



Tales of Indigenous Peoples (IP) of Sama-dilaut Tribe: A Squinny on the Community Outreach and Extension Services of RMC Graduate School, Davao City, Philippines

Marciano B. Melchor ^{a*}, Pablo Bosquit ^a, Ronaldo Seras ^a,
Wilson E. Gamao ^a and Flora Garrido ^a

^a Rizal Memorial College Graduate School, Davao City, Philippines.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJESS/2024/v50i51355

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/115147>

Original Research Article

Received: 25/01/2024

Accepted: 28/03/2024

Published: 02/04/2024

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aimed to investigate the livelihood and economic activities of the Sama-Dilaut Tribe, also known as Badjao, residing in Matina Aplaya, Davao City. Specifically, it sought to understand their transition from street beggars to engaged business owners and the impact of their economic endeavors on their quality of life.

Study Design: Utilizing a phenomenological approach, this study delved into the lived experiences of the Sama-Dilaut people through in-depth virtual interviews. This design facilitated the extraction of rich narratives and perspectives directly from the participants.

*Corresponding author: Email: marciano_melchor@yahoo.com;

Place and Duration of Study: The study was conducted within the well-established community of the Sama-Dilaut Tribe in Matina Aplaya, Davao City, Philippines. Data collection spanned over one (1) year.

Methodology: Face-to-face and Virtual interviews were conducted to explore the personal narratives of the Sama-Dilaut individuals, capturing their journey from street begging to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes emerging from the interviews, focusing on their economic activities and resulting improvements in livelihood.

Results: Thematic analysis revealed several significant findings regarding the daily activities and economic pursuits of the Sama-Dilaut Tribe. Key themes included the selling of seafood, maintenance of fishing traps, engagement in traditional fishing practices, and involvement in the "ukay-ukay" business to augment income. These activities facilitated an enhanced standard of living, enabling the fulfillment of basic needs, access to education, and adoption of modern amenities. Importantly, the reduction in street begging indicated a shift towards financial independence and self-sustainability among the tribe members.

Conclusion: This study sheds light on the transformative journey of the Sama-Dilaut Tribe in Matina Aplaya, Davao City, from marginalized street beggars to empowered entrepreneurs. Their economic activities have not only uplifted their own livelihoods but also contributed to the overall well-being of the community. These findings underscore the importance of community outreach and extension services, such as those provided by the RMC Graduate School, in supporting indigenous peoples toward socio-economic empowerment and sustainable development of the tribe in Davao City, Philippines.

Keywords: Indigenous peoples; sama-dilaut tribe; community outreach and extension services; RMC graduate school; Davao city Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Sama, also called Samal or Bajau, Bajau also spelled Bajao, Badjao, Bajo, or Bajaw, one of the largest and most diverse ethnolinguistic groups of insular Southeast Asia [1]. The Sama live mainly in the southern half of the Sulu Archipelago, in the southwestern Philippines, although significant populations also live along the coasts of northeastern Borneo—primarily in the Malaysian state of Sabah—where they are known as Bajau (Britannica, 2016). Smaller Sama settlements are widely scattered in coastal regions of the central and northern Philippines, as well as throughout the islands of eastern Indonesia, particularly Sulawesi (Celebes). The Sama people also lived along the Southern Mindanao Island in the Philippines [2,3] Sama peoples speak an array of closely related Austronesian languages that are generally grouped as Sama-Bajau. Owing to their mobility, their wide distribution across the Southeast Asian archipelago, and their inconsistent categorization both within and across political boundaries, it has been difficult to obtain a precise population figure for the Sama peoples; early 21st-century estimates were typically between 500,000 and 950,000, based on various social and linguistic criteria. Along with the Maguindanao, the Maranao, and the Tausug, the Sama constitute one of the principal Philippine Muslim

groups collectively identified as Moro” (Gorlinski, 2024).

“The Sama divide themselves into two basic categories: the land-oriented Sama (sometimes called Sama Dilaya or Sama Diliya), who are typically associated with a specific geographic location, and the nomadic or formerly nomadic sea-based Sama Dilaut, often called “sea gypsies,” who historically lack such geographic ties. In the Philippines, the Tausug term Samal is widely applied to the land-oriented Sama, while the term Bajao is similarly used (erroneously, some would argue) to specify the sea-based Sama. The primary economic activities of most shoreline Sama revolve around fishing and the collection of marine products (e.g., seaweed and shells), although many villagers are also engaged in agriculture”.

