

INDIGENOUS RELIGION, INSTITUTIONS AND RITUALS OF THE MAMANWAS OF CARAGA REGION, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

The Mamanwas, one of the IP communities of Caraga region. Said to be one of the original settlers of Caraga and considered the Negrito group of Mindanao. Only very few literatures and studies written about them. Despite of massive acculturation of other IP groups of the region such the Agusan-Surigao Manobos, the Mansaka/Mandaya, Banwaon, Higaanon and Talaandig. The Mamanwas still on the process of integration to Philippine body-politic. It is in this scenario they were able to retain indigenous religion, institutions and rituals. Thus the study was conducted. It covers on the following sites: Mt. Manganlo in Claver, Lake Mainit in Alegria both Surigao Del Norte, Hitaob in Tandag City, Lubcon and Burgus in Cortes and Sibahay in Lanuza of Surigao Del Sur respectively. The study used ethnographic method with strict adherence of the right of pre-informed consent in accordance with RA 8371 or Indigenous Peoples Right Act of 1997. It can be deduced from the paper that despite of socio-cultural changes of the IP's of Caraga the Mamanwas were able to retain these practices but for how long? Moreover, socio-cultural change is slowly taking place in the Mamanwa social milieu. Preservation of these worldviews is wanting as a part of national heritage and for posterity.

Keywords: Mamanwa, Indigenous Religion, Tahaw, Institutions

INTRODUCTION

According to Garvan (1964) and Alameda (1993) the Mamanwas can be considered as one of the original inhabitants of the region. They were often called peace loving people (Maceda 1975). Beyer, (1927) the father of Philippine Anthropology (1916) well thought-out them as the Negrito group in Mindanao and Jocano (1996) classified them as band level group. Eleazar (1985) called them as the original Cantilangnon/Surigaonon. Castro and Tiukinhoy (1997) considered them as indigenous in the province of Surigao De Norte. Stoneking (2008) in his genetic analysis revealed the Mamanwas is the oldest ethnic group in the Philippines. On the other hand, Tomaquin and Tomaquin (2000) in their extensive study of the ethnic group found out the discriminatory name calling of the tribe by the dominant population of the region as: "*Kongking, Tagaijas, Tagamanganlo, Mamaw etc.,*" It does not only denote a discriminatory name callings of the Mamanwas but a form of verbal abuse as well. Today, moreover the Mamanwas stood the test of times, and commencing the renaissance of the tribe colorful culture and practices for posterity, and anchored of the right of self determination of the tribe. With the passage of IPRA Law of 1997 they have been gradually integrated to the Philippine body-politic and their ancestral domains and Indigenous knowledge System (IKS) protected. The study investigated the indigenous religion and institutions of the Mamanwas. It specifically discussed the parts of the rituals; however there is the assumption that social changes encloses these practices as cultural changes impinge on in some extent the traditional Mamanws society. It examined the impact of the said factors to the traditional Mamanwa social milieu. Despite of these changes

of some parts of their material culture they were able to preserve these institutions, rituals and religion. Their strong attachments of their physical environment were influenced by these practices. *Tahawan*, the indigenous religion is derived from the word “*Tahaw*” which literary means supreme being or god. Thus, it can be deduced that this is a very sacred religious ceremony nevertheless it is to be instituted not only of harvest/thanksgiving time, in times of tribal conflict, merry making and community problem such hunger and pestilence. This is also observed as a folk healing ritual of the *Baylan/Tambalon*(Shaman). The value systems of the Mamanwas are influenced by these indigenous rituals. The belief of *Tahaw* as their supreme god is clearly discernible. To this end the Mamanwas are indigenously very pious people. In fact this *Tahawan* ritual in which they would give thanks and make merry. They are still practicing this ceremony which is an indigenous manner of worship, thanksgiving and cheery making. This aims to give the readers/academic community a panorama of these spiritual rites. It will cover the ethnographic presentation of it and its influences on the Mamanwas worldviews. We accept as Mamanwa scholars that these practices are gradually vanishing but the number who believes of its resurgence for the renaissance of these celebrations are not yet trifling. This paper is the result of the researcher’s extensive study of the group. This added the scarcity of literatures published of this fast vanishing tribe of the region. And I believe on the contribution of this paper in the ethnographic and cultural heritage of this part of Mindanao are enormous for there are scarcities of literatures written about the Mamanwas. The paper would like to document this worldviews (indigenous, religion and rituals) in that view preserving for the next generation of Filipinos. Significantly it is worth studying for despite of massive cultural transition of the IP’s of Caraga the Mamawas were able to retain these practices.



Figure 1. Map of the Philippines where Caraga Region is highlighted (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caraga> date accessed Dec. 4, 2013.)

