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FOOD GETTING PRACTICES OF THE LEVUNGANEN MANOBO: A BASIS FOR INTERCULTURAL RESPECT

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Abstract

This study describes the food getting practices of the Levunganen Manobo of Sitio Misulo, Barangay Demapaco, Municipality of Libungan, North Cotabato. The Levunganen Manobo is one of the several branches of the Manobo people who have split into different sub-tribes as a consequence of the people's being nomadic. The study includes data on the food usually served on their table as this could validate the data on the food getting practices.

The food getting practices have changed in many ways because of the changes in the environmental landscape and also due to the fact that they do not anymore own the land that they had considered their homes for several decades already. This is the major finding of the study. The other findings are based on this, such as: the food served on the Manobo table have also changed, owing to the assimilation process going on. They have learned to do menial jobs for the people in lowland Libungan. In returned, they have learned to eat the food items in the market, and use the material things in their stores. Even the medicines are not obtained from nature anymore but usually from the drugstores and the over-the-counter medicines are now sold in small sari-sari stores in the Manobo village in Sitio Misulo, the locale of the study.

The process of assimilation has been taking place naturally, it has been the normal consequence of the proximity between two cultures, that of the Levunganen Manobo and the culture of the lowlanders. The researcher did not notice any observable attempt to force the cultural practices into the people.

However, there are still remnants of the native culture. The adults could still speak the language proficiently although the lingua franca used is a combination of the Cebuano and Ilongo languages.

Based on the observations mentioned above, intercultural respect is still observable. This respect is mutual. Further, mutual appreciation is also perceived in both groups. The lowlanders would buy the agricultural products, even medicinal parts of some plants sold by the Levunganen Manobo and the former would also buy the merchandises from the Ilonggo and the Cebuano.

Keywords: Food Getting Practices, Intercultural Respect, Levunganen Manobo, Libungan North Cotabato

INTRODUCTION

The food on the table manifests several social realities. It can show poverty and which further manifest lack of social justice especially among the indigenous peoples

who are supposedly the rightful owners of the land they till. It can also be an indicator of food getting practices. Further, the different food getting practices could also manifest social and economic status.

Agriculture is the most common food getting strategy. In Central Australia, the aboriginal people depend on the bush food consisting of fruits and seeds, for example of what they call the “*akatyerr* and the acacia seeds. They were once hunting-gathering people and now they have become cultivators with ethical guidance from the Australian government.

They harvest bush fruits and seeds in groups because it is their culture and their life. While some of them remove the calyxes or the stems, the others thresh and winnow. Those picked and produced by the indigenous people are of higher quality than those by the non-aboriginal people (Douglas & Walsh, 2011).

Pastoralism is one food getting practice this is a subsistence strategy depending on herding of animals, particularly sheep goat and cattle and others. However, in some cases, the herder does not own the animals and so they could not make them as regular food on the table. In other cases, they could rely on the animals for secondary food resources such as milk, and probably meat when the owners order them butchered (Lumen Learning, 2017).

Little (2016) says pastoralism is a livelihood pursued by more than 20 Million Africans across about 50 percent of the continents land area. In drier parts of the continent, pastoralists concentrate mainly on camels and goats but in higher rainfall lands, they cattle, sheep, and goats.

In the Americas, there were numerous regional tribes with distinct diets, customs, and languages but many of the foods spread among the regions due to well-organized trade routes. In North America, the main occupation of the indigenous people was farming of staple foods such as squash, corn and beans that may originated from South America. Also, the people have been predominantly hunter-gathers and megafauna eaters including mastodons and giant ground sloths as important part of the diet”. Changes in the climate due to human activity may have resulted in the disappearance of the approximately 60 species of megafauna (www.sk.sagepub.com).

In the Philippines, most indigenous people live in secluded villages and they live apart from the rest of the barangay residents. In the province of North Cotabato, the aboriginal people are the Livunganen Manobo, who were sparsely distributed in some areas of the municipality of Libungan such as Montay, and Sition Misulo of Barangay Demapaco (Alferez, 2016). There is also a sringkling of the people in Barangay Barongis.

Jong (2010) cites Garvan (1927) who describes the food agriculture of the Manobos. He mentioned that the people farmed rice, corn, root crops such as camote, rice, taro, sago, cores of wild palm-trees, maize, tubers and roots (frequent poisonous) in indigenous ways, that is, without the use of farm implements. They were also fishers of fresh water fish in rivers and streams. They would also hunt wild boar, iguana, python, monkey, domestic chicken, wild chicken, birds, frogs, crocodile, edible fungi, edible fern, and bamboo shoots. As condiments, salt, if on hand, and red pepper are always used, but it is not at all exceptional that the latter alone is available.

