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MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION: TALIPAO BEST PRACTICES

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I. INTRODUCTION

Talipao is one of the 19 municipalities that make up the province of Sulu. It was used to be called Lungan Gi'tung as it is located at the center of the province. Sulu's municipalities share common problems such as lack of peace and order condition, poverty, lack of industries, high unemployment rate, high illiteracy rate and poor governance. Some municipalities are not functional in terms of delivering the basic services to the people. Political observers are divided in pointing the roots and symptoms of the problems while the people in general cannot differentiate roots from the symptoms of the problems. Depending on the level of analysis and perspective, many professionals especially professors in the state colleges and universities share the belief that poor governance is the root of the problems in Sulu. If poor governance is taken as the root of the problem, therefore, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, kidnap for ransom, lack of peace and order condition, lack of water supply, and lack of electricity are only symptoms of the problems.

Poor governance means incapability of local officials to administer development and to develop administration. It also implies lack of accountability, no transparency in governance and lack of people's participation. It is not clear to the people what goals the local government in Sulu are trying to achieve for the next ten years.

This paper proceeds with the view that reform in local governance should start with improving the municipal administration as pivot of social change within the municipality. Delivery of basic services cannot be done without strong municipal administration. Without sufficient delivery of basic services, local government cannot attain its vision and goals. The Sulu vision is simply to make Sulu peaceful and progressive community. The objective of the study is to identify best practices in the Municipality of Talipao that can be replicated by other system of local governance in Sulu. Analysis in this research is based on community immersion and inputs given by the participants during the focus group discussion.

II. TALIPAO MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

The Municipality of Talipao was the first rural municipality in the first district of Sulu to transform its administration to become functional and operational. This started with the leadership of then Mayor Tambrin J. Tulawie who won the election under the MNLF ticket during the time of Nur Misuari who happened to be appointed as regional governor of the defunct Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Mayor Tambrin subscribed to the slogan of the MNLF upholding the interest of *hula-bangsa-agama*. Although, this slogan was loosely applied or followed but at least this slogan has become a political principle that guides the administration of the Municipality of Talipao. In this municipality, the

local executives together with the staff have able to operationalize the slogan into action.

Before the advent of Mayor Tambrin in June 1997 as mayor, the Municipality of Talipao was disorganized; its officials held their office functions from their respective houses because Talipao had become the bastion of the Abu Sayyaf fighters who carried out kidnap for ransom activities. So that when Mayor Tambrin became the mayor, he initiated the rebuilding of the municipality. He commanded the whole employees to report to Bilaan, the seat of the municipal government. The mayor said, “we should make our constituents feel the presence of government by holding our office right in the *poblacion*, then from here we can deliver the basic services and work together with the people.” Government is the pillar of *hula*. Without functional government, *hula* will not develop. The mayor was also quoted, let us rebuild our *hula* by putting up basic infrastructure facilities particularly the municipal building, schools, *masjid*, wharf, and *barangay* roads to enhance connectivity of all areas. With this initiative the climate of peace came in. The people saw new hope. They realized that the municipal government exists to help the people improved their own welfare. If there is good governance, our *bangsa* will become united for peace and development. If *bangsa* is stable, they have time to care for their *agama* or spiritual life. The mayor was often saying that *agama* cannot be separated from politics. To him, politics without *agama* is meaningless to the life of *bangsa*. It is *agama* that guides the leaders as well as the people to the right path.

Based on the focus group discussion, the participants identified the following program thrusts of the Municipality of Talipao which were adopted by the late Mayor Tambrin J. Tulawie and has become the pattern by his successors who belong to his own immediate family, such as 1). Improving peace and order condition, 2). Good governance, 3). Public welfare, and 4). Food security.