METHODOLOGY

The research employed the ethnographic method. It was used to have in-depth look of their culture. An ethnographic research technique uses the participant observation and many of the characteristic of non-participant observation studies in an attempt to obtain a holistic picture as possible of the subject of the study (Frankel and Wallen, 1994). The emphasis in ethnographic research is on documenting or portraying the everyday experience of individuals by observing and interviewing them. The study uses in-depth interview and continual, ongoing village immersion. The ethnographic methods of participant observation, non-participant observation, field methods, village immersion, in-depth interview, enable the researchers to present the ethnography of the *Mamanwas*. The ethnographic design was also supplemented with the participation of *Mamanwas* group activities and with intensive work with key informants. The researcher employed the techniques of field diary or notes, the use of camera in documentation, video, cameras, and micro cassette-recorders in recording the data from the interview. Non-participant observation was widely used for it allow direct recording of the data. To verify or crosscheck the data in the observation, the researcher verified it to the elders. The *Mamanwas* at the start of the fieldwork were suspicious to the purpose of the researcher. It is in the reason that the researcher established a good rapport with the *Mamanwas* by participating in some of their daily activities just to gain the trust of the *Mamanwas*. Building a rapport with the *Mamanwas* was essential in studying their socio-cultural views and practices. There was no problem in the dialect between the *Mamanwas* and the researcher for they are fluent in *Surigaonon*. To cross check the data on *Mamanwas* ethnography, periodic interviews were conducted. Another approach to crosscheck the ethnographic data was by direct observation. The locale/sites of the study consisted six settlements of the *Mamanwas* in Caraga namely: Manganlo/Toyatoya in Claver, Lake Mainit- both Surigao Del Norte, *Sibahay* in the Municipality of *Lanuza*, *Lubcon* and *Burgos* in *Cortes* and *Hetaob* in *Tandag* in the province of Surigao del Sur. Most of the *Mamanwas* in Caraga resides in the said settlements. Free and prior informed consent was secured accordance with RA 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Act of 1997. The research process obtained a written consent from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) an agency of the Republic of the Philippines created for the advancement for the welfare of the Indigenous Peoples (IP's). Written free ,prior and informed consent were obtained from the sites of study this includes the permission for taking pictures and tape recording. The ethical considerations in the study includes the privacy of the respondents/key informants was always upheld. The Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) was respected, recorded for posterity and recognition of the community/communities high degree of collective knowledge which is a mark of a highly cultured people with a distinct identity and in the forefront of Philippine nation uniqueness as a diverse/multi- ethnic society. The respondents/communities in the sites were informed of the intent of the research . Finally the source of funding was revealed that it was personal, meaning the source of research fund was from the researcher own resources not from any funding research agency. That they were informed pertaining to the findings of this research would be the researcher contribution in the field of knowledge and one of the means in valuing the pluralistic Filipino culture. Hence recording the *Mamanwas* culture is a part of preserving the Filipino nation cultural inheritance as a unique nation in South East Asia which is highly diverse and multi-ethnic society.



Plate no. 1 One of the Site of the Study.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Binaylan (The Nocturnal Prayer) and healer/shaman ritual

The ceremony is held at the house of the *Baylan/Binulusan/Tambajon* (healer). Everyone present in the said occasion should be facing the east direction. Ladies sit at the left, while gentlemen at the right. The children should stay in any side. The overture on this first action is the preparation of the *Mam-on* (preparation of betel nut). It is placed in plate - like container. After that the *sarok/tambajon/baylan* (healer) instigate by stating his prayers/*tud-om*. This is called *pangangade*. It starts with a low voice that gradually increases in volume, and then softer and softer then followed by silence. In the front side of the *Binulusan/Baylan/sarok/tambajon* were the seventeen plates, which were well arranged in a circle form facing the *tuyagdok/altar* made of coconut and anahaw leaves. At the middle of the said circle are the seven plates, the three of which are paired with a saucer and are placed at the right side (near to the *baylan /sukdan*). With the exception of the last plate at the end of the circle. Each plate and saucer has nine betel nuts and betel leaves, the leaves of betel are cut into small pieces in heart shape of at least 5 (five) centimeters. On a piece of betel leaf is a seven division of the betel nut with a lime sufficient for chewing. This time the *Baylan /sarok/sukdan/tambajon* faces the direction of the full moon ,reciting in some extent singing his sacred prayers (*Tud-om*) calling for the *Abyan* (Spirit World). He summoned the spirits of the departed in the wish they will look after the community. This time he informs /asked the partaker /participants to chew the prepared betel nut'. At this point, he starts to tremble or in the mental state of trance. Though he proceeds with his sacred prayer (*Tud-om*), dancing facing the Altar made of bamboo, coconut and anahaw leaves and continued chanting the *Binaylan* or sacred prayers in the *Tud-om* . It is assumed that the voice of the *Baylan /sarok/tambajon* was now from *Tahaw /Magbabaya* or from the *Abyan / the spirit*. The *Diwata/spirits* revealed the coming calamity, pestilence, sickness and danger. The *Baylan /sarok/tambajon* symbolize /represent the village and ask the spirit not to strike the settlement. When the spirits respond positively, the *sarok/tambajon/baylan* will utter these words: *Kay hendadawod Malaaser De* that the spirits will protect them as it has been protecting the village before. Then, the *Baylan /sarok* stands and dances with the indigenous

guitar (*kudlong*), drum (*gimbar*). The ceremony they consider can provide a good harvest, good result the game (hunting) and also a protection from sickness. The central part of the ceremony is the slaughtered of white pig. The boar/pig is to be offered to *Tahaw/Magbabaya* supreme deity. Its blood will be sprinkled in the Altar '*Oyagdok*' by the *Baylan*. After the prayer of the *Baylan*/shaman the pig is to be roasted and shared by the community. In the whole night. Other preparation of the prayer cooked flour from cassava, starch from lumbia palm, liquor such *sowom* or tuba, or local wine will be used . The ceremony ended early in the morning. It is highly observable the great energy of the tribe was manifested in the entire ceremony since dancing accompanied with the *gimbar*, *kudlong* and continuous singing of the *tud-om* the whole night lead by the *baylan* was in a very festive mood. Before the end of the ceremony , early in the morning/dawn the tribe will converse at the center of the *oyagdok* (altar). In this part, they will express their gratitude to the *Baylan* (healer) for officiating the ceremony .



Plate no. 2 The researcher with a Mamanwa-Manobo Child (Child of mixed marriages of Mamanwas and Manobos in Mt. Hetaob Tandag, Surigao del Sur).



Plate No.3 The Gimbar (Mamanwas drum made of dried skin of iguana)
Offering of in kind to the Baylan (healer) usually rice , roots crops and other material things like sinagadan (spear) and bolos etc. were given to the *Baylan* . He received the offering joyously.

