to Tables 16-18).

Table 16: Do you and your spouse practice birth control methods?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	7	7	1
No	33	36	50
Total	40	43	51

Table 17: If yes, specify the birth control method used

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Self Control	3		
Pills	1	3	
Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Rhythm	1	4	1
God's Will	1		
Not Specified	1		
Total	7	7	1

Table 18: If no, this is because of

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggehob (Mabinay)
Fear	32	26	24
Old Age	1	1	1
Not being used to it		3	21
Childlessness		3	1
Wanting more children		3	3
Total	33	36	50

This is because most of them are purportedly afraid of something unknown or unfamiliar to them notwithstanding assurances from health personnel. On the other hand, the very few who answered that they do practice birth control methods gave thought-provoking descriptions of the methods they used. Three from Tayawan said they employed "self-control" while one respondent simply said "*Pagbu-ot sa Ginoo*" or God's will.

When a pregnancy results from the "self going out of control" (though not ascertained whose self--husband's or wife's--usually goes out of control in these instances), after nine months a *mananabang* (village midwife) is asked to come help deliver the baby in the couple's home (see Table 19).

Table 19: Where does your wife normally deliver her baby?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggehob (Mabinay)
At home assisted by a traditional healer	40	40	51
At hospital		1	
At home, assisted by husband		1	
No Answer		1	
Total	40	43	51

The choice of home and *mananabang* over a hospital nowadays could not be readily read as an outright conclusion that these IPs are still tradition-bound when it comes to delivering babies. This is dictated more by practicality as already discussed in the preceding portion of this section.

It is then not surprising for the respondents in Cabatuanan and Canggohob to have indicated their preference for indigenous medicine or so-called village treatments over health center and hospital ministrations. On the other hand, the Tayawan group's preference for the latter over the former is also quite consistent with the impression that this group of *Bukis* among the three ICCs have become the most acculturated. In this respect, it may now be just a matter of time for *Medicol* and *Vicks Formula 44* to entirely replace the herbs used by their ancestors as treatment for minor illness such as headaches and coughs (see Table 20).

Table 20: Do you prefer local medicine (village treatment) over hospital or Barangay Health Center treatment?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	6	23	33
No	30	6	18
They are the same		11	
Depends on the illness		1	
Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Never tried		1	
Not Certain	4	1	
Total	40	43	51

Sanitation

As often the case of places located in the hinterlands, sourcing potable water is fast becoming a problem. The *Bukis* in the two study areas primarily depend on open wells for their drinking water while most of the

rest depend on springs. The same is true in the case of the Negritos although the latter depend more on springs rather than on open wells (see Table 21).

Table 21: Source of Drinking Water

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggehob (Mabinay)
Open Well	28	31	18
Stream	2	4	
Jetmatic	2	1	
Spring	8	7	33
Total	40	43	51

Basically, the source of drinking water also serves as source for cooking and kitchen use but water for washing and bathing largely comes from streams especially for the Negritos.

Having gone to the Negrito area often enough, the team has indeed observed the problems on water that is besetting the community at present. The main source of water here is the small river that separates Sitio Macabines--where most of the Negritos are located--from Canggehob Proper. This river supplies the drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing water of most of the IPs in the area. Unfortunately, when the rainy season comes, the river gets swollen and becomes muddy and murky easily. If this happens, the Negritos are left with no choice but to go somewhere much farther for drinking and cooking water, or collect rainwater for the same purpose. As for bathing and washing, the river, murky or not, still serves the purpose despite its health risks to the community. This same river, however, also feeds an artificial lake in the nearby Highland Resort, having been deliberately diverted there by the owners. As a result, only a trickle flow into this river in the dry season forcing the Negritos again to fetch water elsewhere much farther.

It should also be noted here that boiling of water for drinking is not part of the Negrito orientation. This is also true to most of the Cabatuanan *Bukis*. Interestingly, though the Tayawan respondents contend to be aware of the importance of boiling water for drinking, they actually do not practice this in their homes. The data then cannot be used to conclude that the Bukidnons in Tayawan are more conscious of their health than the other two groups in this study.

It is therefore easy to understand why water-borne diseases such as diarrhea and the more serious dysentery are quite common in the three ICCs. Further, the lack of water in Canggohob could also explain partly the generally unkempt appearance of both children and adults there. But for this detail, the Negrito children could otherwise be beautiful and exotic what with their soulful eyes, curly hair and dark skins. Nonetheless, when compared to the Bukidnon children specifically in Cabatuanan with their pale skin and dull-eyed stares, the Negrito children are definitely sprightlier and more vigorous. Their counterparts in Cabatuanan certainly need to eat more nutritious food to match the former's sprightliness and vigor.