Improving Peace and Order Condition

Since the 1970s up to the 90s, Talipao municipality became the battlefield between the Philippine military and the Moro National Liberation Front or MNLF. Most of the MNLF strongholds are situated in Talipao and nearby municipalities such as Patikul, Indanan and Maimbung. The military is used to conduct operations in these adjoining areas. For many years these areas especially Talipao and Patikul became no man’s lands. Civilian populations were forced to flee and forced to abandon their farms. Practically, the whole constituents of Talipao municipality had experienced war trauma, poverty and human rights violations in the hands of the Philippine military.

Talipao also became the haven of the Abu Sayyaf. This group engaged in kidnap for ransom activities. It committed crimes against humanity and its actions caused many collateral damages on the properties of the local residents. Armed confrontation between the Abu Sayyaf and the military had displaced thousands of families from their homes and turned the area under absolute poverty. The whole situation is further confounded with family feuds ranging from marriage issues, land ownership, and political rivalry among local warlords.

Against this backdrop, the Municipality of Talipao introduced a comprehensive local peace building plan to address the complicated issues and

problems affecting peace and order condition of the area. This plan is known as the Peace and Order and Public Safety Plan (POPSP) crafted by the local officials together with the police personnel and the representatives of the civil society organizations (CSOs). The plan outlined the target goals, the required support services and peoples' participation.

Priority target goal is to build peaceful Community. In the effort of the new municipal administration to create the climate of peace, Sitti Raya T. Tulawie, the wife of then Mayor Tambrin pushed the transformation of the municipality from a crime-driven area into a peaceful area. To achieve this goal, the planners identified four success indicators: 1). Reduction of number of crimes to 55%, 2). Increasing crime solution to 60 %, 3). Increasing the number of police personnel from 64 to 162 and 4). Sustaining zero incidence of insurgency and terroristic activities.

The municipal administration wanted sustained preparedness for the unforeseen calamities and organized crimes. It has therefore organized the Barangay Peace Action Teams in all 52 barangays of Talipao. Each team will tackle the community problem through dialogue, amicable settlement and monitoring of the day to day issues in the community. Regular meeting of the members of the Local Peace and Order Council and the Barangay Peace and Order Council have to be carried out as scheduled in order to discuss issues, problems and special concerns. As a result, the whole barangays of Talipao became vigilant against organized crimes by reporting any unusual behavior of the armed groups and suspicious people. Each barangay captain ensures all crimes committed are reported to police and the military authorities in the area.

For its part the municipal administration exerts more effort for the full implementation of programs, projects, services and activities on promoting peace building in the whole of Talipao.

Required Support

Parts of the peace building efforts, the municipal administration attempts to improve the communication facilities, water supply and irrigation project to increase agricultural products and concreting the road networks within the municipality in order to enhance connectivity among the people. These farm to market roads are of great help for the farmers to transport their products to the market. The municipal administration also continues to improve water accessibility of the local constituents by implementing the level 3 project whereby access to water supply will be direct to every household.

Peoples' Participation

Empowerment of the people is a key policy of the Talipao municipal administration. It encourages enhancement of constituency building among the local residents to the maximum. It aims to attain 15 to 25% of the local residents are organized into civic organizations and civil society organizations and become represented in all special bodies of the municipal government. Holding of barangay assemblies are also encouraged. The municipal administration ensures that all local problems and development opportunities are discussed within the barangay level. Guided with the spirit of *shura* or consultation, the

people of Talipao are encouraged to consult each other on major issues and decisions affecting the situation of their respective barangays. CSOs participation in the POPS is always welcome. And most importantly, the municipal administration wanted to see more participation and collaboration between the LGUs, PNP, CSOs and the community.

Today, there is an impact of the peace and order and public safety plan in promoting the climate of peace. Kidnap for ransom activities in Talipao have gone done drastically to zero percent since 2018 up to the present. This is the result of the deployment of BPAT in every barangay and military visibility in the area. Violence perpetrated by civilians have also decreased to negligible rate. Illegal drug trafficking is under control. Ninety percent of the persons under listed drug pushers and users have been cleared by the local police. Major armed conflict between the MNLF and the Philippine military has been prevented due to increase dialogue and initiative of the municipal administration. The number of internally displaced persons or IDPs has also decreased to ten percent for the last five years. Majority of the IDPs have returned to their respective barangays and began their normal life. Most of them enjoy water supply level to their respective villages and further connected with road networks.