Pagsangkalanlan

Another religious ceremony is the *pagsangkalanlan*. For several weeks the *Mamanwas* gather salted meat of wild pigs (usually uncooked). They are going to store up it in bamboo internodes. They are going to combine it with starch from a *lumbia* tree. Then they will cook it. While cooking, they will dance around the preparation and should become strident. The ritual dance is called *binangazozo*. After they were done dancing, they will get a *tungkayan*, a wood or stick used in beating the *gimbar* (drum made of the skin of iguana). After that the *baylan* /*sarok* guided the communal prayer, the banquet and merriment will go on followed by eating accompanied by drumming the *gimbar* . When somebody is sick in the village, it is believed that it is brought by *Habang* thus be treated in the ceremony. The spirit that gives sickness will be cast out in the ceremony. The ceremony is aimed at inviting *Tama*, the diwata of the forest, and the in charge of the game. If *Tama* pleased he will release wild pigs and deers. The belief that *Tama* as the *anito* in-charge or herder of hunting animals is clearly noticeable. The lowest in the rank of the deities is the *diyatot*. The *diyatot* is believed to dwell in the *balete* tree. The *sukdan* /*sarok*/*tambajon*/*binulusan*/*baylan* (healer) have two kinds - those who are specialist in herbal medicine and those who are specialist in their rituals and ceremonies. A young *Mamanwa* can be a *sukdan*/*sarok*/*tambajon*/*binulusan*/*baylan* by training, inheritance or by dream. The *sukdan*/*sarok*/*tambajon*/*binulusan*/*baylan* can either be male or female. Moreover, a male *tambajon*/*baylan* is always desired. If in case there are female *tambajon*, they serve as assistant to the male.

In the ceremony, the *sarok*/*sukdan*/*baylanis* assisted by female *tambajon*. The minor *Tambajon* assists in the *Mam-on* ceremony. The main *Tambajon* followed by the minor one first performs the spiritual dance (*Katahawan*). After they are done, the rest of the participants will join. A single *gimbar*/drum is the only instrument used in the ceremony. It

is expected that after the dance, request are made to the gods, the main *sukdan/baylan* trembles or in the state of trance. He should be brought to the constructed altar with a boar. The minor *Tambajon* gets near the altar (Oyagdok) and offers the sacrificial dance of prayer. After the main *sukdan* is done with his prayers, and the minor *Tambajon* finishes his/her dance, the main *sukdan/baylan* will get a spear and pierces or kills the boar. After which prayers of wish and supplications/petitions are offered to supreme god *Tahaw*. Then, the blood of the boar is scattered to the ground. The community will bring young coconut leaves for the blessing of the main baylan afterwards The members of the community will pass by in the constructed altar to be cured of possible illness.

After wards they will butcher the pig, cook it and then the whole community will share with it. Another related ceremony offered to *Tama* is releasing a hen in the forest. The ritual is performed in order for hunting/game to be successful. And for *Tama* to release iguana, deer, and pigs in the forest. In this ceremony the blood of the wild pig was scattered /sprinkled in the specified area in the Kaingin, for *Tama* to hear the wishes of the tribe.

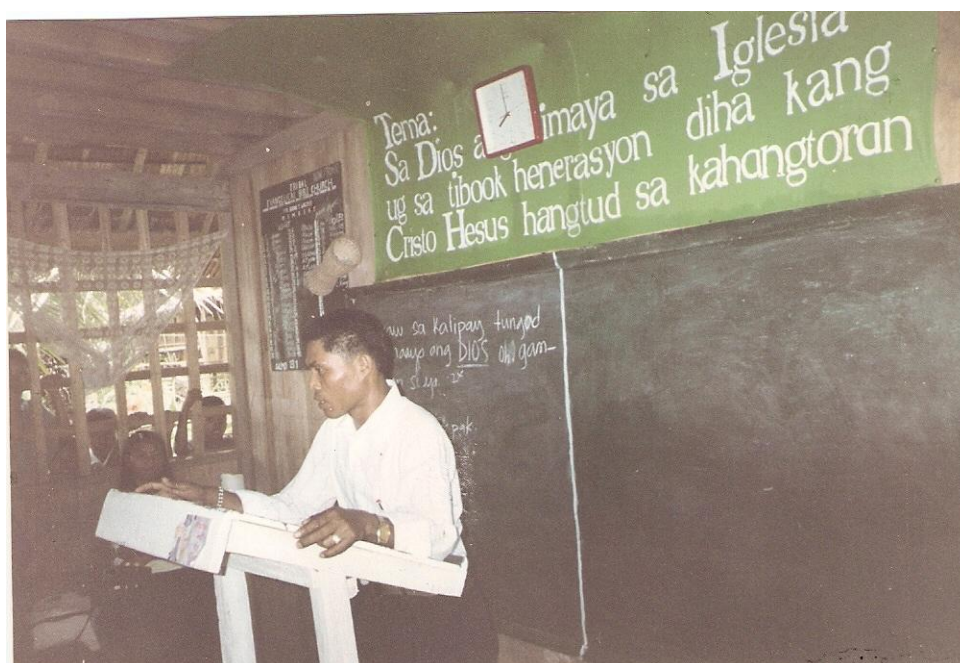


Plate No. 4 Missionary Work in the Sites/locale of the Study.

