

# Chapter 2:

## Demographic Development of Lantapan

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### Introduction

This chapter report on the demographic situation in Lantapan since it became a municipality. It examines population attributes such as age distribution and composition, growth rate, its causes and likely implications for the size of future population and pressure on natural resources. It provides a brief ethno-historical account of migration to the area by *Dumagats*<sup>1</sup>, and of interactions between migrants and the indigenous *Talaandig* people in relation to the acquisition of land.

### Sources of Data

The three main basic sources of demographic statistics for Lantapan are the Census of Population and Housing; Registry Books of the Civil Registrar's Office; and testimony provided by key informants.

Data on size and age distribution of the population are readily available from the Census of Population and Housing conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO). However, vital statistics (birth and death rates and marital rates) are not available for years prior to 1968, when Lantapan was declared a municipality. Thus, the computation of rates of natural increase that could be useful in identifying the sources of population growth, whether natural or social (migration) is confined to later years.

Additional details regarding migration during the last two to three decades were obtained through interviews with some of the relatively older members of the community. For this purpose informants were

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<sup>1</sup> The word *Dumagat* is derived from the root word *dagat*, meaning sea. Most indigenous peoples in Mindanao call migrants who come from across the sea as *Dumagats*.

chosen using the “snowballing” technique. First to be interviewed were the older migrants in Lantapan followed by other informants suggested by earlier informants. Keeping in mind that the other *barangays* needed to be represented, the suggested person was then visited and interviewed, and, in the same way, was asked to recommend other possible informants from other *barangays*. This process was repeated for every new informant until the ethnohistorical accounts they provided became nearly identical to those of the previous informants. Through this process a total of 16 informants were interviewed (See Appendix 2.1 for the profile of the informants).

Inasmuch as the indigenous occupants of Lantapan have already been fairly well-studied by other social science researchers (*e.g.* Burton 1989; Nazarea and Rhoades 1995; Cairns 1995), this study tried to elicit information from older migrants to complement the oral story of the indigenous occupants. Some older indigenous occupants were also interviewed to corroborate the stories of the migrants.

### **Size, Growth and Composition**

Lantapan first appeared in the 1948 Census of Population with a population of 668. It was listed as one of the *barangays* under the then Municipality of Malaybalay, Bukidnon until the 1960 Census of Population with 1,667 residents. In 1968, by virtue of Republic Act No. 7487, Lantapan, together with eight other *barangays* under Malaybalay was converted into a municipality and by the 1970 Census, there were already a total of 14,523 residents. As of 1995 there were already fourteen *barangays* within Lantapan with a total population of 36,943.

Population growth in the municipality during the three and a half decades was indeed very fast, registering an average of 4.26% between 1960 and 1995. This rate was much higher than the Philippine national average of 2.51% in the 1960 and 1995 inter-census period. Such population growth was typical of upland areas, particularly in Mindanao, which in the 1950s earned the title “land of promise” because of its sparse population and vast tracts of “uncultivated” lands.

The rapid increase in population growth in Lantapan is reflected in its increasing share of Bukidnon’s total population. Except for 1980, the percentage share of Lantapan has increased consistently since 1960 until 1990 (Table 2.1). It can be presumed that migration has contributed to this rapid increase.

**Table 2.1. Population enumerated in various censuses, Lantapan: 1970-1990.**

Year	Number	Percentage of Provincial Population
1970	14,523	3.5
1975	20,006	3.8
1980	22,678	3.6
1990	33,351	4.0

Source: NSO. Census of Population and Housing.

There have been recent indications of decline in the annual population growth rate. From 6.4% from 1960-70, the annual growth rate has declined until the present; most noticeable is the sharp drop from 4% in 1980-90 to 1.92% during 1990-95. However, according to NSO staff, part of the recorded drop in growth rate may be due to overestimation in previous censuses.

The population of Lantapan is quite young. A comparison of 1970 and 1990 age distribution reveals population pyramids characterized by a very wide base, which gradually narrows as age progresses. This connotes rapid population growth. The age group 0-14 constituted 50% in 1970, falling only to 42% by 1995. In 1995, close to half of the population belonged to the reproductive age group (15-49 years). In fact, the proportion of future parents increased from 42% in 1970 to 46% in 1995. The momentum provided by such a young population indicates that without out-migration, the population of the municipality will continue to grow well beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given the young age structure of the population, it is also not surprising to find that the youth dependency ratio was very high: 101 in 1970 and 82 in 1995.