The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., an educational institution duly recognized by the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has made and entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in Barangay Matina Aplaya particularly for SAMA/DILAOT (Badjao Tribe) community represented by Punong Barangay, Nestor B. Cirunay; and RMC President, Dr. Evelyn A. Magno, through its Community Outreach and Extension Services of the

Graduate School. This agreement Shall remain enforce and effect within three (3) school years, effective December 21, 2021 to December 21, 2024 unless sooner terminated by the parties concerned with valid reasons or due to completion of the project/program.

Corollary to MOA effectivity, research study was conducted on the profiling of respondents vis-à-vis their needs for sustainable development in the community. This was spearheaded by pool of Rizalian Researchers, namely: Dr. Marciano B. Melchor, lead researcher with his co-researchers, Ms. Flora C. Garrido, IPED District coordinator, Janine C. Garrido, IPED School coordinator, Dr. Ronaldo L. Seras, GSCES Coordinator, Dr. Maylin M. Blancia, GS literacy Coordinator; Dr. Pablo F. Busquit, Dean Graduate School and Dr. Albert G. Musico. The study was funded by the School Administration through the office of Research and Development Center headed by Dr. Nelia B. Aga.

Moreover, the study delved into the Voyage towards a better life: the Sama Tribe of Matina Aplaya, Davao City. The purpose of this study was to unleash some of the Sama Tribe's dreams to a better future through their daily life routines, their basic needs for survival and their outlook on education.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used qualitative research employing phenomenology. Interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. The interview(s) attempts to answer three broad questions [4]. "The data was then read and reread and culled for like phrases and themes that are then grouped to form clusters of meaning" [5]. "Through this process, the researcher constructed the universal meaning of the events, situation or experiences and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. In this study phenomenology attempts to extract the purest, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing is used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process. One method of bracketing is memoing" [6].

2.1 Participants

The participants of this study were the Sama Tribe family members who have children

currently attending the formal elementary, secondary and senior high school. All of the participants of this study had been sending their children to school, specifically in Matina Elementary School and Daniel R. Aguinaldo national High School (DRANHS) and were very active in the school and community activities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study disclosed that their daily routines were composed of their traditional fishing activities, tending to their fishing traps and selling freshly caught seafoods. Additionally, to augment their financial needs, they got entangled with their business of selling 'ukay-ukay' shoes and dresses. These economic activities provided them a much better life in their community. They were able to sustain their daily needs such as food, sanitation and basic toiletries, payment of their consumed electricity, purchase of school requirements and acquisition of the most common gadget which is the cellular phones. These economic activities made them financially independent and notable lessened their street 'begging' routines in the past.

Joshua Project [7] identified "fishing, boat building, and iron working are primarily male occupations, while weaving mats and marketing pottery are jobs for women. Both men and women engage in collecting and selling valuables from the sea, such as sea cucumbers"

Further, this study disclosed that the families of Sama Tribe have dreams in becoming a better person and having a better life comparable to those of their neighbors within their community, the reason why they decided to send their children to school. Majority of the tribes school children were able to read and write, unlike their parents and grandparents who could hardly write their names and could not even recall their birthdays. Education, for them, is one of the keys to a better future if they decide to stay on the land and compete for survival.

"Children tend to be highly valued and for the first six or seven years are made to assume few responsibilities. Preadolescent children undergo a ritual haircutting (*maggunting*) and weighing ceremony. Boys are circumcised at puberty, whereas girls undergo a form of partial clitoridectomy between the ages of 2 and 6 [8]. At adolescence some children are taught to recite from the Quran, either under the guidance of a personal tutor or through attendance at

special Quranic schools. Those who complete instruction demonstrate their proficiency in a public reading (*magtammāt*), at which both they and their instructor are honored. Following puberty, girls are usually kept close to home, where they are expected to help with housework and child care; boys are allowed greater freedom of movement, accompanying their fathers when they go fishing and marketing. Today most children attend public school, although few complete more than primary education" [9].

3.1 Future Directions

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that: The RMC Graduate School Community Extension Services shall continue its mission in extending its academic expertise to the Sama Tribe members through its extension activities by providing small lecture activities to the Sama tribe children and provision of *Nipa Hut* within the school campus of Matina Aplaya as well as within the community as meeting place of school children and their elders.