Another component of sanitation severely lacking in the three research sites are toilet facilities. All the Canggohob respondents declared that they do not have a designated area used as toilet while a majority in Tayawan and about one half of the respondents in Cabatuanan also have the same situation (see Table 22).

Table 22: What kind of toilet facilities do you use?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Open Pit	4	12	
Closed Pit Antipolo Type	1	1	
Water-sealed	1	9	
No CR	34	21	51
Total	40	43	51

In the survey done, it is quite amusing to note that many respondents considered the open space outside their houses as comfort rooms with even one respondent claiming to have a "5-hectare wide toilet." In these modern times, not having a properly designated comfort room is not only primitive but unimaginable. Yet, this just happens to be still the state of things among the indigenous peoples in this province today.

Cultural Profile

In the course of the field research, the SU Task Force was not able to identify many names of IPs in the research sites who are recognized as keepers of what were once rich traditions. Perhaps the only authentic Bukidnon traditional healers alive today are Salduga Trono and Nayo Aureano of the Cabatuanan Bukidnons. Unfortunately, the two are now very old men with Salduga no longer able to stand and walk on his own. In addition, his voice is barely comprehensible aside from the fact that he is also hard of hearing. Presently, he is still the acknowledged leader of the Cabatuanan tribe and hence the importance of his contribution to this research, but his health is fast deteriorating and so it is now quite impossible to interview him extensively. This is the reason why the researchers were not able to extract any substantial Bukidnon cultural practices from him. Nayo, on the other hand, still occasionally administers his indigenous medicine but he, too, is getting on in age and so younger

members of the group should learn from him now if they would like their tradition to survive.

A few Bukidnons from the same site also said they could still remember a song or two from their elders but when asked to sing a sample of these, they sang songs having either Cebuano or Ilonggo lyrics and not the *Binuki* language and so the origin of these songs are questionable. In terms of knowledge of their traditional songs and dances, the Tayawan group seems to remember more of these than their counterparts in Cabatuanan. In one occasion, the research team witnessed some old Bukidnon dances by some of the Tayawan elders. As well, the Tayawan *Bukis* can boast of having a member who still knows their traditional practice of walking on fire. In an interview, Ramonito Ugad claims to have walked on fire in the past during important celebrations but he rarely, if ever, does the act at present since he is wary of outsiders or ill-wishers who might get jealous of his prowess.

On the other hand, the Negritos in Canggohob like the Tayawan Bukidnons still know a few of their traditional dances like the *kinalaykay* and the *kinalasag*. Most notably, Antonio Baldado and Eugenio Requel showed that they could still dexterously execute these traditional dances if prodded; however, because of nonpractice, they tended to falter in their steps at times. Needless to say, a more intensive documentation of these fast vanishing traditions should be done soon if one wants to preserve what is left of these cultures.

One sign that signals the inevitable process of cultural destruction is the demise of these respective group's dialects. All the respondents consider either Cebuano or Ilonggo as their main language and have all but forgotten their ancestors' native tongue. Although a few words of *Binuki* (Bukidnon dialect) or *Inata* (Negrito dialect) have trickled down to the younger members, no one below 40 years old among the three groups can actually speak their respective languages. Not only are the languages forgotten in the process of integration but also their traditional lifestyles. For instance, the Negritos were once mainly hunter-gatherers but this is no longer true of their descendants today who all consider farming as their main means of survival.

One contributory factor to this cultural destruction could be attributed, ironically, to the IPs desire to adapt to the ways of the dominant culture; in this case, the Cebuano or the Capizeno for socioeconomic and political exigencies. For instance, if one were to scrutinize Table 23, one will realize that an overwhelming majority of the respondents and their spouses have not gone to school at all.

Table 23: Educational Profile of the Household Members

	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggojob (Mabinay)
Children of Respondents who are below 8 years old and have not gone to school yet	73	64	67
Parents (respondents and their spouses) have gone to school	39	7	64
Parents (respondents and their spouses) have not gone to school	40	67	98
Children have gone to school	129	179	31
Total	281	317	260

For those who did, no one went beyond Grade 2 among the Negritos while not a single Bukidnon parent has gone beyond the elementary level. What is then made obvious here is that practically all members who are 30 years old and above are uneducated. In contrast, the younger ones now show better chances of getting higher education since all those who have reached high school are in the 25 and below bracket. Two of the Bukidnons in this age bracket have even gone on to college. Thus, in terms of education, the younger generation will definitely not remain unlettered for long unlike their elders before them (see Table 24).