Hongodgod

This ceremony is done when planting *doma* or root crops (*camote, kalibre, karlang, ube, palaw*, etc.) After clearing the *kaingin*/slush and burn farming, a nursing *Mamanwa* mother would institute the first planting. She should carry on her back the infant because it is believed that by doing so, harvest will be plentiful. Since *Mamanwas* believed in the presence of *Diyatot* and *Anitos*, (part of the spirit world) who usually dwell in the *balete* and *tuog* trees, during their *Kaingin* farming, these *balete* trees were spared. The *saruk/tambajon/baylan* should conduct a ritual so that the *Diyatot* and *Anitos* will not be angry of the *kaingin*. Moreover, they believe that there are two types of *anitos*: the *Maradiyaw* and *Mataro* (Good and bad). The good ones promote good harvest of the *kaingin* and *kamotihan*. The bad ones give illness or sickness. The observance of the cited rituals revealed that the *Mamanwas* widely practice their indigenous religious rituals which show

that even though there were who converted to Christianity they still retain their indigenous practice.

Kahimonan

The language used during the ceremony of *Kahimonan*/grand festivity, is a sacred. The *Mamanwa* considered it as revered and therefore will only be used during the *Kahimonan*. The researcher believed that the *Binaylan* prayer is both address to the souls of the departed and to their supreme God, *Tahaw*. The prayers or *Binaylan* is address to the dead to invite their presence in the ceremony. It safe then to conclude that originally the prayer is a nocturnal prayer. Once the *Baylan/Tambajon* uses the language, he is renewing his religious vow and his healing -religious prowess. The abundance of food and jubilant merry making after the prayer of the *Baylan/Tambajon* shows that the *Kahimonan* is a religious ceremony, a celebration of native religiosity that holds and binds them intact.

The element being sacred of the *Baylan/Tambajon* language during the *Kahimonan* is widely recognized by the *Mamanwas*. The use of the *Binaylan* language reflected the trance experience of the *Tambajon* resulted of *Mamanwas* respect tothem. This they believe the *Tambajon/baylan* has a healing powers. The presence of an altar during the ceremony which is called “*Bangkaso, or Uyagdok* ” would offer an idea that there is a Christian element in it. However, it would be unfair for the *Mamanwas* if the researcher will conclude that the use of *Bangkaso/Uyagdok* or altar is of Christian in origin. The *Kahimonan*, made the settlement stands despite of hardship in lives. It is then a celebration of life, thanksgiving, merrymaking. Moreover, the use of *Malong* by the *Baylan/Tambajon* is of *Bisaya* influence. The religious function of the *Kahimonan* is shown of curing the sick after the *Binaylan* prayer was recited. In this part of the *Kahimonan*, it can be deduced that the *Baylan/Tambajon* is a faith healer. Non-mamawas may call it an animistic ritual, but among the *Mamanwas* it is a sacred ceremony. Let me cite part of the *Binaylan* language.

*Og Tahaw kad nu banwa
Kahabzen, gihud kaname
Kin-isa gihud banwa
Dahed, dahed, iza daza
Di dipi katahawan dizan katotawan
Dini kanmo kaotawan
Hagdan katahawan oralaaser
Kapupuran hagdan katahawan
Hawag, hawag oapirpuan
Hawag, hawag kapupuan
Hilwa kadayawan banwa
Iko laga katahawan latubinaw
Mayazer, Mayazer tapopooan
Maloza, kaporoan
Manganop boog, bakit
Nogay nazehet kalsahawan
Surig, surig Tahaw.*

Translation:

God *Tahaw* visit the settlement
This day, please accompany us
All the time please accompany us,

For our protection
God who dwells in all direction
Tahaw who knows the flow
Of the river of life
Closely accompany us
Here in this life and after
Please protect your people
The ancestors know of your power
The ancestors are calling you
Please provide good harvest to the village
You just like fire, God *Tahaw*
Good in all generation
You have been good to our ancestors
You can weaken the bad spirits
You made bounties of the game
Please forgive the village
We will be faithful to you
God *Tahaw*.

The text spelled out that the *Kahimunan* has healing -religious content. It is an avenue of renewing the healing powers of the *Baylan*. At this end of the *Kahimunan* the researcher observed an influence of the Catholic rituals such the use of candle of ceremony for example. The *Mamanwas* were very much grateful to the *Baylan*. As an expression of their gratitude they will offer dogs, *sinagdan* (spear), pig, chicken or anything that would express their gratitude to the *Baylan* for having been officiating the ceremony. Once the *Baylan/Tambajon* accepted the offering in the *Kahimunan* it finally ended. Besides, thanks giving elements , the *kahimunan* is also a celebration in welcoming a visitor or dignitaries.



PLATE NO. 6 THE SINAGDAN (SPEAR).

INDIGENOUS INSTITUTION/ POLITICAL SYSTEM

The basic indigenous political system of the *Mamanwas* is the group. The group is headed by a *Datu /Dakula or Hawodon* or chieftain usually the eldest in the group (*Malaas*). The elder is the interpreter of the indigenous laws and norms. The *Tambalon/Tambajon, /baylan* are the group medicine men or folk healers. The *Datu/Dakula* is usually an arbiter, speaker during tribal meeting and a counselor. Its political system is largely based on respect for elders. These elders maintain peace and order in a group. Wisdom in interpreting tribal laws and taboos are noticeable in the *Datu*. From this political structure, flourish a peace loving *Mamanwa* community, quiet and distant from quarrels with the lowlanders. They don't have the desire to seek for power. A *Tambajon/Baylan* works as a religious leader in the rituals mentioned and as the village herbalist. The *Mamanwa* society is an example of band level social structure (Jocano, 1996). There is no social stratification of the *Mamanwas*. Thus, all are equal and equal in actual putting (Tomaquin, and Tomaquin 2000). The traditional system of leadership has to adopt with the innovations of the changing time. They have adopted innovations of the indigenous political system. Thus, the community selects young and able *Mamanwa* as their leader or *Dakula*. The young blood ushers and offers changes to the traditional indigenous political system. These young people provide avenue of responsive leadership in their right to campaign for their welfare. They have adopted the following organizational changes below:

Kabudagan - An organization of *Mamanwa* women. It aims to empower them in issues relative to women's welfare; it also provides a forum of their stand in the issue of ancestral domains. It further aims to have oneness of the *Mamanwa* women on other issues such as education and cooperatives.