This study intends to find out the food served on the Levunganen Manobo table and the food getting culture of the people, the changes that took place and the circumstances that led to the changes. This will gather stories and narratives that will give a vivid picture of the processes leading to the phenomenon of social change. Some of the circumstances may or may not manifest intercultural respect.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the Mixed Design, specifically using the Sequential Explanatory method. The survey was done first. The result added to the bases for the questions in the interviews.

Locale of the Study

The data were gathered in Sitio Misulo, Barangay Demapaco, where a group of Levunganen Manobo are settled. The community is situated in a hilly slope under a secondary forest where trees are scanty and bushes and shrubs abound.

The dirt road leading to the community is a one-lane road and if two vehicles happen to meet, one has to stop and give way to the other to pass. There used to be a resort in the community owned by an influential family in the mother barangay and this was why the dirt was improved.

There used to be a resort in the area when the trees still abound the environment. The resort improved the socio-economic condition of the people in the community. They were the ones hired to do some menial jobs.

The resort had a swimming pool surrounded by cottages. Some seven years ago, the swimming pool of the resort had dried up, due to loss of the secondary forest cover, so the resort was closed.

There are around thirty families in the community led by a Timuay. However, governance is still by the Local Government Unit. The Timuay represents the community in the Local Government Council and also reports to the National Commission of the Indigenous Peoples.

Data Gathering Techniques

The survey was done to gather the data on the food or variety of food served during breakfast, lunch and supper. It was also used to gather data on the sources of the food and the food gathering practices of the people.

The interviews sought answers to the questions on the history and origin of the people, where they came from and the circumstances that brought them to where they are

settled now in Libungan. This also gathered responses to the questions on the food getting practices and to the changes in the food getting practices, the consequences and the strategies of coping by the people. The responses are expected to include the loss of their forests which may be a problem they share with other Manobo in Mindanao.

Respondents and Participants of the Study

The respondents of the survey were representatives of the different sectors; men, women, youth and children. The participants for the interviews were selected farmers, and former fisherfolks, the Timuay and other elders, and selected local government officials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Circumstances that brought the Levunganen to Sitio Misulo

The sources of data for this historical account of their settling in sitio where they are now settled.

Table 1.

Circumstances that brought the people to Misulo

Core Ideas	
The Levunganen Manobo came from Aruman, Carmen, North Cotabato. They were in search of a river valley.	<i>Gikan mi sa Aruman, didto sa Carmen ba. Ang istorya sa akong katigulangan, sauna daw, gikan didto sila sa Aruman, namalhin pa daw sila sa daplin sa suba mao tong ang uban sa amo kabalo mangisda.</i> (We came from Aruman, there in Carmen. My old folks told a story that before, they came from Aruman, they transferred to a place near a river, that is why some of us know how to fish). <i>Kining Libungan naa syay suba, didto mi pero nagbalhin pero naghinay-hinay mi ug sibog hasta niabot mi diri sa Misulo</i> (Libungan has a river. We were there but we gradually moved until we reached Misulo). <i>Naa may suba mao to nga daghan namalhin diri. Ang uban naa sa Montay, tua pud sa Barongis. Kami, diri ra</i>

Conflict with others caused the departure.

gyud sa Misulo. Gikan sa Carmen nilatas mi anang kabukiran ug kapatagan (There is a river so we transferred here. Some of us are in Montay and Barongis. We went straight here in Misulo. From Carmen, we crossed that mountains and valleys).

Pag-bot namo diri, wala pay tag-iya diri sa mga yuta. Kami pay tag-iya. Gikan mi sa Aruman, Carmen. Sa bukid pud mi nag-puyo didto. Pero kining among batasan lagi nga kung naa miy makabangi, mohawa dayon. Ang among katigulangan gikan pud sa laing lugar sauna pa nagpu-yo sa Carmen. Daan na silang nangisda ug ug nanguma diri (When we arrived here, there were no owners of this land. We came from Aruman, Carmen. We also lived in the upland there. But we have this behavior that when we encounter conflicts with others, we would opt to leave our place. Our ancestors also came from other places before we lived in Carmen. They used to fish and farm here.)