Table 24: Educational Attainment of Indigenous Household Members

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Below 8 and have not gone to school	49	56	56
Above 8 and have not gone to school	56	61	96
Grade 1	24	26	9
Grade 2	31	30	18
Grade 3	21	39	20
Grade 4	22	37	4
Grade 5	7	20	
Grade 6	23	21	4
First Year High school	4	5	
Second Year	4	4	
Third Year	5	1	
Fourth Year	3	2	
College	1	1	
No Answer	31	14	53
Total	281	317	260

From the perspective of progress, a higher education, of course, means more chances of success. Unfortunately, "getting an education" seems also to be the nemesis of programs aimed at preserving cultures, specifically indigenous cultures, which have many practices that are considered primitive by those who do not understand them. And many of the indigenous youth today happen to be among those who do not understand their ancestors' lifestyles simply because they have not been given the opportunity to do so. When the younger IPs were asked if they were willing to carry on the tradition of their elders, many of them either said "*nahuya kami*" ("we're ashamed") or "*wala kami kahibalo*" ("we don't know anything about it").

Social Profile

The data gathered from the three research areas have yielded practically the same information as far as domestic and community relations are concerned. Almost 100% of the respondents in the three sites claim that they are living in harmony with both their family and their community. This claim is corroborated by the researchers' impression that there is relative peace and order in the three study sites.

On the domestic front, budgeting finances and child discipline lay largely on the shoulders of women. This finding confirms the stereotype role of women at home who are expected to concern themselves mainly with the upbringing of children and the day-to-day activities in the house such as cooking and cleaning. In the meantime, the husbands, being the breadwinners, are expected to worry about where to get the money for their needs. Nonetheless, the couple jointly decides on business ventures and investments, as well as on their children's education. Accordingly, these indigenous couples exhibit traits typical to Filipino parents.

Corollary to the above is the matter on child discipline. When asked whether it was all right to discipline children (taken here to mean the imposition of some kind of punishment on children who misbehave), most respondents said yes, and that they imposed "light to moderate punishments" on the misbehaving or disobedient child. It is a bit disturbing to note, however, that 10 respondents from Canggohob declared that they imposed "heavy" punishment on their children. Unfortunately, what constitutes heavy punishment for them had not been followed up by the group.

To an outsider, this punishment could come in the form of parents making their children stop schooling, if they were allowed to go at all, so they can work long hours in the sun to help fill the perennially empty family coffer. For instance, Rustum Bornea, an intelligent 22-year old Negrito was asked why he only reached grade two when he was obviously interested in going to school. He said that his mother told him to stop schooling after his father died because she needed help in the farm. Rustum happened to be the eldest among his siblings and thus tradition demanded that he had to carry on his father's responsibility. Recently,

Rustum expressed desire to go back to school since with his new awareness of the marginalization of his people, he realizes now more than ever the importance of education. "*Para dili mi pahimuslan ug politico*" ("so that politicians will not take advantage of us"), he declared. When asked what then would become of his family responsibilities if he goes to school, especially now that he is married with one child, he answered that his siblings are old enough to help him in the farm and so this means his task is now lessened. In this regard, though unwittingly, Rustum is helping perpetrate the unfair practice of child labor in his community. And so the cycle goes on.

The above illustration therefore contradicts the respondents overwhelmingly positive response to the query on whether or not they are willing to sacrifice for the sake of their children. Nevertheless, it does complement the data on the harmonious relationship among the family members (see Table 25). One explanation for this seeming contradiction is that these parents do not consider as punishment their asking very young children to help earn for their survival as do most poor parents anywhere.

Table 25: Are you willing to sacrifice for the future of your children?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	39	41	51
No	1	1	
No Answer		1	
Total	40	43	51

The data above further reflects the attitude of the parents towards their obligation to give their children a better future. The overwhelming positive response from the respondents indicates that the parents are still aware of their basic obligations toward their children.

This benevolence towards one's own kin is also extended to the community at large. This is supported by the response given to the query on whether or not the respondents will stop being a member of an

organization if she/he realizes that she/he will not get anything from such involvement. A greater number of the Bukidnons said that they will still continue with their community involvement. The Canggohob group however takes the pragmatic view that if they do not gain anything then they better not get involved at all. Such a stance could perhaps be explained by the "wait-and-see attitude" that this group generally have according to anthropologists (see Table 26).