Kalomonan - refers to the general assembly of *Mamanwa* community. It comprises the *Mamanwa* population. *Kalomonan* also serves as a forum of opinions of the community regarding socio-economic and political issues. A member of *Mamanwa* population is a member of *kalomonan*. The *kalomonan* organize income-generating activities such preparing their goods to be sold out during the *tabo* or market day.

Marigon - the organization, which support their claim of ancestral domain. These innovations revealed that the *Mamanwas* want to modify its indigenous political structure to suit the demands of the community. It further shows their willingness to adopt changes and to effectively affect their campaign of ancestral domain and other welfare/ benefits they deserve such as equal access to services of the government. The *Mamanwas* recognize that if there is a convergence of force or oneness of the community there is an easier campaign for reforms. The political innovations have made them more receptive to government programs apparently addressing more of the common problem of the village. Moreover, the *Mamanwas'* unity further shows to strengthen their claim of ancestral territory or domain. The *Mamanwa* however considered the elected Barangay Captain as one of the leaders in the village in implementing governmental projects and order in the community.

The *Dakula* serves as head or village leader while the *malaas*, as council of elders. The authority of the *Dakula* covers a group/ specific community. In matters of tribal norms, taboos and customary laws, the opinion of the *Dakula* is sought. The *Dakula/hawodon* can be chosen based on his integrity, wisdom, mediation and conflict and dispute/ setting skills. The *Malaas* or the council of elders assisted the *Dakula*. Moreover, due to their decisive

move for more incorporation to mainstream body-politics, apparently, there are communities that the *Malaas* are only advisers to the *Dakula*.

Dakula is equivalent to *Manobo* concept of a *Datu*. The *Dakula* should be a *Mamanwa* within the group, married, not sickly, can speak the dialect of the lowlanders, sociable, and if possible must know how to read and write even in minimal degree, and at least can demonstrated leadership skill. In electing a *Dakula*, the community will convene for the purpose. The eldest in the group will preside in the meeting. The thanksgiving ritual is performed. Some or part of their customary law will be narrated then follow the election of a *Dakula* by merely raising their hands. The *Dakula* will serve in non-fixed term. He can be removed anytime if proven not worthy of the position. The duties of the *Dakula* are to serve as their leader on matters pertaining to interpretation of their tribal laws, to represent the village to the Barangay Captain in matters and program for their welfare, to mediate community conflicts and in some extent, to judge. Moreover, if he could not solve the dispute, it will be forwarded to the Barangay Captain. He is also expected to lead the village if there is incursion or attack from their enemies. He is also expected to be a keeper of traditions.

The *Malaas*, on the other hand are known as council of wise men and elders. They are expected to be adviser to the *Dakula*. The *sarok* or *tambajon/baylan* on the other hand is the medicine or the herbalist of the village. The *sarok* or *tambajon* can be a man or woman. It is believed that these men and women are good healers and endowed with mystic power to heal. A ceremony of institution of a *Dakula* is headed by the *sarok/tambajon/baylan*. He can cure *Inbarang*, or sick people who were victims of sorcery. The lowlander called them *Tambajon*. He uses oil with saliva and others to remove illness. Not everyone can be a *sarok/baylan* - only those with healing powers and had dreamed of supernatural herbs can be one. He is also a *buyagan*, meaning a person can cause curse to person's under-estimating his wisdom. The *Tambajon/baylan* is also keepers of traditions. His knowledge of medicinal plants and indigenous medicine is indeed truly awe-surprising.

The *Dakula* is an innovative concept or name of the *Datu*. Before, the *Datu* is expected to be old or in late adulthood. Now they have changed in this practice. The *Datu/Dakula* is the one who is the most educated in the group and is certified and recognized as such by the NCIP (National Commission on Indigenous Peoples). A *Dakula* is considered as a representative of the *Mamanwas* to governmental institutions. He can, at least read and write simple communications.

The Tambajon / Baylan / Binulusan (Healers/Shaman)

The *Tambajon/baylan* is believed to be charmers and an herbalist. It is thought that they have several charms. It is a popular belief among the *Bisaya/lowlanders* population that they are endowed by the power of *hisgut* or *barang*, a curse or simply a form of sorcery.

The *Mamanwas* generally are peace loving. They are unassuming and tend to settle their conflict peacefully. The *Tambajon/Baylan*, in some extent is a peacemaker if the *Datu* seeks his services. *Tambajon/baylan* is an institution of *Mamanwa* society. It holds the community and provides its solid framework of the society. He is a protector of their indigenous religion. As a herbalist, his knowledge of indigenous/ traditional medicine is exemplary including the knowledge in treating or curing snakebites. The *Tambajon* then is a healer--religious expert. He is an intermediary between the *Diwatas* and the settlement. The *Tambajon/baylan*

becomes through his own effort or through a visionary experience. He is an expert of the indigenous prayer (*Tud-om*), the *Mamanwa* shaman, whose influence of culture is noticeable. He is highly respected in his spirituality as intermediary to the temporal world to the Paradise (*Katahawan*). The *Tambajon/Baylan* can directly receive communication from *Tahaw*, as the *Mamanwas* believe. He is the most sincere person in the village for he led the *Kahimonan* with deep respect to *Tahaw*. He is expert in the *Mamanwa* oral tradition and is endowed with wisdom of the *Tud-om* and the code of religious vow of the *Tambalons* or the *Binaylans*. He is expected to be honest in dealing with the community and with the *Bisaya*. Aside from being keepers of traditions and tribal mythology, the *Tambajon* received his vow directly from their god *Tahaw*. The *Tambajon* has exclusive prayers known as *Tinambajon* or *Binaylan* and performs other ritual. He is expected to be the most moral person in the village.



