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**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF  
TWO ALTERNATIVE SETTLEMENTS IN MINDANAO**

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**Abstract:**

This study attempted to look into one of the government solutions of addressing the problems of population pressure, unemployment, under-employment, and impending food shortages to promote social justice, thereby ensuring the dignity, welfare and security of all citizens through one of its agencies, the Department of Agrarian Reform, particularly its Resettlement Program.

The subject areas involve the Tiruray beneficiaries in the "Maguindanao 3" DAR Resettlement Project, comparing their present status with the Tiruray immigrants who settled in Arakan Valley.

Tiruray is an ethnic cultural group found in the mountainous regions of Southwestern Mindanao, particularly in Cotabato (the place now being part of Maguindanao Province). The research aimed to find out the socio-economic development and sense of fulfillment of these people, both in the DAR-initiated settlement in Labungan, Dinaig and Kibucay, Upi, Province of Maguindanao, and the self-initiated settlement in Arakan Valley, Cotabato.

The study revolves around the hypothesis that any cultural minority will develop into a self-reliant, self-sustaining, and economically viable community through the efforts of concerned government agencies and non-government organizations.

Primary data were gathered with the use of a structured interview schedule. Responses were tabulated, compared, then evaluated and summarized.

The analysis of the data showed that land tenure influenced the productivity potential of land. However, actual productivity of land seemed to depend more on the greater intensity of input use and better husbandry, which was more easily learned by emulating successful neighbors who count their harvest by number of sacks than by technicians presenting statistics of farm yields.

This phenomenon was demonstrated by the study group in Arakan who had gained not only expertise in modernized farming but also a new work ethic and world view.

The beneficiaries of the DAR project received material and technical assistance, infra-structures and some facilities but it seems that the beneficiaries were not ready to utilize these for their own good, so that the roads constructed for them reverted to unusable state. In Arakan, despite the lack of infra-structure, the settlers continue to maintain a positive attitude for the reason that to them, like the rest of the immigrants from Luzon and Visayas, "good life" is not pegged on the present but is expected in the future through their own efforts in land development in this frontier settlement area. They, however, wish that the government will be more instrumental in the realization of their hopes for a bright

economic future by providing them with much needed access roads, bridges and basic social services in their communities.

This is the very reason why review of resettlement policies and other schemes for the development of cultural communities in the Philippines is necessary. Some top-to-bottom development plans may work, but definitely, participative planning will turn out to be more economical in the end. Also, a settlement of mixed cultural groups is highly recommended to provide the less advanced groups a model to follow.

This will enhance a faster integration of cultural communities into the mainstream of society and enable them to become active partners in nation building. Bringing developmental infrastructures to the cultural communities in their own isolated reservation may result in expensive investments that may not even be fully appreciated by the beneficiaries and, instead, may only breed a “dole-out” mentality, where they expect the government to give everything to them.