Table 26: If somebody tells you that your involvement in the community project would not give you and your children a better-future, would you deter from it?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Yes	5	3	46
No	32	32	5
No Answer	3	1	
Don't Know		7	
Total	40	43	51

The generally congenial relationships between and among the ICC members have of late been disturbed on account of the Ancestral Land and Ancestral Domain Claims program of the Philippine government. Relatives and neighbors who used to live peacefully together are starting to become suspicious of each others' motives. This is especially true among the Bukidnons, both in Tayawan and in Cabatuanan. Thus, it would be interesting to observe the reactions of members when the specific area are awarded by the government to each of the three groups will finally be parceled out among themselves.

Because the issue on Certificate on Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC)² and Certificate on Ancestral Land Claims (CALC)³ is presently

²The Certificate on Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC) declares and certifies the claim of each indigenous cultural community over a corresponding territory earlier identified and delineated as ancestral domain. The certification is issued in the name of the indigenous community claimant and placed under the custody of its recognized

causing divisiveness among the IPs, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources (PENR) officials met with the people (the nonindigenous members in the community were also invited to attend) a few times to answer questions and clarify matters pertaining to the abovementioned government programs. Such meetings have, however, not been of much help at all if the data in Table 27 were to be used as a gauge. The figures show that there were still quite a number of respondents who claimed ignorance of the ancestral domain issue. Those who declared knowledge of the subject explained it simply as part of their birthright; "*nga kami ang mosunod sa mga yuta sa among katigulangan*" ("that we will inherit our ancestors' land"). This definition obviously reveals very limited understanding of the subject, and thus the research team thinks that there is still a great need for the IPs to have more in-depth knowledge of the issues concerning the ancestral domain claims so that they will be ready to deal with all the program's legalities.

Table 27: What do you know about "Ancestral Domain Claims?"

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
That we will inherit our ancestors' lands	7	18	49
Owned by the haciendero	2		
To divide among ourselves		1	
The claims of the minorities		1	
No knowledge about it	31	23	2
Total	5	6	18

indigenous socio-political leadership or people's organization (Department Administrative Order No. 02, 1993, Section 1, Article IV).

³Certificate of Ancestral Land Claims (CALC) refers to certificates issued to individuals and indigenous corporate claimants of ancestral lands which are not within recognized ancestral domains (Department Administrative Order No. 02, 1993, Section 2, Article V).

Aspirations

Like everyone else engaged in the business of living, the Bukidnons and the Negritos aspire to have a better life in the future. Specifically, most respondents have indicated that they wished to have a more prosperous life in the next five years (see Tables 28-30) and better than the one they now have.

Table 28: Aspirations of Bukidnons in Tayawan

Aspirations	Frequency
1. To live harmoniously	19
2. To own a piece of land	5
3. To send children to school	4
4. To have good health	4
5. To continue and sustain farming activities	3
6. To engage in business	1
7. To be able to maintain and live in a concrete house	1
8. Cannot say because not certain of the future	3
Total	40

Table 29: Aspirations of Bukidnons in Barangay Cabatuanan

Aspirations	Frequency
1. To improve living condition	28
2. To continue farming and own a carabao	2
3. To send children to school	2
4. To have Peace and Order	5
5. To have Good Health	1
6. To be Employed	2
7. To get rich	1
8. Cannot say because not sure of future	2
Total	43

Table 30: Aspirations of Barangay Canggohob

Aspirations	Frequency
1. To Improve living conditions	24
2. To send children to school	1
3. Can't say because not certain of future	26
Total	51

Although tables 28 to 30 indicate other items in the respondents' wish list, such items actually all boil down to the dream of a better life. For example, five respondents in Tayawan said they wanted to own a piece of land while two in Cabatuanan expressed the desire to send their children to school. In the Philippine context, owning a piece of land is both a status symbol and a sign of security: status symbol because so many Filipinos do not own one considering the price of land today; and a sign of security because land is an asset that is generally believed to appreciate in value, thus acquiring a piece or pieces of land is considered a sound economic move.