1. The graduate school may sponsor college graduates of the tribe as scholars in the Master of Arts in Educational management (MAEM Program).
2. The graduate school students, being teachers, may extend their time in the *Adult Literacy Program* of the Sama Tribe elders.

3.2 Needs Assessment

The needs assessment of the SAMA/DILAUT (Badjao Tribe) community reached a growing realization of an entire year's work. It collected data through in-depth interviews, focus groups, round tables, and observations; research gaps, strengths, and challenges were identified. These were improved and strengthened by the organizers of the quality initiative.

Spearheaded by the graduate school organizer and volunteer groups analyzed the community needs of the Badjao Tribe to help guide decision-making and resource analysis while involving barangay Talomo communities in the process.

Noticed patterns to help make sense of gathered data the following were organized into the following categories: on strengths, the graduate school of RMC maintains: a robust community partnership that worked collaboratively to serve

low-income Badjao families regained community image, and socially engaged; on the challenges, internal weaknesses or threats faced by the organizers, time constraints for volunteered faculty, staff, and lack of retention strategy led to moderate turnover rates and lowering of enthusiasm to serve; on the opportunities, and falling of confidence to do; on the options, the external strengths and resources in the community were identified where programs directed toward low-income families experienced variably increased support in funding last year.

3.3 Evaluation: A Step-by-Step Approach

Put simply, organizer, staff, and stakeholder evaluation helped people learn their day-to-day work. It assesses the effectiveness of a piece of work delivered to the Badjao Tribe. It can also highlight whether the project is moving steadily and successfully towards achieving what it set out to do or is moving in a different direction.

Step 1: Review the situation

Evaluating a project is like taking a journey: First, we need to plan our journey – we need to decide where we want to get to; then work out how we are going to get there and what we need to equip ourselves with for the journey; we will also need to look out for the signposts and milestones that will tell us whether we are on the right road and whether we are likely to get there on time.

Step 2: Gather evidence for the evaluation

This is a vital part of the evaluation process: We need to find evidence to show whether or not we have reached the goals we set.

Different types of evidence should be collected:

- numbers (for example, the number of people we have reached, the number of people getting work, the number of good stories in the press, and changes in crime levels);
- people's opinions, views, and experiences (for example, people's stories about their experience on the program, photos of the area 'before and after, people's views on whether they think they have more power);

Step 3: Analyze the evidence

We have gathered together quite a lot of information: Working out what it is telling us is

the next stage. We are alert to unexpected outcomes, both desirable and undesirable. For example, evidence of good community cohesion might be that events have been organized that draw together people from across the community or groups previously in conflict. Other evidence of community cohesion might be recording stories of how disputes have been resolved or the views of formerly distant groups now working as partners. The opinions of different people involved in, or affected by, the project (including those taking part and service users) can often be as important as numbers in providing evidence of change. Allow plenty of time to pull the information together. Even if only one or two people initially do the work, it is worth feeding the initial findings back to a broader group of stakeholders to add their insights.

Step 4: Make use of what we have found out

If there are goals or objectives we have not met, or if we haven't got as far as we had hoped, we need to think about why and what we can learn from that. There could be a variety of explanations. Here are a few ideas to consider:

Problems with external circumstances

- The environment in which we work has changed or worked against us (for example, local or national policies have changed, or a major employer has closed down).

Problems with carrying out our plans

- We have departed from your original aims.
- We didn't allow enough time or resources.
- Changes in the organization have meant we can do what you said you would do.
- The quality of Graduate School performance.

Step 5: Share findings with others

Sharing our findings with others is essential because it can help other people in the project, or those associated with it, recognize any problems or issues preventing the project from making progress. It can help everyone to learn from any mistakes that have been made or pick up on any successful ideas that have been put into action. Remember that sharing findings can provide an opportunity to celebrate success and learn from difficulties.

- We are thinking about sharing our findings and how best to communicate with Badjao Tribe.
- To ensure that any report uses clear, plain language and follows a logical order.
- It may be necessary to produce both a comprehensive report of the evaluation exercise and a much briefer report or summary of key findings.
- We could hold a special meeting or workshop for those involved in the project at which both give feedback on key findings and collectively consider future action plans in the light of these findings [10-15].