Plate no. 7 Female Baylan/Sukdan (healer) with Kalibugan Children (Mixed descent of both Manobo and Mamanwa marriages).

The *Tambajon/Baylan*, in some extent is a peacemaker or in occasion where there are cases of conflict that could not be solved by the *Dakula*. He advises the *Dakula* in matters pertaining to tribal unity. Another word that describes the respect of the *Tambajon* is the concept of *Binaylan*, which means that the *Baylan* or *Tambajon* possess supernatural powers and that they derived their charms from *Tahaw* himself but they are believed to be not vulnerable to sorcery. During the *kahimonan* the *Mamanwas* believe that the spirit of *Tahaw* possesses the body of the *Tambajon* and in such time, the body of the *Tambajon* cannot be pierced by a bullet. The primordial duty of a *Tambajon* is to keep the faith of the *Mamanwas* to *Tahaw*, their god. The *Tambajon* is a spirit medium, an intermediary to the world of the living and the spirits. As a medicine man and healing-religious leader, he is expected to reveal the message of their God *Tahaw* to the village using the *Binaylan* language. Moreover, in his healing -religious practice, he does not receive payment in his service of healing the sick only offering in kind.



Plate no. 8 The Mamanwas Kudlong (Guitar).

Bagani

Despite the fact that the *Mamanwas* are more passive and peace loving than the dominant IP in the region. The *Mamanwa* offender will just be driven out as outcast. They have the concept of *Baganiship*, similar to that of the *Manobo*. In fact, it is believed to be a *Manobo* influence due to its geographical proximity and intermarriages. *Bagani* simply means protector of the village. Today, they also called their *bagani* as *Tanod* influenced by the *Bisaya* concept of barangay police. The *Mamanwa Bagani* as a proof of his status wears a red turban. Today, the *Bagani*, as an institution, has diminished its stature. *Mamanwa Bagani* is also an institution. It protects the village from loggers. As warriors, they protect the peace and security in the village. *Bagani* is part of the local folklore. He is the folks' brave man. He is an individual who leads the group in terms of tribal war in the past. Thus, he is the protector or defender of the settlement.

Indigenous conflict resolution and the Role of the Dakula/Hawodon

The *Dakula* or *Datu* has a direct authority in maintaining peace in the village. He is assisted by the elders (*Malaaser*) and his advisers, the *Baylan/Tambajon*. He is obliged to pacify or solve the conflict and will make sure it can be pacified so it will not be forwarded to the Barangay captain. In settling conflicts, it is their practice to call the attention of the parties in conflict. Both are allowing expressing their sentiments which are listened to and thoroughly considered. After weighing reasons the data offers solutions or verdict. A guilty person has to pay a fine, usually a pig. The pig should be slaughtered and a cup of blood should be consumed by the guilty party as a sign of guilt. In cases of murder, it should be forwarded to the *Municipyu* or the police. In cases of conflicts between *Mamanwa* and *Bisaya*, it is barangay chairman who will have the jurisdiction of the case. Collectively, the farm field of the *Mamanwa* such as one in *Sibahay* is managed by the *Dakula*, which he subdivides among the community members. The same is practiced in *Burgos* and *Hetaob*, *Manganlo* and *Lake Mainit*. The following are some of their customary laws:

They pay respect to civilians and military authorities and the laws of the land. They always provide an avenue in conducting the *kahimonan* at least four times in a year they may be self-reliant or not. They respect the hunting rights of other tribes. They respect personal property. They avoid stealing, each should offer suggestions on how to solve village problem. They respect the elders and parents. They respect everyone in the village. They share food and meat gathered from hunting with the rest in the community. They respect women and children.

The *Dakula* maintain the peace of the place with the assistance of the *Malaas*. A guilty party will offer *Mangangade/fines*. *Mangangade* is in form of cash or property. In case there is a severe offense, the penalty will be *oyayoanan* or forced labor is given. Forced labor will be demanded by the relatives of the aggrieved party. The guilty party is also required to give a piece of land to the victim in cases of severe act of transgression or offense such as murder. The settlement will be done in the house of *Dakula*. The observance of its folk medicine and the institution of *tambajon*, *bagani*, *Dakula* are clearly marked. The political organization of the *Mamanwas* traditionally is a band type (Jocano, 1996). A band usually consisted of 20-90 households. There is a loose tie in the band for there is no social stratification. The settlement or band is headed by a *Dakula*, equivalent to *Manobo* Chief or *Datu*. Though his authority is informal he exercises tremendous influence of the settlement. Sanctions such as expelling from the band if there is a violation of tribal norms is very effective.

However, today there is an innovation of the role of the *Dakula*, gone were the days that he is the eldest in the band, today the most educated in the band can be a *Dakula*. Moreover, the *Baylan/Tambajon* remains the adviser of the *Dakula*. Each band has its own *Dakula*, which shows each is independent with each other. The *Dakula* today further innovates their traditional leadership styles by forming a council of *Dakula* among the *Mamanwa* communities in Caraga which is registered and supervised by the NCIP. The innovation of this mode of leadership is due to the acceptance of the *Mamanwas* that they can effectively govern if they have this organization. The purpose of this innovation is to promote the campaign of their ancestral domain claims. This is one of the requirements of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) so that they can be recipients of relevant government services and thereby encourage them actively in the economic and political system. This innovation also recognizes the role of *Mamanwa* women. It is for this reason they organized the *Mamanwa* women so they can be the best partner in their campaign for more rights stipulated in R.A. 8371 of 1987. The innovation of the *Baganiship* into *Tanod*, aims to protect the incursion of their traditional territory from miners and loggers.