Too, sending one's children to school is seen by parents as an economic investment because Filipino culture dictates that children should take care of their parents when the latter are already old. Aside from this, children who have finished schooling and who now have jobs are also expected to help the family either by giving part of their salaries to their parents or by sending their younger siblings to school. Obviously, all the above are just different ways of trying to arrive at the same end; that is, to have a better or more prosperous life. It could then be pointed out here that a harmonious life is actually also translated to mean an economically-stable life. In this regard, the Bukidnons and the Negritos are normal beings in wanting to improve their lot in life.



Fig. 3: Bukidnon mother and child, Cabatuanan, Basay
(photo: Ceres E. Pioquinto • digital imaging: Christian K. Schales)

Be this as it may, these people have not lost faith on their ability to survive and are taking one day at a time which could explain the Negritos' overwhelming choice of their present condition over what they have experienced five years ago. When made to compare the quality of their life between now and five years ago, 49 out of the 51 respondents chose the present to be better (see table 31).

Table 31: If you compare your present living condition with that of the last five years, which is better?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Now	19	14	49
Last five years	4	14	2
The same	10	11	
Not Sure	7	4	
Total	40	43	51

This figure comes as a surprise since as manifested earlier, the Negritos claim that their land is no longer as fertile as in the previous years which resulted in their generally poor farm yields hence the economic burden they are presently experiencing.

The Bukidnons, however, think that there is not much difference between the two periods. Though 19 out of the 40 respondents in Tayawan chose the present over the past five years, this number is neutralized by the 10 who believe that there is really no difference between their life then and now and the seven who are not certain of which answer to give. Meanwhile, the Cabatuanan IPs are also about even in their assessment of the situation. An equal number of respondents (14) chose the present over the past and vice versa while 11 think that their situation now has not really changed from five years ago. When asked the reason for their answers, the Bukidnons opined that their life is "*mao gihapon*" ("still the same").

Comparatively, the figures in Table 32 below which give an assessment of the chances of their life being better five years from now are also about even in showing the Tayawan Bukidnons' choices.

Table 32: If you compare your present living condition with that of the next five years, which do you think would be better?

Response	Tayawan (Bayawan)	Cabatuanan (Basay)	Canggohob (Mabinay)
Now	13	14	46
Five years from now	17	16	5
The same		3	
Can't say because not certain of future	10	10	
Total	40	43	51

Although a bigger number think that their lives would be better in five years' time than what they are presently experiencing, the difference is actually very slight. Some of them maintain that it is not easy to predict the future and so it is difficult to speculate on an answer. On the other hand, the Negritos show firm rootedness in the now for most of the respondents claim that their situation at present is preferable to that five years from now since they believe that their farms will not be that fertile any longer. ❖

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Calvert & Calvert (1996: 48) identify five basic human needs which are universal: (1) clean water; (2) good food; (3) proper sanitation and health facilities; (4) reasonable housing; and (5) education. Although the manner of organizing to meet these needs varies with circumstances, the chilling reality stands that these basic needs remain unmet among a billion people living in poverty in the developing countries. Similarly, it has been widely established that "environmental degradation is increased by

inappropriate development which is a consequence of poverty, and it then in turn increases the poverty from which it arises. It is most painfully experienced by the poorest elements of society which usually include women, children, and indigenous peoples" (Calvert & Calvert 1996: 237).

Amazingly, despite the immense diversity of cultures, contexts, and circumstances, and the great distances that separate them from each other, indigenous peoples all over the world share one thing in common--a deep-seated sense of powerlessness. This malady is succinctly summed up in this description of the indigenous peoples' situation everywhere: "indigenous peoples exist wherever traditional, sustainable lifestyles survive in continued opposition to the encroaching power of the modern, internationalized state" (Calvert & Calvert 1996: 246). In this situation, the daily lives of indigenous peoples are lived in constant battle against greater powers that continually threaten their survival and obliterate the culture which gives them their identity. Dispossessed of their tribal lands and displaced to the hinterlands, indigenous peoples find themselves entangled within the vicious cycle of poverty and environmental exploitation from which they have little hope to come out. As results of the recent research in these communities attest, the lives of the Negritos and the Bukidnons, particularly those in Cabatuanan, provide a concrete case.

To zero in on the local situation, the results of the recent study conducted on the indigenous communities of Negros Oriental by the Silliman University Task Force suggest that we need never look too far for examples of the way in which a group of people suffer because of the deprivation of the basic needs mentioned above. Nor do we need much proof to validate the situation in which "a community survives in continued opposition to the encroaching power of the modern, internationalized state." Putting the usual economic (income, rate of savings, or ownership of property, adequate housing, etc.) and social (life expectancy, access to health care, proportion of children in school, adult literacy rate, etc.) indicators to bear on the results of the baseline survey of the three identified indigenous cultural communities easily locates the Negritos and the Bukidnons at the bottom of the human development index (HDI) as far as the quality of their lives is concerned.