Naay nakaaway sa among pamilya didto. Nihawa lang mi kay niingon man tong among apohan nga dili lang mi magpuyo kung nay dili makasinabot nga ubang tawo. Mayo nang magpuyo nga linaw (Our family encountered a conflict here. We left because our grandfather said we should not live in a place where we encounter conflict. It is better to live peacefully).

Ako ug akong pamilya niapas diri atong nay gimasaker sa didto sa Carmen. Wa mi labot kay kadaghanan atong gipamatay mga Muslim man, pero nakuyawan mi (My family and I came after our relatives here when there was a massacre in Carmen. We were not involved because most of those killed were Muslims but we were afraid).

A long draught forced the people to leave.

Nihawa akong mga ginikanan sa Aruman atong nay hulaw. Niapas na lang ang ubang mga anak, apo (My parents left Aruman during the long drought. The other children and grandchildren followed).

Kadtong tag-init, wala na mi makaon. Ingon akong mga ginikanan nga maghinay hinay tag hawa aron ta dili mangamatay sa hulaw. Bisan mga kamote ug kamoting kahoy dili motubo. Ang mga mais motubo gamay pero mangalaya

(During the draught, we had no food to eat. My parents said that we gradually move so that we would not all die. Even camote and cassava would not grow. Corn would grow a little but eventually wither).

The data reveal that the Levunganen Manobo came from Aruman, Carmen, North Cotabato. In an interview, a tribal elder said that came they did not all come at the same time and that there were other places in Libungan where the people migrated to; Montay and Barongis.

There were three main reasons why the people moved from Carmen to Libungan. The first was that the people were in search of a more fertile land to till and this was supposedly a river valley. Libungan is a large valley but in the valleys, the lands have been transformed to ricefields. They did not have the skills in wet agriculture. They were forced to go up where dry agriculture could still be practiced.

Jong (2010) says that the name of the group could have come from the word “mansuba”. *Suba* is a Cebuano or Visayan word for “river”, but the word may have also been originally of the Manobo language. “Man” is a prefix that could mean an action of developing a culture along a river. “To produce “a”, the Manobo speakers tend to round their lips so they seem to produce “o” instead.

Another reason for the migration was the conflicts the families had with others in their place of origin. Being nomadic characterized many of the indigenous people before (Jong, 2010). Whenever they find conflicts and they felt that fighting the enemy was a waste of time and efforts, they would opt to leave their place.

The third reason is the long draught that hit Mindanao in the early 70s. The heads of some Manobo family thought that to stay in Carmen would mean they would be part in the contest for food resources which was rapidly dwindling.

No year was mentioned. The year cannot be recalled but the Manili massacre happened in 1971 (<http://www.mindanews.com>). Those who came to Misulo because of the Manili massacre said that when they left Carmen, they were already certain where to go, and this was in Libungan where they said, they have relatives. Those who left because of the long draught, said that this was before the outbreak of the war between the Muslims and the Christians where the armed Ilongos called the Ilaga were involved. Tracing this, we end up with the 1960s (Cerezo, 2012).

Food Items Commonly Served in Manobo Tables

The data on the food items commonly served on Manobo tables at breakfast, lunch and supper are indicative of their food getting practices. In the survey questionnaire, there is a listing of the possible food items served during breakfast, lunch and supper they were asked to indicate the frequency using a scale of 1 to 4 in which 1 is interpreted “very rarely” and 5 as “very frequently”. Table 2 shows the data.

Table 2.

Food Items Commonly Served in Manobo Tables

Food Items	Mean	Interpretation
A. Breakfast		
bread	2.1	Rarely
rice	2.9	Rarely
corn	2.9	Rarely
camote	3.2	Frequently
cassava	2.2	Rarely
cooked banana	2.4	Rarely
yam	1.8	Very rarely
noodles	3.8	Frequently
eggs	3.2	Frequently
meat		
beef	1.0	Very rarely
pork	1.0	Very rarely
goat meat	1.0	Very rarely
fish		
marine fish	2.0	Rarely
fresh water fish	2.2	Rarely
dried fish	4.1	Very frequently
Vegetable		
kangkong	2.1	Rarely
camote tops	3.2	Frequently
malunggay	3.2	Frequently
ferns	1.6	Very rarely
eggplant	2.7	Rarely

beans	2.0	Very rarely
squash	2.0	Very rarely
squash leaves/flowers	1.0	Very rarely
gabi stalk	1.0	Very rarely
cassava leaves	1.4	Very rarely
saluyot	2.9	Rarely
pechay	2.4	Rarely
mushrooms	2.2	Rarely