There are more males than females in each age category, even at birth. However, the difference in the sex ratio is even wider among the older population, starting from 15-19 to the 60-64 age groups. This pattern suggests an imbalance in net migration between men and women. Presumably more than half of the in-migrants are male; moreover, more women than men migrate out of the municipality upon reaching working age, a phenomenon that was widely observed in the rural areas of Visayas and Mindanao in the 1980s and the 1990s. Out-migration upon reaching working age was also noted by the Research Institute for Mindanao Culture (RIMCU) in its recent census of the occupants of the buffer zone and protected area of the Mt. Kitanglad Range Nature Park (Suminguit

1998). Studies show that women moved out of the rural areas to work as domestic helpers, sales ladies, waitresses and factory workers in urban areas, while men remained to work on the farms. Key informants in Lantapan cited Malaybalay and Valencia towns in Bukidnon, the regional center Cagayan de Oro, and the national capital Metro Manila as popular migration destinations for women as well as for men.

## Population Distribution

Among the 14 *barangays* of Lantapan, Alanib had the largest population in 1970, followed closely by Kulasihan, Poblacion (town center), Bugcaon and Bantuanon. These five *barangays* constituted 50-62% of the municipality's total population over the last 25 years. Except for Bugcaon, which was outranked by Kibanggay, these *barangays* remained the most populous *barangays* until 1995. *Barangay* Kibanggay in 1970 ranked number nine and climbed to number four in 1995. Kibanggay is the only upper-watershed *barangay* in this group; the others are all located in the lower portion of the watershed, at the eastern end of the municipality.

Population growth rates by *barangay* tell a somewhat different story. Bantuanon, a lower-watershed *barangay*, registered the highest average annual growth rate in the municipality (5.4%) between 1960 and 1995. However, four other *barangays* posted annual average growth rates of more than 4% during the same period: Cawayan, Songco, Kaatuan and Basac. All four are located in the upper part of the watershed. The lowest population growth rate during this period (1.62%) was registered by Capitan Juan, which is located in a relatively remote lowland area.

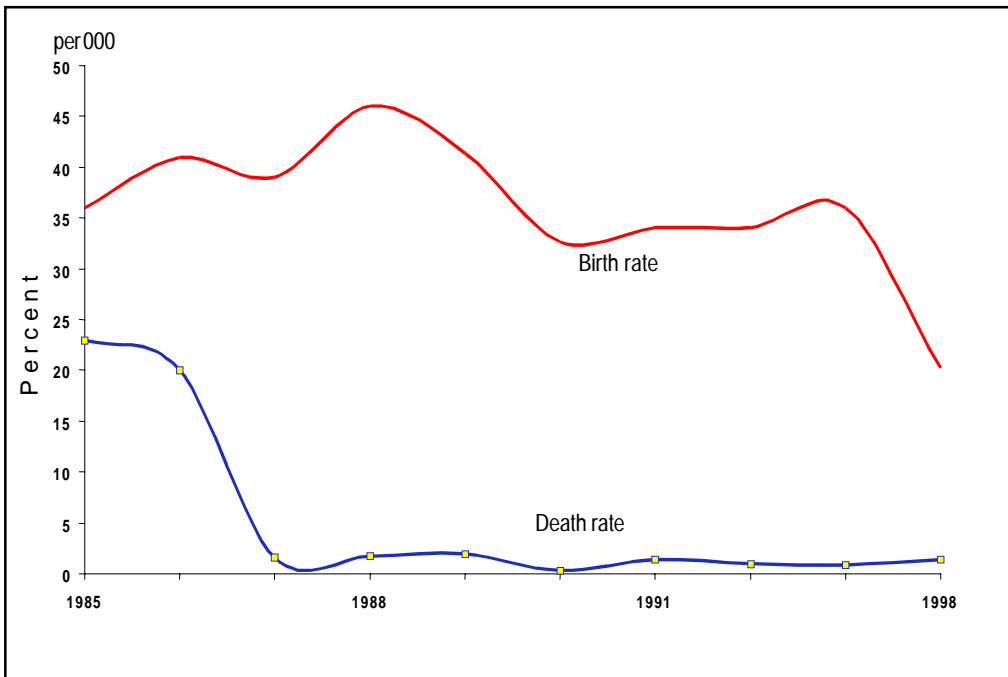
The high population growth rate in Bantuanon is attributable to the introduction of irrigation, which resulted in a shift from single-cropping in the wet season to cropping of rice and corn in both wet and dry seasons. The availability of land, and the development of a market for cool-climate vegetables could have attracted more people into the other four *barangays*. Another explanation could be that most of the earlier migrants from the Visayas and other parts of Mindanao have settled in these *barangays*. With chain migration, the new migrants might have preferred to settle in the *barangays* where their relatives were. The other source of population growth is natural increase, as will be discussed in the following section.