Both Negrito and Bukidnon communities manifest marked forms of poverty and vulnerability. As the baseline survey shows, aspects of material poverty experienced by these places include, among others, undernutrition and malnutrition, ill health, extremely low levels of education, and inadequate shelter. Aggravating these problems is the absence and/or nonfunctioning of supporting institutions or agencies which could provide the much needed assistance. For instance, the survey shows that although there are barangay health centers located in these indigenous communities, few have availed of their services for a variety of reasons, foremost of which are that the health facilities are dismally inadequate and health workers almost nonexistent. This, along with poor nutrition, overwork, and maternity seem to provide the explanation for the high incidence of women's deaths in the community, a speculation suggested by the number of successive marriages that a majority of men have contracted in their lifetime. At this stage, no actual figures are available to indicate the rate of female mortality, nor of its cause, but if these initial speculations have some validity, then this problem has to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Absence of clean water supply exacerbates the problems of health and sanitation and contributes to poor nutrition, too. Again the survey shows that clean running water in the indigenous households is not just a luxury but a rarity few have ever heard of. And not surprisingly since a majority of them, except for Bukidnons living in the vicinity of the former Construction Development Corporation of the Philippines (CDCP) Mining where water is abundant, source their water from rivers or streams several hills away from their houses. This scarcity of water for consumption may account not just for the poor health of many of the indigenous peoples, particularly the Cabatuanan children, but also for the generally unkempt, and untidy appearance of indigenous men, women and children. Basic hygiene practices generally taken for granted in better surroundings are a critical issue in these parts and only a concerted and massive education campaign will improve the situation.

Still, given the scarcity of food in these areas, concerns for hygiene are understandably peripheralized for the more urgent issues of survival. The generally poor state of health of a majority of indigenous peoples,

chiefly children and older people, in these areas points to the woefully low quality of nutrition that is available for everyone. What might constitute a meal is not so much a problem as whether one is able to eat at all. Yet, it has been widely established that poor nutrition lowers the resistance and thereby exacerbates the problem of disease, leading eventually to deaths. Again, the displacement issue is easy to blame for pushing people into marginal lands where they are hardly able to produce anything from their subsistence farming. However, the problem is more complex than it seems. Any policy initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of the indigenous communities must also include equally major initiatives to rehabilitate and care for the environment.

Again, the issue of survival is at the root of the problem of adult illiteracy and the low attendance of children at schools. Although the link between an improved quality of life and the level of education is widely accepted, very few Negritos or Bukidnons see the connection as revealed in the results of the baseline survey. Predictably, education does not figure on the top of their list of aspirations for their children. The dismayingly low literacy rate among adults may have been due to a lack of access to educational opportunities given the absence of economic resources and the distance to the schools. Surprisingly, although the situation has improved with the proliferation of public schools even in the remotest barangay, a low school attendance among indigenous children is perceptibly obvious. That the cycle of ignorance and illiteracy continues among the younger generation is not just an unfounded fear; it is a disturbing reality. An encouraging exception is the initiative shown by the Negritos for an adult literacy program which they themselves have identified as a priority need.

Up to the present, a number of efforts have been tried to solve these problems, but if the solutions remain remote or very slow in coming, often they never reach their beneficiaries. Mainly, this is because these communities, particularly Cabatuanan, are so remote and access to them is only by extremely bad roads; partly, because there is no efficient internal transfer system to act as safety nets to assure that assistance reaches their intended beneficiaries. Usually, the enormity of the problem simply leaves the government overwhelmed and, unprepared with emergency initiatives, is unable to respond quickly enough.

What seems to be the root cause for the dismayingly sordid situation of indigenous peoples? Just as the manifestations of poverty of indigenous peoples everywhere are amazingly the same, so are the root causes of their misery and their aggravating circumstances. Among indigenous peoples in the Philippines in general and the Negritos and the Bukidnons in particular, both external and internal factors have conspired to wreak havoc on the traditional habitat of these people and consequently decimated their culture.