B. Lunch

rice	3.4	Frequently
corn	2.2	Rarely
camote	2.9	Rarely
cassava	2.3	Rarely
cooked banana	3.2	Frequently
meat		
chicken	2.6	Rarely
beef	1.0	Very rarely
pork	1.0	Very rarely
goat meat	1.0	Very rarely
eggs	3.0	Frequently
noodles	4.2	Very frequently
fish		
salted fish	3.4	Frequently
dried fish	4.2	Frequently
marine fish	2.0	Rarely
fresh water fish	2.4	Rarely

vegetables

kangkong	2.8	Rarely
camote tops	3.4	Frequently
ferns	2.4	Rarely
eggplant	3.1	Frequently
alugbati	3.2	Frequently
malunggay	4.0	Very frequently
squash	3.5	Frequently
squash leaves	1.6	Rarely
gabi stalk	2.0	Rarely
saluyot	2.6	Rarely

B. Supper

rice	3.2	Frequently
corn	3.0	Frequently
camote	2.6	Rarely
cassava	2.6	Rarely
cooked banana	3.2	Frequently

meat

beef	1.0	Very rarely
pork	1.0	Very rarely
goat meat	1.0	Very rarely
chicken	2.6	Rarely

fish

marine fish	2.5	Rarely
fresh water	2.7	Rarely
dried fish	4.0	Very frequently
salted fish	3.0	Frequently

vegetables

kangkong	2.9	Rarely
camote tops	3.6	Frequently

ferns	2.2	Rarely
eggplant	2.6	Rarely
alugbati	2.8	frequently
malunggay	4.0	Very frequently
squash	3.5	Frequently
squash leaves	1.6	Rarely
gabi stalk	2.0	Rarely
saluyot	2.6	Rarely
eggs		Very Frequently
noodles		Very frequently

Among the food served at breakfast, the means are very low. In the interview, one woman said, she and her husband do not really eat full breakfast. They just drink coffee and go to work if there is work to do. Besides, time for the preparation of breakfast is limited. The children may eat rice but usually, only very small amount as they have to leave early for school because they have to walk four kilometers to get there. They bring their *baon* or packed lunch consisting of rice and fish or dried fish. Many times, it would consist of rice and eggs. Only few children are going to school.

Among the food items served during breakfast, the one with the highest mean, 4.1, is dried fish. One of the interviewees explained that it is the most convenient to keep, the easiest to prepare and with costs less. All that the family needs is a basket where to store the dried fish. Also, dried fish that is fried in the morning, if not all consumed, may be mixed with vegetables in the evening. She said that it is evening time when she has more time to prepare for supper, such as cooking vegetables.

For lunch, noodles and malunggay are served very frequently. It was interesting for the researcher to know why and why was rice, which is the staple food, not served very frequently. According to one mother, sometimes, cooked banana was used as substitute. Sometimes when a family has one bunch of banana, the bananas are not cooked in one sitting. The bunch could last for two or three days.

Few mothers revealed that their children prefer to eat noodles, rather than vegetables. They said they strategize by cooking noodles and mixing some vegetables such as malunggay and eggplant. They added that malunggay is abundant because it grows anywhere. Eggplant is also common because it is also easy to grow. Once it bear fruits and harvested, it bears fruits again several times. Alugbati is also easy to grow just like camote tops.

When ask why there were food items that are expected to be served more frequently and yet they are availed very rarely. Camote is served more frequent than rice. In the literatures, the Manobos are said to be tillers of land and planters of crops such as

rice and corn. The interviewees said that camote is easily raised. When it is planted on the ground, there is no need to take care of it. It grows leaves for vegetable and root crops as staple food. Some of them said that in many homes, meals are served only twice.

Coffee would do for some parents in the morning. Sometimes, they give their children bread in the morning and this would be enough for them.

Some farmers said that they cannot work hard because they do not eat nutritious food. Some of them do manual jobs for others in the poblacion and they are paid lowly by the hour.

An elder related that several years before, their area was full of trees and it was easy to grow plants. Now, it seems as though the land has become barren, it cannot regain its humosity, so it is difficult to grow plants even the common vegetables.

Supper is the time when the mothers have time to prepare. But dried fish, noodles, eggs and malunggay are still very frequently served. More vegetables are prepared such as squash, alugbati and camote tops.