Good Governance

In principle, the goal of good governance is to create the condition by which LGUs become accountable, and provide sustainable clean water, energy and sanitation for all, inclusive and equitable education, good health and well-being, peaceful, orderly and just community suitable for business and livelihood activities. The FGD participants were asked the kind of principles being observed by the local officials and the employees. They mentioned the concept of *amanat* (trust), unity of Islam and governance, *kaadilan* (justice), *pagsamasibu* (equality) and *pagnakura* (leadership). It is these principles the municipal administration has managed effectively. The mayors from husband to wife and now the son, have consistently socialized their employees and their followers to the five principles. Key staff of the mayor is proud enough to resonate the idea that governance is *amanat*. It must be actualized and implemented as *amanat* from Allah which local officials must fulfill sincerely and effectively. Governance is for the well-being of the people.

Officials and employees of Talipao municipality believed in the unity of state and religion expressed in the phrase: *Al-Islam addin wa addawla. In Islam amuna agama, amuna parinta*. They said that the two entities cannot be separated; Islam is there to guide the actions of the people. They asserted that separation of religion and politics is not good as it breeds corruption in government. They also asserted that Islam is the answer to all problems of humanity. Balance life with emphasis to both *dunya* and *akhirat* will make people moderate in their life. It must be the core strategy to attain good governance as pointed by the FGD participants.

The FGD participants failed to articulate their points on the concept of *kaadilan*. However, most traditional leaders including the late Mayor Tambrin J. Tulawie are acquainted with the traditions of the Tausug. It was Dr. Hannibal H. Bara who clarified and explained the concept of the Tausug *kaadilan* in the forms

of phrases such as 1). *Way pagbakul, way pagkingking*, 2). *Tindug batik* 3). *Umanib dayn ha sara kulampira*.

Pagsamasibu or equality is also a major social concept of the Tausug. Local officials said, “We are all servants of Allah and we are equal before the law.” Discrimination is therefore prohibited. All constituents are entitled to fair treatment and help from the municipal administration. Even the Tulawie clan cannot claim special privilege. Anyone will have to undergo the due process of law. Nobody will be punished except after due process of law is observed.

The concept of *pagnakura* is also a major guiding principle of the Talipao municipal administration. The FGD participants however can hardly articulate how this concept is operationalized. Their common observation is that the mayor is firm and courageous to enforce his leadership and justice to all. The mayor personally leads in finding solution to all conflict brought to his office. He never turns down and gives up any case for resolution. He does not abandon his men and his followers as well as the *ra’ayat*.

In an interview with Dr. Hannibal H. Bara, the good professor mentioned the *hadith* of Nabi Muhammad (S.A.S.): “*Kullukum ra’in wa kullukum mas-ulun an raiyatihi*.” Every one of you is shepherd and you will be asked about his flock. He said, why the Prophet described the leader like a shepherd. Because the shepherd focuses his time to guard his flocks because he is afraid to his master for being accountable to the welfare of the flocks. Similarly, the leader guards his people all the time for fear of being accountable before Allah.

To the Tausug tradition, if a person accepts to become leader is tantamount to become liked a horse, ready to act as carrier of loads, hence he is *nakura* or you become or he becomes like a horse. The Prophet said: the leader is servant of the people.

Good Governance in Action

The mayor often mentioned that the object of *pagnakura* is to promote good governance. He believed in the dictum the leader is public servant and that the leader must be ready to serve the people. Tulawie clan under Mayor Tambrin has succeeded putting good governance in action. They regained back the trust of the people of Talipao from which the Tambrin dynasty draws popular support keeping them in power for more than 20 years already. What is done in the municipal level it must be also done at the barangay level. There is tandem of action between the municipal and the barangay level. When the FGD participants mostly employees of the Talipao municipality, were asked how they put good governance in action, they said the Talipao municipal administration follows basically the three cores of good governance such as transparency, accountability and people’s participation.