## Sources of Population Growth

### Natural Increase

Available data on birth and death rates suggest that the acceleration in the population growth rate, particularly in the period after 1985, resulted from a sharp decline in the death rate. This fell from 23 per thousand in 1985 to less than two per thousand in 1997, while the birth rate remained relatively stable at around 30 per thousand. This implies that population growth was largely due to a high natural rate of increase. The accelerating natural rate of increase can be seen in Figure 2.1, as a widening difference between crude death rate and birth rates from the mid-1980s until 1994. From the mid-1990s, the natural rate of increase began to exceed total population growth, suggesting that out-migration occurred in the municipality during this period and succeeding years.

The rapid rate of natural increase during the 1980s can be attributed to improved health and nutrition in Lantapan. As an illustration, Table 2.2 shows that the proportion of children who were malnourished dropped significantly between 1992 and 1998. The mild malnourishment rate



**Figure 2. 1. Birth and death rates, Lantapan: 1985-1994 and 1998.**  
Source: Municipality of Lantapan Health Office.

**Table 2.2. Malnourished children, Lantapan: 1992 and 1998.**

	(In Percent)	
	1992	1998
Mild	69.18	36.12
Moderate	27.26	8.17
Severe	3.55	0.37

Source: Municipal Health Office, Municipality of Lantapan.

dropped sharply from 69% to 36% during this period. Of the 7,935 children weighed in 1998, only 27, or 0.37%, were severely malnourished—one-tenth of the 1992 figure.

As earlier revealed, Lantapan's rate of population growth declined continuously in the recent past. One possible source is decline in fertility due to late age at first marriage. In recent years, both women and men have married older, and childbearing years are shortened as a result. The mean age at first marriage was only around 19 for women in 1968, compared with 25.2 in 1994. Similarly, men's age at first marriage rose from 22.5 in 1968 to 27.6 in 1994. Analyzing the pattern of fertility and contraception use, Rele and Alam (1993) found that the late in age at marriage was perceived as one of the sources of fertility decline among Asian countries.

Though limited, the data also suggest the use of artificial contraceptives as a source of decline in the birth rate. As early as 1991, there were already women using artificial contraceptives, of which the pill was the most popular, followed by intra-uterine devices and condoms. Among the 2,353 cases of women practicing family planning, 51% or 1,198 women were taking the pill. The least method used was rhythm method, which is to be expected because of its unreliability in preventing pregnancies. According to Lucas (1994), out of the 100 women using the natural method, 18 to 25 women got pregnant as against 2-5 for pill users.

Another source of declining fertility is better education. There are two possible ways by which it can contribute to lower fertility. First, with increasing education, there are greater employment opportunities for both women and men, and this raises the age at marriage. Second, with higher education, people tend to be more informed and to have a better understanding of family planning. What are its advantages and disadvantages? Results of the 1980 and 1990 Census population showed a slight improvement in the educational attainment in Lantapan where the proportion with high school education increased between these years. Studies (Caldwell and Caldwell 1997; Hirschman and Guest 1990 cited in

Caldwell and Caldwell 1997) have associated declining fertility with certain levels of education.

## **Migration**

Given the limited information on migration and given the mixed ethnicity of the Lantapan population, it can be deduced that in-migration contributed to the increase in the population growth of Lantapan, particularly in the middle of this century. A survey conducted in 1993 (Paunlagui 1996) revealed that most of the migrant respondents had moved to Lantapan between 1950 and 1989. Most migrants came from the Visayas, Cebu and Bohol in particular, while the rest were from other parts of Bukidnon. Similar results were also found in the ethnohistorical study conducted in year 2000, in which 16 middle-aged and elderly members of the community were interviewed.

Appendix 2.1 shows some selected socio-demographic characteristics of the informants in the survey of migrants to Lantapan. The ages of informants ranged from 46 to 75 years old. The mean educational attainment of the informants was 6.75 years, or barely completed first year high school. Three-quarters were affiliated with the Catholic religion. They earned income primarily from farming (50%), unskilled labor and retail activities.