The mothers and elders were asked why the people are not eating many of the foods they used to serve on the table. One of the responses is: *Mao man ni pagkaon sa mga Bisaya, Ilonggo ug Ilocano. Bisan mga Muslim mao man pud ni ang gikaon. Sila man among mga silingan. Sa ilang mga tindahan, mao man ni mga baligya. Kanang noodles. Kanang itlog, pinalit pud sa tindahan kay lisod na man magbuhi karon* (These are the foods that the Bisaya, Ilonggo, and Ilocano eat, those noodles, for example. Those eggs, we buy them from the stores because it is now difficult to raise (chickens). These are the items sold in their stores.

The explanation is indicative of becoming one with the neighbor communities. Through this, it could be observed that the interactions resulted to appreciation, if not, borrowing of the cultural practices relevant to food, would not be possible.

Further, the respondent-participants were asked about the reasons for them to interact with others in the neighboring communities. They said that it was necessary for some reasons such as for the education of their children, for their clothes, for earning cash money, and others. Some participants said they work as laborers for some people in the market. Others say they sell their products to them.

Food Getting Practices of the Levunganen Manobo

The main focus of this study is the food getting practices. The data on this were gathered through interviews. Table 3 presents the data.

Table 3.

Food Getting Practices of the Levunganen Manobo

Core Ideas	Significant Statements
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Some of the Levunanen
Manobo do farming

Naga-uma pa mi pero indi na namo yuta ang among gina-uma. Ang uban naay gamay nga mga luna busa daghan ilang produkto kay wala man silay bahinan (We are still farming but we do not own the land anymore. Some of us have small patch of land so they have many products because there is no one that they share their products with).

Usahay magtanom mi ug mais ug mga utan. Ang uban ibaligya namo. Ang uban among konsumo, pero kasagaran, amon ibaligya aron naa mi kwarta (Sometimes we plant corn and vegetables. We sell some of the products so that we could have money. We consume some, buy we sell more so that we could have money).

Magtanim man gyud ang trabaho mula pa sa among katigulangan. Kaniadto, magtanom mi ug mais o kana bang humay, magtalinis mi ug kahoy dayon magbuho mi sa yuta didto namo itanom ang humay o mais. Pero kung tag-init, lisod motubo ang mais o humay, labi na ang humay. Ang mais, kung tag-init ok ra sya basta tugyaw sa gabii. Ang kamoteng kahoy, delikado kung tag-init. Makahilo. Katong wala yuta nga katanuman, magtrabaho na lang didto sa ubos, mangarga usahay, aron lang makakaon (Planting has been our occupation since our ancestors time. We plant corn or palay. We sharpen a piece of

wood and make a hole on the land. We put the grains of corn or palay on the hole. But during draught, the rice and corn will not grow especially rice. It is okay for the corn provided that the nights are cold. Cassava is sensitive during dry season. It could be toxic. Some of those among us who do not have land to till, work as paid laborers in the lowlands, to be able to eat.

Some of the people
have backyard gardens

Naa pud mi mga garden garden diri duol sa among mga balay. Tanom mi utan. Mao pud ni among kuhaan pagkaon adlaw adlaw (Some of us have backyard gardens. We plant vegetables. This is also our source of food everyday).

Some neighbors ask
for vegetables

Ang uban diri mangayo sa uban. Example, Kanang kamunggay pagtanom ana, sige lang na panahon. Bisag putlon, motubo ra gihapon. Sigeg pananga. Dili kinahanglan

bantayan. Kung naa ka kamunggay, expect na lang nga daghang mangayo. Usahay di na gani mananghid (Some of us here would ask from others. When you plant, it will always grow abundant leaves. For example, the malunggay. Even if you cut the plant, it will regrow. It branches fast. You need not take care of it. If you have malunggay, expect many would ask. The others would not even ask permission anymore).

Diri sa among lugar, mora ra mi ug usa ka pamilya. Maghinatagay mi kung unsay makaon. Pero dili pud gyud mi magsalig na lang sa uban. Kanang mga emergency ba panaglitan hapon na moabot way pagkaon. Makapangayo usag bulad sa silingan. Bisag kanang mga Bisaya dha sa ubos, tagaan pud mi nila ug pagkaon kung makaadto mi sa ila. Naa pud mga eskwelahan sa Cotabato moanhi na sila diri manghatag pagkaon, mga sinelas. Sauna naa pay gidalang doctor. Mga sundalo pud ug pulis uban mga estudyante nakaabot diri. Nanghatag sila ug aros kaldo, pastil daghan, fried chicken. Karon pud natagaan pud mi mga bugas, sardinas, noodles. Pila na pud ni ka adlaw nga pagkaon (Here in our place, we are like one family. We give each other whatever food we have. But we do not depend upon others entirely. But there are times like when one comes home late in the afternoon and there is no food to eat, one can ask such as dried fish from others. The Bisaya people in the lowlands, they also give us food when we go to their place. There are schools in Cotabato that come here, give food, slippers. Before, they even brought a doctor. There were also soldiers and policemen who came here with students. They gave aroz caldo, many packs of *pastil*, and fried chicken. Now, we are also given rice, sardines and noodles. This will last several days.