CONCLUSION

The most important features on the study were herein summarized. The data below are the highlights of the findings.

The *Mamanwas* still practice collective division of food gathered from the forest such as wild animals which were being distributed to the community as part of their culture. The *Mamanwa* community or village is headed by *Datu/Dakula/hawodon* is widely respected. He has a charismatic leadership style, personality and wisdom. However, the band elects today's *Mamanwa Datu*. Usually the individual who is schooled has bigger chances of becoming a *Datu/Dakula*.

They are peace loving individuals for their love of status quo and their avoidance of conflict with the lowlander or the *Bisaya* population. Like the *Manobos* and

Mandayas, the *Mamanwas* believe in spirit of the forest (*Diwata/Anitos*). Moreover, the manner of reverence differs. If they are suffering from famine, they perceived it is caused by the angry *diwata*. In this respect, indigenous ritual of *Kahimonan or Tahawan* should be performed. The supreme deity of the *Mamanwas* is *Tahaw*. This belief is clearly marked. When there is a calamity they perceived it is the anger of *Tahaw*. Christianity, as a religion greatly influences the *Lubcon Mamanwa*. It is their assumption that becoming a Christian is an acceptance and that they are acculturated to the mainstream culture. However, there are significant convert of Christian religion among the *Burgos, Sibahay* and Hetaob, *Manganlo and Lake Mainit Mamanwas* many part of their indigenous culture do not change. They have observed still their indigenous religion. The indigenous ceremony of *Kahimonan/Tahawan* is widely practice among the communities of *Burgos, Sibahay* and Hetaob, *Manganlo and Lake Mainit*. The *Lubcon Mamanwas* truly lost this practice due to Born Again conversion.

The *Mamanwa* shaman or *Tambajon/Baylan* is the person indirectly in charge as keeper of traditions. He is also a herbalist or healer. It is believed that he has charm and posses a healing -religious power. There is no stratification among the *Mamanwas*; their economic condition is more or less the same. The right of private and personal property is recognized. As a people, the *Mamanwas* are respectful to government authorities. Their high illiteracy contributed much of to its poor economic condition. Because of this, they could not run for public office. The *Mamanwas* are truly indigenous to their land, their forest and their rivers. Truly undeterred by the idea and concept of consumerism and lowlander values, their reverence of nature is manifested through deep reverence to *Tahaw* whose concept is shown with its protection of nature.

The *Mamanwas* are still engaged in food gathering such as game hunting and trapping. There are still wild animals, which are rich in protein source. The *Mamanwas* of *Sibahay, Hetaob, Manganlo, and Burgos* still leave in lean-to-like dwellings. Lake Mainit *Mamanwas* already build their houses pattern after the lowlanders. They have difficulty of having three meals a day. *kamote, karlang, kalibre, palaw, doma* are their staple foods. Rice is a good substitute for *doma*. Food is becoming nil or scarce, continued logging, *kaingin* by *Bisaya* population and wanton destruction of forest contributed to skin diseases and scarcity of food which lead to malnutrition which is the primordial effect because of the lack of food supply. The *Mamanwas* of *Lubcon and Lake Mainit* are shall we say "Better off" than the *Mamanwas* of *Sibahay, Burgos* and *Hitaob and Manganlo*. *Lubcon Mamanwas* build their houses like the *Bisaya*. They are engaged in poultry, piggery. The *Mamanwas* already accepted their tribal identity. They accepted the term *Mamanwas, Mamaw, and Kongking, kalibugan* ill-without feeling about it. Generally, the *Mamanwas* in the six communities are on the process of adopting the mainstream culture despite with their limitations. It will take long before they can equal with the *Bisaya* in terms of recognition, political role, and status and property ownership.

The significant differences between and among the *Mamanwa* communities provide insights and avenues on the extent of acculturation of the *Mamanwas*. Education has contributed to acculturation of the *Lubcon and Lake Mainit Mamanwas*. Adult literacy programs of *Lubcon and Lake Mainit* further fast track its acculturation. The observable aspect and patterns of its acculturation can be perceived further that it will delve the contribution of religion and adult literacy program. The acculturated *Mamanwas* of *Lubcon and Mainit* built or patterned their houses with the *Bisaya*. *Burgos, Sibahay, and Hitaob*. *Mamanwas* are still in their *dait-dait*, a windscreen structure. However, all of them or each household has its own home. The *dait-dait* is made of *tikog, anahaw* leaves and the post from hardwood. The flooring also is made