Transparency. The Municipality of Talipao has no ghost employees. All employees were recruited on the basis of competitiveness by way of interview, demonstration, eligibility, and qualification. People who occupy key positions are not connected to mayor by blood or political affiliation. People were recruited of being an asset to the promotion of good governance.

Programs and projects and their corresponding budgets are all reflected in the annual development plan of the municipality. They are implemented after public bidding is done.

The municipality of Talipao has 8 thousand 4Ps recipients. In order to have transparency, the mayor ordered the reassessment of the present lists due to report that some recipients are not residents of Talipao. After the reassessment, only two thousand recipients were found to be qualified. Hence, survey was conducted and identified six thousand potentials eligible for the 4Ps.

Accountability. Public accountability is the accountability of public officers and employees to the people. This means that public officers who are invested with public trust and authority exercise their powers and functions as servants of the people and they are held responsible to the people through their immediate superiors, for their acts and omissions during the performance of their functions.¹ There are three types of accountability such as financial accountability, compliance accountability, managerial accountability and results accountability. Financial accountability is that public officers have the duty to protect and use government funds and resources in accordance with the instructions, regulations, restrictions and limitations laid down by the law. Compliance accountability is the responsibility of the public officer for adherence to laws, rules and regulations in the performance of his functions. Managerial accountability is concerned with the efficiency and economy in the use of public funds, resources and manpower. Results accountability looks to the accomplishment of mission by public officers and is concerned with whether the objectives and plans of the government are achieved.²

Guided with the principle of *iman* or Islamic faith, municipal officials and employees are aware of their accountabilities to the people and Allah. The degree of living up to be always accountable will depend on the level of *iman* of a person. A person with high level of *iman* fully believes in the *yawmal hisab* or day of reckoning that Allah will judge every deed by His servants.

Peoples' Participation. There are many kinds of mechanism of participation of the people in governance. These are election, consultation, special bodies, suggestion box, and public criticism. Election is the basic mechanism for participation of the people in the selection of leaders. By law, every citizen is granted with the right of suffrage or the right to vote. In Sulu, unfortunately, election is not conducted freely. Voters are not free to vote in accordance with their prepared choice. The exercise of the right to suffrage is often marred with violation. The glaring factors affecting this right are vote buying, coercion, threat of harming, and deception of the voters who are illiterates. These factors are common not only in Sulu but true to the whole country.

Consultation is also part of the mechanism for participation. At the barangay level, the conduct of consultation is not done as it is ought to be done properly for reason most people are not well-educated. Local folks can only

¹ Pacifico A. Agabiun and Lydia A. Agno, *Public Accountability: A Handbook*, Quezon City: Institute of Government and Law Reform, 1992, p. 3

² Ibid p. 4

express their demands and interests but cannot feed ideas on how to improve good governance. The tendency of the leader is only to inform the people about his decision on the proposed program of policy for the community.

As observed, some leaders do not observe the procedure of conducting consultation or do not follow the parliamentary procedure of conducting a meeting. Agenda of the consultation are not made clear to the participants. The true scenario of the community is not told before the participants. Ethics of meeting are not discussed beforehand. The FGD participants pointed out the tendency of *sambulakut* (disorder) in meeting and that is some people speak even they are not recognized while other talks to each other. At the end of meeting, many participants do not understand what has transpired in the meeting. However, at the municipal level consultation follows the normal approach.

Under the local government code, the members of the civil society organizations are represented in the local special bodies as well as in the municipal councils including representation in the public bidding. Local special bodies include local education board, local health board, local development council, peace and order council and the PBAC or Prequalification Bid and Award Committee. The members of the local school boards are the mayor, district supervisor, municipal treasurer, representative of the federation of *Sanguniang Kabataan*, president of the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) and elected representative of the non-academic personnel. The main function of the local school board is to determine the annual supplementary budgetary needs for the operation and maintenance of public schools within the municipality.