Many of the Manobo
buy food from the market

Kami, kulang gyud ang pagkaon kung dili mi mamalit sa merkado sa Libungan mao nga kinahanglan naa gyud kwarta, ug mao pud ni nga magtanom mi aron naa y ibaligya aron nay kwarta ipalit ug pagkaon sa merkado. Kami anad mi ug sakripisyo. Kung wa jud kwarta, pwede mi one day, one eat. Pero kung naa pay mahimo, maninguha nga makapalit pagkaon (We would lack food if we do not buy from the market in Libungan, that is why we should have money and this is the reason why we plant so that there is something to sell so we could have money to buy food from the market. We

are used to making sacrifices. If there really is no money, we could be “one day, one eat”. But if something could be done, we would really try to buy food).

In sum, there are four food getting practices of the Manobo: farming, planting of vegetables in the backyard, asking for vegetables from neighbors, and buying from the market. In their responses, one could sense poverty and difficulties in life. They do not own the lands they till and if they have produce, it would be enough for the family’s subsistence.

The implication of the findings on intercultural solidarity is that, the Manobos are no longer living as an island. They have learned to live with People of other ethnic groups in lowland Libungan. They wear the clothes of the lowlanders. Except the tribal leader who wears his uniform when there are visitors. They eat the food sold by lowlanders.

On the question whether this is a case of assimilation or not, the participants said that it is not in that level yet. Based on the responses of the elders on whether they have abandoned their culture, they said they hold on to their culture and this is the reason why they have never transferred residence to the lowlands. But the danger they are facing is intermarriages with other people. There are more and more younger people marrying people of other tribes and that is the reason why small children of these couples learn the cultures of others.

Changes in the Food getting Practices of the Manobo

It is important to know what have been the changes in the food getting practices of the people. This may make them aware that there have been changes and probably would make them desire to restore what have

been lost especially discovering that adjusting to the new cultures encountered make their life more difficult, more difficult than when they were still in their place of origin. The data are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.
Changes in the Food Getting Practices of the Levunganen Manobo

Core Ideas	Significant Statement
Their land is not theirs anymore	<p><i>Wa na man mi yuta na matawag namo nga ancestral domain. Bisan didto sa Carmen, tuod mga galain mi puyo pero gakadto ra gihapon mi sa mga Bisaya, Ilonggo, Ilocano ug mga Maguindanaon kung nay importanteng tuyo. Naa yuta didto among giuma, unya pag-abot sa daghang katuigan, naa man diay tag-iya ang yuta. Kung naa mi yuta, lagpad among matanuman ug mais, kamanting ug mga utan</i> (There is no more land we can call our ancestral domain. Even in Carmen, although we lived apart from the Bisaya,</p>

Ilongo, Ilocano and Maguindanaon, we still go to them for some purpose. There was land we tilled there, but after several years,

There was a claimant land owner. If only We have our own land, we could have large plantations of corn, cassava and vegetables).

Diri sa Misulo, gikuha na sa tag-iya ang yuta nga akong gitamnan ug mga utan ug mais pa gani sauna pa gyud. Sila may nay titulo, mao nga didto na pud mi sa wala gigamit nga yuta pero naa gihapon tag-iya.

Kung moingon ang tag-iya nga bawion na niya ang yuta kay nay laing tuyo, iuli ra man dayon (Here in Misulo, the owner of the land on which we planted vegetables and corn, got it back already. They are the title holders so we moved to another land of which the owner is not around. If the owner says he is going to get back the land, we return it immediately).

Kining akong gitrabaho nga yuta, naa ni tag-iya. Mao nang makapagusto ko unsa itanom kay dili man gyud mag-anhian ang tag-iya. Nisugot pud sya nga trabahuon nako. Buotan man sya. Dili sya mangayo ug bahin (This land that I till, has an owner. I could work freely because the owner does not come. He gave permission that I till this land. He is a kind person. He does not ask for his share).