The majority of the informants were born in the Visayan Islands, particularly Cebu (25%), Bohol (18.8%) and Leyte (6.3%). Twenty-five percent of the informants were born in Luzon and ethnically identified themselves as Igorots (18.8%) from Bontoc Province and Ilocanos (6.3%) from Ilocos Province. Some migrants, however, traced their ancestry from outside Mindanao but had settled elsewhere in Mindanao before moving to Lantapan (Paunlagui 1996).

Table 2.3 indicates that half of the informants came to Lantapan in the 1950s, while others came in later years. When asked why they came to Lantapan, the informants offered varied responses, most of which were economic in nature. Interestingly, one of the reasons cited by 29% of the migrant informants was that they found employment in Lantapan. This was the case of a 61-year old farmer-carpenter from Cebu who came to Lantapan in 1951 to work for his uncle as truck helper. He recalled that his uncle had enticed many Cebuanos to come to Lantapan saying "Let us go to Mindanao to own a piece of land. Land there is very cheap; we can buy it from the natives for 25 pesos. We can even exchange it with alcoholic beverages."

**Table 2. 3. Arrival date and reason for migration.**

Year of Arrival in Lantapan	Frequency	Percent
1950s	8	57.1
1960s	5	35.7
1970s	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0
<b>Reason for Migration</b>		
To own a piece of land	3	21.4
To look for a job/got a job	4	28.6
Invited to come by a relative	4	28.6
To have a better life	3	21.4
Total	14	100.0
<b>Situation Back Home</b>		
Unproductive land	3	25.0
Landless	2	16.7
Own little land but have so many siblings	5	41.7
Employed, but paid very little	1	8.3
Jobless	1	8.3
Total	12	100.0
<b>Process of Migration</b>		
Came by myself	3	21.4
Came with family members	8	57.2
Came with employer	3	21.4
Total	14	100.0

Source: Key Informant Interview 2000.

Almost 90% of the informants in our survey of migrants claimed to own the land they currently occupy. The tenurial instrument possessed was either a Certificate of Land Title (50%), Tax Declaration (35.7%), or both (14.3%). It is important to point out that Tax Declaration *per se* is not a tenurial instrument in the sense of securing one's right over a piece of property. While it is recognized as proof of occupancy, Tax Declaration does not provide security of tenure because the land, even if it is classified "alienable and disposable", remains in public ownership until such time as the occupant has been issued by the government with a Certificate of Land Title. Consequently, much land acquired by in-migrants is held in legally insecure tenure.

A 70-year old Igorot from the Province of Bontoc in the northern Philippines shared a similar migration story. He came to Lantapan in 1952 because he and three other Igorots were hired by the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) as tractor drivers. The ADC was an agribusiness corporation owned by American nationals, and specializing



in the production of white potato. The company acquired 339 ha of land in *Barangay Songco* and *Barangay Cawayan*, which he along with other workers plowed using tractors before planting potatoes. The three other Igorots returned to their province one year after their job contract with the ADC expired. Wed to a Talaandig woman, one Igorot stayed. In 1953, the couple bought a hectare of land in Songco for just 80 pesos. In later years, a professional surveyor measured the land that he bought; it turned out to be four ha.

Our key informant continued to visit his home province in Bontoc. During his visits, he would share the story of his adventure and fortune in Lantapan to his relatives and friends. Some Igorots, who were willing to take the risk of venturing into relatively unknown territory would travel with him or follow him later, knowing that they already had a contact person in Lantapan. As the years passed by, the number of Igorots in Lantapan increased. The Igorots in Lantapan are known to produce high value cash crops in Kibangay and Basac and other *barangays* near the buffer zone of Mt. Kitanglad Range Nature Park.

To probe the reasons for migration further, informants were asked to describe the economic situation in their province of origin. Those who responded to the question were unanimous in saying that economic difficulty back home—and specifically the shortage of agricultural land and other productive resources—encouraged them to migrate. Migrants from Bontoc pointed out that while their rice terraces on the mountain slopes were quite productive, they had limited opportunities to venture into other activities because of poor natural resource endowments. In fact they were forced to carve the mountains into rice terraces because they had very few options—there was very limited flat land to till. Those who came from the Visayas cited unproductive land after years of repeated cultivation as a reason for leaving their provinces. The land required high labor and fertilizer inputs in order to maintain yields. Some informants cited having very little land with many mouths to feed as reason for their migration. Two informants cited having no land at all as reason for venturing into the unknown territories of Mindanao. For instance, a 58-year old farmer from the island of Negros Occidental lamented that most farmers like him could not cultivate farms of their choice because vast tracks of land in Negros were owned by a few landed elite. Landless farmers had to work as laborers in sugarcane plantations, or make the decision to migrate elsewhere in search of a better life. Farmers like him came to Mindanao with hopes that their dreams would be fulfilled in the so-called “land of promise.”