4. CONCLUSION

By deeply studying the lives of the Sama-Dilaut Tribe in Davao City, this research has shown how they've gone from struggling to thriving. Using interviews, we learned how they've moved from begging to running their own businesses. We found that their fishing and 'ukay-ukay' businesses are key to their success, helping them earn a living and improve their lives. These activities also let them afford basic needs, education, and modern comforts, giving them independence and respect in their community.

Looking ahead, the RMC Graduate School is committed to helping the Sama-Dilaut Tribe succeed. They'll keep offering education and activities to support their dreams. Plus, they'll continue programs like scholarships and literacy classes to help the community grow. In short, this study shows how the Sama-Dilaut Tribe's strength and hard work, along with support from education and outreach, are leading to better lives and a brighter future. [This should briefly state the major findings of the study. If you are using copy-paste

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our gratitude to the members of the Sama-Dilaut Tribe in Matina Aplaya, Davao City, Philippines, whose participation made this study possible. Special thanks to Punong Barangay Nestor B. Cirunay for representing the community in the agreement with Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. Additionally, we extend our appreciation to Dr. Evelyn A. Magno, President of RMC, for her support. This research was made possible through the dedication and collaboration of the following

individuals: Dr. Marciano B. Melchor*, Dr. Pablo Bosquit, Dr. Ronaldo Seras, Dr. Wilson E. Gamao, and Flora Garrido, MAEM.

We also acknowledge the support of the RMC Graduate School Community Extension Services and the Research and Development Center. Their commitment to academic outreach has been instrumental in fostering socio-economic empowerment and sustainable development within the Sama-Dilaut Tribe and the wider community of Davao City, Philippines.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Klein J. Sama-Bajau History, Culture & Population; 2023.
Available: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/sama-bajau-history-culture-facts-people>.
2. Pitogo Phelps JR, KME, Emit AT, Hill K. Inter-household transfers of material goods among sama. *Sea Nomads of the Philippines: Reciprocity, helping, signaling, or something else*; 2023.
3. Cruz-Lucero R. With additional notes from Joi Barrios, Jay Jomar F. Quintos, John Bengan, and Rosalie Matilac. Sama Dilaut (Badjao) Tribe of Sulu: History, Culture and Arts, Customs and Traditions [Mindanao Indigenous People. Philippines; Ethnic Group]; 2018.
Available: <https://www.yodisphere.com/2022/09/Sama-Dilaut-Badjao-Culture-History-Sulu.html>.
4. Moustakas CE. Phenomenological research methods. Sage Publications, Inc.; 1994.
5. Creswell JW. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. 4th Edition, SAGE Publications, Inc., London; 2013.
6. Maxwell J. Qualitative research design an interactive approach, 3rd Edition; 2013.
7. Joshua Project. Sama-Bajau in Philippines; 2016.
Available: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/18873/RP
8. Schultz J, Lein I. Meaning-making of female genital cutting: Children's perception and acquired knowledge of the ritual; 2013
Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3634398/>
9. Encyclopedia.com (Downloaded September 20, 2022) Samal.
Available: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/samal>
10. Gorlinski Virginia Sama. Encyclopedia Britannica; 2016.
Available: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sama-people>. Accessed 20 September 2022.
11. Jae Joseph, Russell B, Rodriguez John, Meldwin D, et al. Ethical challenges in genetic research among Philippine indigenous peoples: Insights from fieldwork in zamboanga and the sulu archipelago. *Frontiers in Genetics*. 2022;13.
DOI: 10.3389/Fgene.2022.901515
12. Mohd Anis Nor, Hanafi Hussin. Gendering dance, gazing music: Dance movements, healing rituals and music making of sama bajau and sama dilaut of East Malaysia and Southern Philippines. 2019;1(1): 75-91.
DOI: 10.22452/Samudera
13. Rahman F, Abbas H, Akhmar AM, Tahir MD. The men and the sea: Cultural preservation of bajau people with their traditional practice in bone regency. *Journal of Positive Psychology And Wellbeing*. 2023;7(1):820-835.
14. Rodriguez JJRB, Schroeder L, Muallil RN, Dino N, Herrera MJB, Ishmael AI, De Ungria MCA. Sea nomads, sultans, and raiders: History and ethnogenesis in the sulu archipelago, Philippines.
15. Vida May, T De Juan. Inclusivity in education among sama-bajaos in bohol. Philippines: A Tracer Study. 2018; 6(1).
DOI: 10.15631/Ub.Mrj.V6i1.117

© Copyright (2024): Author(s). The licensee is the journal publisher. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:

The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/115147>