Of the external factors, Bennagen identifies at least five that play a major and direct destructive role in practically all of the traditional territories of indigenous peoples, not least of all those of the Negritos and the Bukidnons. These factors interrelate and reinforce each other in making life for the indigenous peoples a constant struggle for survival. One, the encroachment on tribal lands by migrant settlers whose greater number and political power continue to marginalize the lifestyle of the indigenous peoples. Two, the impact of recent programs for rapid development such as infrastructure projects which often lead to the clearing of large areas and the cutting of trees, and local as well as transnational corporations who show intense interest on resource-rich regions often occupied by indigenous peoples. Three, displacement because of government counter-insurgency campaigns. Four, the continuing prozelytization and evangelization by various religious sects whose own sets of values have marginalized the traditional ways and practices of indigenous peoples and undermined their traditional beliefs particularly those related to protection and biodiversity conservation. A fifth and most important factor is the conflicting views of land ownership held by indigenous peoples and that subscribed to by the state. To the growing indigenous movement around the world, the structure of land ownership is often pointed out as the single, most deeply-rooted and most persistent evil from which emanated all other evils plaguing the indigenous communities everywhere. The question of land ownership is a prevalent motif in the indigenous peoples' assertion of their rights to their ancestral lands (1996: 3).

In the Philippines, this takes the face of the Regalian Doctrine introduced into the country during the Spanish era as part of the colonial

policy but persists ever stronger today with constitutional sanction. As pointed out by Bennagen (1996: 3), this Doctrine specifies that "all lands of the public domain, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum, and other mineral oils, all forces of potential energy, fisheries, forests or timbers, wildlife, flora and fauna, and other natural resources are owned by the State" (*Philippine Constitution*, Section 2, Article XII). It is clear that this Doctrine has been designed to favor the rich and powerful outsiders who have access to political influence and legal means of acquiring lands within the tribal territories from the state. And, more often than not, they have the capability, usually through violence, to displace helpless inhabitants out of their tribal lands. Meanwhile, it has been established that "once the control over the resources is transferred from the indigenous people to the state and corporate interests, exploitation and destruction of the environment inevitably follow" (Fiagoy 1996: 74).

On the other hand, the indigenous peoples maintain a communal concept of land ownership, a view which clearly runs counter to the Regalian Doctrine. Compounding the problem for the indigenous peoples is their ignorance of their rights and of the law which renders them vulnerable to victimization by those who have recourse to legal procedures. This results inevitably to the disenfranchisement of the indigenous peoples and consequently to environmental and cultural destruction for which, unwittingly, they are often blamed for causing. Although indeed there are enough data showing indigenous peoples' role in the destruction of their own environment,⁴ they cannot be blamed entirely for the problem. The problem, however, is more complex than it appears and mainly because of the peculiar nature of land itself. According to Calvert & Calvert, "land is not a homogeneous commodity that can be shared at will... [and] it is not always easy to agree who should get access to land" (Calvert & Calvert

⁴ Bennagen cites a few cases in which the indigenous peoples have been involved in the destruction of their environment, among them: (1) the penetration of commercial vegetable production into Benguet Province which has greatly eroded the biodiversity and indigenous management practices in the area; (2) commercial woodcarving by the Ifugaos has led to overcutting of trees and the deforestation of the rice terraces (Bennagen 1996: 2). Among the indigenous communities of the province, both the Negritos and the Bukidnons have been known to engage in illegal logging practices by allowing and assisting illegal loggers to prey on the forest products in their respective area.

1996: 36-37). Until the introduction of the Certificate on Ancestral Domain Claims (CADC), the state's nonrecognition of the indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral land posed the greatest threat to the biodiversity and cultural diversity of the traditional communities. Among the Negritos and the Bukidnons, such problems are too obvious to mention.

What have been the consequences of these external factors on the quality of life in general and on the traditional culture in particular of the indigenous peoples, prominently the Negritos and the Bukidnons? To be sure a number of effects are plainly evident and far-reaching as the results of the recent research show. One, the tribals are noticeably worse off than the rest of the population. Continued pressures from upland migration in Canggohob, Tayawan, and Cabatuanan by Cebuano and Panay settlers as well as development projects, notably the logging companies, the bankrupt CDCP Mining in Cabatuanan area, and the Tolong Sugar Central, among others, have combined to oust these people from their traditional domains and push them farther up the hinterlands where they eke out a miserable hand-to-mouth existence.