The composition of the Local Health Board includes the following: mayor, municipal health officer, chairman, committee on health, and representative of the NGOs involved in the health services. The main function of this Board is to propose annual budgetary allocations for the operation and maintenance of health facilities and services.

The members of the municipal development council are the mayor, all barangay captains, chairman, committee on appropriation, representative of congressman and representatives of the NGOs (not less than 1/4th of the total council members). The main functions are to formulate long term, medium term and annual socio-economic development plans and policies and to formulate the medium term and annual public investment programs.

The fourth mechanism of participation is public criticism. Under the law, all tax payers are entitled to criticize government policies and behaviors of public officials whereby the municipal officials have no right to intimidate or to threaten anybody who wants to express their opinions even it goes against their personal interest.

Fifth mechanism is suggestion box. This is observed at the Talipao municipal office. The person who is in charged to collect the suggestions, will prepare the lists and analyze and summarize them before presentation to the head of the human resource development.

Public Welfare. The FGD participants agree that the adoption of Comprehensive land Use Plan (CLUP) is the key to promote public welfare. The planning body of the Talipao municipality has identified the forest areas, agricultural lands,

residential areas, commercial areas, river banks and coastal areas for the purpose of preservation and protection.

Projects promoting public welfare are going on. Barangay roads are eighty percent cemented. The whole 52 barangays are now connected to Bilaan *poblacion* by roads. The municipal government also put up fishing port at Barangay Tuyang. Water system was also completed and has served the whole barangays. With the help of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the municipal government managed to develop the Bontod water system that supplies water to all barangays and areas belong to nearby municipality.

Important facilities such as livelihood training center, hospital, gymnasium and fire station are now in place and operational.

At present, the municipal office has already formulated the solid waste management but still pending approval by the regional office. It has also established tie up with MSU-Sulu for the plan to offer educational extension service in Talipao. It has maintained coordination with the education officials assigned in the field. Regular consultation with the educators concerning issues affecting education is often conducted. Reassessment of the recipients of the 4Ps was completed already. It will benefit the real residents of Talipao.

The municipal government also encourages the community to organize the people into CSO to become part of the local council. Local residents are given training to make them highly organized. People are encouraged to organize People's Organization for them to become eligible to receive financial assistance and actively participate in the development process. In particular, the municipal office conducted empowerment training for the women.

Community dialogue with the *panday* (traditional midwife) is also carried out by the municipal health officials in order to reduce mortality. The local health practitioners work as partner with the *panday* from profiling until delivery of the child. Today, many *panday* have registered with the municipal government. The aim of the *panday* dialogue is to expose the *panday* to modern practice of child delivery. Before, no one goes to the center. Today the situation has changed. Pregnant women are now visiting the health center in order to avail the medical services. The mother is assisted together with the newly born baby.

Business one stop Shop facility is now established in order to encourage competitiveness among the people. Issuance of business permit can be worked out within five days. Investors coming from outside is expected to invest business activity in Talipao. Generating local revenue is part of the objective of the municipal government.

Food Security. The municipal officials believed that food security is linked to the enhancing of the income of the residents. More food production means more income for the people. As such, the municipal government has built irrigation projects in order to revive the rice production of Talipao. It has also helped the local farmers in expanding their cassava, corn and vegetables plantation by providing them cassava stalk and seedling. So far seventy percent of the local residents of Talipao derive their income from the farm. While the rest get their income from fishing.

Currently, the municipal government also helps the farmers in putting up poultry farm. It is seeking the technical assistance of the DOA Region 9 for the benefit of the farmers. It wanted to make Talipao an egg producing municipality.