Sauna, daghan gyud mi pagkaon dala inig uli sa balay gikan sa lasang. Makadakop mi usa, amo, kayaw, baboy halas ug dagko nga langgam pareha anang banog Anad kayo mi ana manakop. Karon, wala nay lasang. Nihit na pagkaon. (Before, we would bring many foods from the forest when we would come home. We could catch wild deer, monkey, hornbill, wild pig and big birds such as native eagle. We were so skillful in catching them. Now, the forest is gone. Food is now scarce).

Pag-abot sa akong ginikanan kuno diri, Daghan pang dagko nga kahoy dihang dapita. Way problema pagkaon, naay mga utan, motubo lang, saging, sige lang bunga. Mga kapayyas pud. Manguha ra kuno sila. Ang kamunggay hindi na itanim. Magtubo lang bisan asa. Karon, wala na ang mga kahoy, hubas na gani pud ang tinubdan sa tubig. Lisod na ang tubig labi na tag-init. Magtanim ka mamatay lang din. Init na ang lupa. Kay wala nay landong. Ug wala nay mopugong sa tubig. Noon, may swimming pool dyan sila kapitan.

The forest is gone,
the trees had been
cut, so the people
cannot maintain
old practices anymore

Masaya kami. Marami nagkapera. Pero nauga lang ang tubig, wala nay gigikanan ang tubig. Pati kami nawalan hanapbuhay. (When my parents came to this place, there were still big trees in that part. There was no problem with food. There were vegetables, they would just grow, bananas always bear fruit,

also papaya. They will just gather. Malunggay plants were not planted. They just grew anywhere. Now, the trees have gone, even the source of water has dried up.

If you plant, it will die, because there is no more shade. And nothing will hold the water. Before, the family of the barangay chairperson used to have a swimming pool there. We were happy, many of us earned money. But the pool dried up there was no sufficient source anymore. We lost our source of livelihood).

Closer interactions with the lowlanders changed some lifestyles.

Ang uban sa amo lain na ang relihiyon labi na kadtong nakaasawa ug taga ubos. Lahi lahi na among mga tinuohan. Naay mga Portistanti ug katoliko. Mas daghan katoliko. Bisan ang pamuyo, nagbag-o.

Wala na tong pagtawag kang Lalawag sa dili pa magtanom. Dili na mohangad sa kalangitan aron tan-awon ang signos kung maayo ba magtanom. Ang mga anak atong nakaasawa ug mga Bisaya Binisaya na pud ang gawi. Pareha nako, nakaasawa man ko ug Bisaya, ang akong mga anak mga Katoliko. Kung mosimba sila diri ra ko sa balay. Ang mga gipangtanom namo kaniadto lahi na sa mga gipantanom karon.

Ug dili na pud mi tanom ug daghan kay dili na man kami ang tag-iya sa yuta nga among giugmad. Kining pula nga kahoy, dili gyud ni mawala sa among nataran kaniadto kay daghan sakit matambalan ani. Karon, moadto na man sa doctor o magpalit na daan tablitas didto sa parmasi.

Kung walay makaon dagan lang dha sa tindahan kung naa kwarta. Kung wala, naay ginamos (Some of us have changed religion. Especially those who married from the lowlands. Our beliefs have changed. There are Protestants and Catholics. There are more Catholics. Even the lifestyles have changed. Calling Lalawag before planting is no longer observed. People do not look at the skies to look for signs that it is right for planting. The

children of those who have married Bisaya also adopt Bisaya culture. Like me, I have married a Bisaya so my children are Catholic. If they go to church, I stay at home. What we plant today are different from what we planted before. And, we do not plant much because we are no longer the owners of the land that we till. This red tree was always in the backyard of every house before because this can cure many ailments. Now, people go to the doctor or buy tablets in pharmacies. If there is no food, we always run to the store to buy something to eat, if there is money but if there is none, there is always the salted fish.

As shown in Table 3, there are two major reasons why the food getting practices of the Levunganen Manobo have changed: (a) Their land is not theirs anymore; and (b) The forests are gone, the trees had been cut so the people cannot maintain their old practices; and, (c) Closer interactions with the lowlanders changed some lifestyles.

The people lamented on the ownership of the land they have been tilling for decades already. In the interview, they said, they just discovered that there were titles owned by other people from the lowlands, and some of them have really sold their lands because it was difficult to fight it out in court to have a title. During the interview, the people involved said there was no point improving the land. The lack of ownership of the land made the planting limited, thinking that anytime, the owner would get back the land.