The process of migration to Lantapan was thus either spontaneous in nature, or the product of chain migration. The informants came either on

their own, while still single (21.4%) to explore better life opportunities; or with an employer (21.4%); or with family members (57.2%) (Table 2.3). Usually the adventurous individuals came first. As pointed out earlier, after finding a place they could call home, they occasionally visited their home province and encouraged relatives and friends to come with them. The second batch of settlers, therefore, already had contacts in Lantapan. These were the ones who immediately brought their families with them. No one mentioned coming to Lantapan due to government-sponsored migration, although some had heard of it taking place in other parts of Bukidnon. That there was no mass exodus to Lantapan was confirmed by the third wife of the former Talaandig chieftain Kinulintang. She pointed out that one of the early *Dumagats* who came to Lantapan was Jurolan. When Jurolan became the first mayor of Lantapan in 1968, the number of Cebuano migrants increased dramatically. This is because, like other early migrants, he encouraged people from his hometown in Cebu to come to acquire land in Lantapan.

### **Projections of Population Growth and Pressure on Land Resources**

As noted earlier, population growth is a result of the interplay of three demographic processes: mortality, fertility and migration. The age-sex structure then defines a dependency level that is closely related with density and other land-related factors. As population increases beyond the limits of the resource base, new and more intensive techniques of resource use, which may lead to further degradation of the environment, are sometimes adopted.

The average land area owned by the informants in our migration survey is 12 ha. That the average farm size owned by the informants is fairly high is due to the fact that they came to Lantapan in the 1950s (57.1%) and 1960s (35.7%) when land in Lantapan was relatively abundant and cheap (see Table 2.3). This figure is also consistent with Huke's (1963) observation that in the 1960s, Mindanao was characterized by an average farm size of 12 ha. However, Costello (1986) noted that in the 1980s the average farm size for Mindanao had dropped to less than four hectares. Other survey data from Lantapan place the average farm size much lower still (see Chapters 2 and 3, this volume).

To examine the effect of population pressure on the environment, we computed the future path of population density, using the projected population until year 2030 and the total land area of Lantapan. We also computed the man-land ratio, the ratio between the total population (or

some segment of it) and the area of arable cropland. This ratio is more useful in Lantapan since many of the people in Lantapan are primarily dependent upon local agricultural resources, and much of the land is unsuitable for cultivation by virtue of slope, inaccessibility, or other factors.

Using a simple extrapolation, the population of the municipality is projected to increase from 36,943 in 1995 to 114,948 in 2030 (Table 2.4). After 35 years, it is projected that the population density will be 359 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, 242 persons more per hectare than the computed population density in 1995. This means that more people will depend on the same land resource, which at the same time is also being used for purposes other than farming. Compared with the national density of 229 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, the population density for Lantapan was much lower in 1995.

The computed man-land ratio suggests the increasing scarcity of agricultural land for cultivation among Lantapan residents. Table 2.4 shows that as early as 1995, there was less than half a hectare of cropland per person. Assuming that the area of arable land remains the same and will not be converted to other uses, the arable cropland per person will drop to only 0.15 ha, or 1,500 m<sup>2</sup>, per person by 2030. The very low available cropland per person can be attributed to the fact that almost half of the land of Lantapan is considered forestland. With the implementation of the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program of the government, the people of Lantapan will have to depend heavily on arable cropland area for their source of income.

**Table 2.4. Projected population projection, density and man-land ratio, Lantapan: 1995-2030.**

Year	Projected Population	Density (No. of person/km <sup>2</sup> )	Man-arable Land Ratio (hectares/person)
1995	36,943	116	0.46
2000	43,406	136	0.39
2005	50,999	160	0.33
2010	59,922	188	0.28
2015	70,405	221	0.24
2020	82,722	260	0.21
2025	97,194	305	0.17
2030	114,198	359	0.15

Source: NSO, various years.

As early as 1996, the people interviewed were already feeling the strain on land resources. They complained that there were times during the year that there were no jobs available in the area. Unless there is substantial growth of non-agricultural employment, and with the law prohibiting the opening up of new lands for agricultural production, people will have to rely on the available agricultural land for their farming and related activities.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Population growth in the Municipality of Lantapan was rapid until 1990, and was due to both natural increase and migration. From the 1950s until the 1970s, migration contributed largely to the rapid increase of population, but this was later substituted by natural increase. Migrants into the area arrived in the 1950s and the 1960s from the Visayas (mainly Cebu and Bohol) and Luzon (Mountain Province and Benguet). In the late 1980s, there was a rapid decline in the crude death rate. However, the crude death rate remained high, and this health and nutrition-driven transition contributed to the rapid increase in population.