of hardwood. *Sibahay, Burgos, Manganlo, and Hitaob Mamanwa* still used *Kaingin* farming. None of them used the carabao in planting. *Lubcon Mamanwas* are indulged in coastal fishing, Lake Mainit Mamanwas in Lake fishing, hunting, lumber gathering, and raising chickens and pigs. The *Mamanwas* have their own basketry and handicraft. They weave *Agsam* and many kinds of rattan handicrafts. *Caraga Mamanwas* indigenous culture is rich in mystical elements and remarkable belief system. Their beliefs in *Tahaw* are clearly obvious. *Tambajon/Sarok/Baylanis* their medium. There are no initiation rites of *Mamanwa*'s boys and girls. The boys are circumcised like the *Bisaya*. The *Lubcon and Lake Mainit Mamanwas* are Christian community and abandoned their indigenous religious ritual and have transformed their lifestyle to that of the *Bisaya*. There are a high percentage of *Mamanwa - Manobo, Bisaya - Mamanwa* marriages who give to the rise of the *Kalibugan* term meaning half *Mamanwa, Manobo* or *Bisaya*. These intermarriages had affected their indigenous culture and made the enculturation process affected by outside influences. *Mamanwas* have poor inclination to education. Many of them are illiterate. This also due to the distance of the community to the village. Discrimination of the "*Bisaya*" population as manifested in the term as *Mamaw, Kongking, lomon* and *Tagaejas* have contributed further to their poor inclination to education. Generally, the *Mamanwas* of Caraga are not ready to let go with their indigenous lifestyle and culture. The shifts from subsistence economy to cash or money oriented economy have contributed further for their poor economic system. There is a near depletion of their hunting, fishing, and farming ground due to illegal logging, large-scale *kaingin*, mining in some extent poison the rivers. The *Mamanwas* are skilled in weaving baskets, rattan gathering and weaving agsams. The *Hitaob, Burgos, and Sibahay Mamanwas, Manganlo* adherents and beliefs in the indigenous religion are remarkable. Their refusal to abandon their indigenous religion *Katahawan*, have also resulted to their desire to stay away from *Bisaya* villages or settlements. The *Kahimonan/Tahawan* religious activity is widely practice by the *Mamanwas* of *Sibahay, Hitaob, Manganlo, lake Mainit* and *Burgos*. They have considered the *Kahimonan* ceremony as a way of preserving their indigenous culture and to promote oneness of the tribe. The *Baylan/Tambajon* is an institution. It is widely instituted in the *Mamanwa* communities namely: *Burgos, Hitaob, Manganlo, and Sibahay*. *Baylan* has both healing -religious functions and also considered a keeper of traditions. He exerts a great influence to the *Datu/Dakula* and to the community and the individual *Mamanwas*. Shamanism, among the *Mamanwas* is clearly marked despite of integration of many *Lumads* of *Mindanao*. The *Baylan/Tambajon* is also considered a wise man. They also indulge in hunting, rattan harvesting, honey gathering, gathering wild fruits and vegetables but of a lesser scale now due to the activity of logging and mining. And resulted in poor harvest in the game. Trapping also supplemented their protein source. Food gathering is still practice by the *Mamanwas*. They also practice fresh water fishing and in some extent coastal fishing in the case of *Lubcon* and *Burgos Mamanwas* and lake fishing in lake Mainit. They also indulge in basketry, mat weaving as earning also for daily use.

The *Mamanwa* marriage is monogamous and is an extended patriarchal family in authority. In terms of residence after marriage is patrilocal. The *Tud-om* and the *Binaylan* language used by the *Baylan / Tambajon* is a sacred language. It is a good indicator and tool in understanding *Mamanwas* religious psychology. Poor acculturation of the *Mamanwas* is due to its strong attachment to its indigenous value system. It will take a long way before they will feel that they are Filipino citizen due to the poor governmental projects extended to them. They already accepted the word *Mamaw* without feeling ashamed about it. Their love to stay as a village/group revealed their desire of community unity and promote status quo. They are the original settlers of the region. Education and religious aspects ,factors are key determinant for its acculturation. If the *Mamanwas* are educated it can result in observable

changes of their economic lives. Significant difference in acculturation in religious aspect showed how they respond to cultural changes and modernization. The *Mamanwas* then are the most underprivileged indigenous peoples in *Mindanao*. The out-group in the political and policy making of the Philippines.

There is no social stratification among the *Mamanwas*. The medicine man and the headman functions are well defined. The medicine man or shaman (*Tambajon*) is expected not only as a herbalist but also keepers of tradition. The headman or *Dakula* authority is informal but highly respected by the village. The value and belief system among the *Mamanwas* was influenced by their worldviews. The belief of *Tahaw*, the supreme god is clearly marked. To this end, the *Mamanwas* are very religious people, basing it in their native religiosity. The *Kahimongan* religious ceremony is an expression of thanksgiving, merry-making and indigenous manner of worship. They are still practicing this ceremony.

There is high incidence of *Mamanwa* illiteracy. The *Mamanwas* in the six communities are poorly educated. Most of them can't read and write. The lack of interest in education is mainly due to their lack of interest in schooling. The discriminating attitude of the *Bisaya/lowlanders* to the *Mamanwa* school children, lack of interest among the *Mamanwa* parents in sending their children to school. Extreme and abject poverty further contributed to their lack of interest in education. *Mamanwa* parents preferred that their children help them in the household chores and make a living rather than sending them to school is much acculturated.

The *Mamanwa* value system such as tribal unity manifested in the sharing of food to the whole band illustrated communal cooperation. Their adherence to monogamy illustrated their respect to the sanctity of marital union because the *Mamanwas* love peace, simplicity as a lifestyle, and respect for nature. Their reverence to nature while maintaining its sustainable use shows its dynamism in looking to nature as both a value and venerated or cherished this respect for nature is a good reason that could be cited regarding its respect to the bounties of natural resources.

Malnutrition has evident in the communities. Cold and respiratory illnesses are common in the said communities. Unsanitary practice contributed to the rise of these illnesses. The *Kahimongan* festivity which is the center of their indigenous religiosity serves as a unifying factor of the tribe oneness. It is also a thanksgiving prayer. It is an occasion for a *Mamanwa* shaman renews his vow as keeper of traditions and his healing -religious power. *Tahaw* is their omnipotent god. However, the *Mamanwa* has other *diwatas* or deities that are *Tahaw's* servants. The *Mamanwas* are respectful people especially to local civil and police authorities. The *Mamanwas'* economy is no longer a subsistence economy. It shifted to cash or market economy. It is affected by the social concept of the *Mamanwas*. Their acceptance of Christianity provides a new avenue of gregariousness. There is a gradual change then.

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