But some of the Levunganen Manobo were lucky because there were title holders who would not come to the place and ask for share of the produce. They continued working but there was always worry that anytime, the land could be retrieved for special purposes.

The loss of the forest had far reaching consequences. There were trees that were freely growing and they were medicinal. They are no longer around, so many people would buy medicines from pharmacies when they get sick. This alone is causing change. Instead of nurturing those medicinal plants in the backyard, they tend to run to the health center and to pharmacies. Those plants such as the oregano are not growing anymore, according to an elder. Also, those animals that sufficiently provided food to the people before such as the monkeys, big birds, wild pigs and others could no longer be found.

Zamba (2017) said that the forest provide the Manobo with the materials used for building their houses. Not only do forests provide them with their daily needs, they also hold and represent their culture and identity. The forest is their life. Indeed, the forest is the source of culture and of life of many people.

Those who had money because of the sale of the land started frequenting the lowlands. The others were able to go to Libungan proper because they had to sell their products to be able to en money. Those parents who sent their children to school have interacted with other people. This was the beginning of more intermarriages between the Manobos and other people in the lowlands.

The intermarriages caused changes in the lifestyles. The plants chosen, the way of cooking, the food to be served, what to plant, and others. They had tendencies to secure food in the market.

The Theory of Acculturation asserts that constant interaction of two ethnic groups would cause adaption of each other's cultural beliefs and practices. The transfer of practices is from above because it was the Manobos who learned and adopted the ways of the lowlanders. The Manobos become speakers of the language of the lowlanders is another indicator. Less non-Manobos learned the language of the Manobos, it was the Manobos, almost all of them became proficient Cebuano speakers. With the change of language, the names of plants and names of animals sought would change. Amo, for example, would no longer be a buyword, aside from the fact that the animals are dwindling due to loss of forest. More common would be "katipa or catfish", kwaknit or bat, and other animals eaten by the lowlanders. Some Ilocanos and Ilongos would even eat a special variety of frogs.

In the analysis of the researcher, the change of food getting practices was not imposed on the Levunganen Manobo. The loss of land ownership, and the inevitable changes in the environment prompted changes in the practices, intensified by the closer interactions between the two groups.

How the People Cope with the Changes

Many of the people were sad over the changes. They said that these changes have caused their miseries in life. They have lost the nature which was the greatest provident of what they needed. Before, when they needed something, all they had to do was run to the forest. Now, when they are sick, they go to the *albularyo* or indigenous medicine man, or to the pharmacy.

Those who have intermarried and who are of later middle ages like 50-60, are complacent with the changes. They said that their families could survive in both worlds. The elders said, they find it hard to adjust. They long for the old songs, the old worship, the old food and food getting practices. One elder women said, she is fed up with the smell of noodles in the kitchen of the houses everyday. She longed for the smell of grilled birds, and dried meat of deer.

The younger ones complain that their dwellings are too far away from the lowlands. Roads are bad especially during rainy season. But they prefer this condition, rather than restore the forests. They said just the thought of a forest could be horrifying. They imagined big snakes, fierce animals and others. To them, the bushes and shrubs are enough.

In sum, it seems that there is a division of the participants based on their responses. The first group are the late middle aged, the elders and the younger ones. Among the three, it is the older ones saying that they are missing the old nature. Those aged 50-60 said they are complacent with the new setting. The younger ones have coped well with the current changes.

Findings

The Levunganen Manobo in Misulo, Demapao, Libungan, North Cotabato are not really aboriginal to the place. They came from Aruman,

Paralejas 50

Carmen, North Cotabato. So much have changed among the people in terms of the food served on the table because their food getting practices have also changed. All these are due to change in the physical and natural environment. The people still engaged in planting but the activity has been limited due to the fact that they do not own the land

anymore. Because of the change in food getting practices, the food served on the Manobo Table have also changed.

The coping skills of the people vary by age. Only the younger ones are attuned to the current life. The middle-aged are a bit uncomfortable and the older ones long for the distant past.

Conclusion

The people have not found the comforts and peace they have been looking for, reason why they have left their place. This is gleaned by the complaints they raised. For example, when they were in Aruman, Carmen, they said, they just discover one day that the land they tilled was owned by somebody else and who holds the title. The same thing happened in Misulo. Thus, this changed their food getting practices and the food served on the table.

Their being a nomadic people may still continue. They have all the reasons to be. In the future, when there is still somewhere to go, they might leave but probably leaving behind those who have already established roots in the area.

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