There are indications, however, that the population growth rate is now declining. This trend can be attributed in part to declining fertility, which in turn can be due to increased age at first marriage, improved education, and use of artificial contraception. The data also suggests that Lantapan is becoming an out-migration area. The annual rate of natural increase is now greater than the average population growth rate. There is a need to further examine the robustness of this result once more and until better data becomes available.

Indicators measuring the pressure of population on land resources reveal that Lantapan is better off than the country as a whole. However, given limited opportunities for non-agricultural economic activity and stricter laws on the use of forest resources, the municipal government in cooperation with the provincial government must institute programs to increase agricultural productivity and ensure the sustainability of agricultural development in the area.

There are couples using artificial contraception to limit their number of children, thus the local government must provide a range of family planning methods available, often referred to, as the "method mix." The more methods available, the better chances that couples can find the best method for their needs. Seemingly, late age at marriage contributes to declining fertility, thus educational, as well as, economic opportunities for the youth must be made available. Although the proportion of well-

nourished children in Lantapan is increasing, it remains still below figures for the country as a whole. Thus, the program of the local government must also ensure food availability and food quality. Some of the policy considerations related to nutrition are as follows: increasing local production of nutritious food, better nutrition education and provision of safe water and basic sanitary facilities.

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**Appendix 2.1. Selected demographic characteristics of informants, Lantapan: 2000.**

Item	Frequency	Percent
<b>Barangay where Informants Currently Live</b>		
Alanib	4	25.00
Baclayon	1	6.25
Balila	2	12.50
Basac	2	12.50
Kibangay	1	6.25
Songco	4	25.00
Victory	2	12.50
Total	16	100.00
<b>Age of Brackets</b>		
45-49 years	2	12.50
50-54 years	2	12.50
55-59 years	2	12.50
60-64 years	4	25.00
65-69 years	2	25.00
70-74 years	3	18.80
75-79 years	1	6.30
Total	16	100.00
	Minimum=46 years	Maximum = 75 years
		Mean = 61.25 years
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Elementary	10	65.50
High School	4	25.00
College	2	12.50
Total	16	100.00
	Minimum=2	Maximum=14
		Mean=6.75
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>		
Seventh Day Adventist	2	12.5
Catholic	12	75.0
Four Square	1	6.3
Baptist	1	6.3
Total	16	100.0
<b>Occupation/Livelihood</b>		
Farmer	8	50.00
Farm caretaker	1	6.25
Farmer and carpenter	2	12.50
Farming and sari-sari store	3	18.75
Farming and photography	2	12.50
Total	16	100.00

**Appendix 2.1. Continued.**

Item	Frequency	Percent
<b>Place of Birth</b>		
Within Lantapan	2	12.50
Outside Lantapan but w/in Bukidnon	1	6.25
Outside Bukidnon but within Mindanao	1	6.25
Outside Mindanao but within Visayas	8	50.00
Luzon	4	25.00
Total	16	100.00
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Boholano	3	18.75
Cebuano	4	25.00
Igorot	3	18.75
Talaandig	3	18.75
Leyteno	1	6.25
Ilocano	1	6.25
Mixed Ethnicity	1	6.25
Total	16	100.00
<b>Ownership of Land</b>		
Land owner	14	87.50
Does not own land	2	12.50
Total	16	100.00
<b>Area of Land Owned</b>		
<2.4 hectares	2	14.30
2.5-4.4 hectares	4	25.00
4.5-6.4 hectares	3	21.40
6.5-8.4 hectares	1	7.10
>10.5 hectares	4	28.60
Total	14	100.00
Minimum=	0.2 hectares	Mean=
Maximum=	50 hectares	11.73 hectares
<b>Tenural Instrument</b>		
Certificate of Land Title (CLT)	7	50.00
Tax Declaration (TD)	5	35.70
A few hectares of land owned have CLT, the rest only have TD	2	12.50
Total	14	100.00
Less than 19 years	2	15.40
20-29 years	3	23.10
30-39 years	4	30.75
40-49 years	4	30.75
Total	13	100.00
Minimum=	15 years	Mean=
Maximum=	48 years	32.46 yrs