Two, being physically marginalized as a result, they abandon their indigenous knowledge of their resources, and more often than not, given the limited remaining resources, contribute to their exploitation either by their own abuse or by allowing others, for money, to abuse them. This may account for the conspicuous absence of examples of indigenous resource management practices, especially among the Bukidnons. The effect of the change from subsistence system to cash economy is particularly striking among certain members of the Bukidnons as profit-orientation takes hold of their traditional ways and practices. Among the Cabatuanan Bukidnon, this mentality has been observed to lead ultimately to unsustainable practices such as overexploitation of resources, participation in ecologically destructive practices, or simply nonparticipation in government-initiated cooperative efforts on environmental protection and conservation.

It is common knowledge, for instance, that many of these Bukidnons used to participate in illegal logging operations, lured to the scheme by the seemingly quick returns. With the issuance by the government of the Certificate on Ancestral Domains Claims (CADC), the

Tayawan Bukidnons are now talking about mining which seems to them more lucrative and profitable, realizing neither the devastating ecological consequences of this enterprise nor the contradictory implication of this plan in relation to the real spirit of the CADC. Unlike most other indigenous groups in the country who profess a timeless link to the land and manifest a reverence for it as a source of life (Bennagen 1996; Lucas-Fernan 1996; Fiagoy 1996), the Bukidnons see land as a commodity with fixed market value. This attitude exemplifies the extent to which the Bukidnons have become alienated from their traditional culture while at the same time highlights the forces that have caused this alienation.

Three, another consequence of this displacement is cultural marginalization. The indigenous peoples, chiefly the Bukidnons, are forced to abandon their traditional ways and practices as a way of coping with the processes of integration and acculturation in a more dominant social order in which they find themselves at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Among the Negritos and the Bukidnons, the loss of their native dialects and many of the expressive forms that gave them their distinctive cultural identity, is a direct consequence of cultural marginalization.

Interethnic marriages also contribute to the marginalization of traditional lifestyle in a different way. They determine genetically the physiological characteristics and traits of progenies of Bukidnons/non-Bukidnon and Negritos/non-Negritos alliances resulting in the gradual disappearance of distinctive physical features among the mixed-breed offspring. Similarly, indigenous cultures tend to be displaced from the hierarchy of values by new sets of values that come with interethnic marriages by being branded as backward or inferior. This tendency guarantees, if not hastens, the demise of traditional cultural beliefs and practices. Nowhere is this situation more strikingly conspicuous than among the Bukidnons of Cabatuanan whose community has been overrun by migrants from Panay and Capiz since the early 1950s. Many of them exhibit values, traits, attitudes, and mentality so perceptively remote from those described in current literature as distinctively unique to indigenous peoples.

Another contributory factor to the continuing marginalization of indigenous ways and practices is the pervasive influence of mass media and

film which has encroached on the consciousness of these people in a far more insidious way by presenting to them unattainable images of the good life as they are lived in the affluent surroundings of Makati or Hollywood. Apart from the new set of values that are introduced by these culture agents, integration into the world of media and film has left the younger generation of indigenous peoples keenly aware of the disparity between their ideal and their actual circumstances. Not surprisingly, this leads them to want the trappings of modern life and development such as a motorbike, a radio, or a watch. The problem starts when to buy them, they take, or allow others to take, more from the already depleted natural resources than they need. And then the same pattern of poverty and environmental exploitation repeats itself even more relentlessly.

Afterword

The problems mentioned here underscore the complexities underlying programs aimed at preserving traditional cultures. Their professed objective which is the preservation of indigenous peoples with their way of life intact presents the government and other institutions involved with a moral dilemma. Needless to say, the importance of preserving indigenous culture as a way of strengthening community solidarity and identity cannot be overstressed. However, what is no longer debatable is that not all aspects of indigenous culture are good. A paradoxical situation that surfaces from this kind of cultural policy is the way the emphasis on cultural heritage represents an attempt at validating and maintaining the status quo. However, as the indigenous people themselves know, there is nothing remarkable or exemplary about their present situation and any attempt to preserve it leaves little to be desired as far as the quality of their life, or lack of it, is concerned.

Issues such as these raise more questions than offer answers. Questions such as the role of governments and established institutions in the preservation of indigenous cultures. What kind of intervention would be appropriate in recuperating tradition and preserving traditional cultures? What are the motives for doing so, the particular approach to take, and the attitude that must accompany that approach? What are the

effects of the current strategies employed by both GOs and NGOs on the people who are supposed to be their beneficiaries? Indeed, what do these prospective beneficiaries, the indigenous people themselves, think of the whole endeavor? There are no easy answers.❖

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