III. DELIVERING BASIC SERVICES THROUGH IMPROVED MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

There was a substantial improvement of municipal administration of Talipao from the time of Mayor Tambrin J. Tulawie up to the present compared to the martial law period which disrupted the operation of the municipal government of Talipao due to the MNLF rebellion from 1972 to the signing of the 1996 Peace Agreement. At this period there was no actually functional government throughout the Province of Sulu and most of the local residents were displaced from their homes.

When Mayor Tambrin became the mayor in 1997, his first action was to organize a functional government right in Bilaan, the seat of government of Talipao. He led his followers to come home to Bilaan and he also commanded the staff of the municipality to hold office at Bilaan. He revived the municipal office, opened the market at *poblacion*, and strongly supported the opening of the schools in the whole Talipao municipality. He secured the roads from harassment by lawless elements by putting up military checkpoints, armed guards along the highway. The presence of the military camp in Talipao and its various detachments helps much in neutralizing the lawless people. Within the first three terms or nine years in power, Mayor Tambrin was able to improve the climate of peace although occasional events took place but at least many people came home already to their respective barangays.

Administrative Capacity

Improving the administrative capacity of the Talipao municipality, Mayor Tambrin did his best to make the municipal administration functional. He brought in competent and committed people who did help him in running the municipal administration. In his time, Tambrin managed to institutionalize the reform he wanted to introduce to the Municipality of Talipao, completing the bureaucratization of the municipal administration. He filled up all the itemized positions with the qualified young people. Mayor Tambrin recognized the role of the municipal administration as pivot of peace and development. Stable administration is the symbol of hope of the people. Without showcase to show to the people as in the form of functional administration, he can hardly convince his people to rally behind his leadership. Hence, he promoted human development among his employees by sending them on regular basis to training and seminars in order to hone their skills in planning and management. Some of his staff were also allowed to undergo graduate studies in public administration.

The result of human development program, the municipal staff became exposed to administrative works such as planning formulation, preparation of annual report, coordination, program implementation and evaluation. The

members of the municipal council were also trained on how to legislate relevant policies. Members of the CSOs were also trained on advocacy and to develop social agenda for inclusion in the development agenda of the municipal government. The end result of human development is the enhancement of the administrative capacity of the municipal administration. Administrative capacity refers to the capacity of the municipal officials to formulate development plan and program and to implement it efficiently and effectively. The current development process now taking place in the whole of Municipality of Talipao is the result of the improved administrative capacity of the Talipao municipal administration. Talipao is now transformed from war-driven area into conflict free area, from unfunctional governance to functional governance.

Sustained Functional Administration

The FGD participants identified two factors that sustain the functional administration of Talipao. They are the continuing political dynasty and commitment to the philosophy of *hula-bangsa-agama*. The people of Talipao have likely favored the present political dynasty as positive force in the making of Talipao. Although, there are people who are negative to family dynasty but considering the attitude and the culture milieu of the people, dynastical leadership seems to be relevant in bringing stability and discipline among the people.

Factors Affecting Delivery of Services

Basic services in the Municipality of Talipao are basic health service, support to education including *madrassa* and *masajid*, livelihood training, solar energy, irrigation system, farm to market roads, water supply and farm technical support. Through these services the people have felt the Talipao governance. However, there are more rooms for improvement and reform of delivering the basic services to the Talipao people.

The factors affecting the delivery of services are lack of financial resources, lack of regional and national support. The twenty percent development fund is not enough to provide the needs of the community considering the magnitude of poverty and the devastation of properties during the 40 years MNLF armed conflict as well as the impact of the Abu Sayyaf terroristic activities. Local generated revenue is very negligible. The municipal government can hardly raise local revenue because there is no yet business progress that can pay taxes to the government. Without special support from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and the national government, it takes decades to accelerate the development growth of Talipao.

IV. BEST PRACTICES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF TALIPAO

Improved good governance in the Municipality of Talipao has been sustained due to the best practices of its leaders and employees. There are two indicators of best practices: good intention and observance of standard operating procedure expressed in the local government code. The mayor always emphasizes of the importance of keeping the employees' intention pure for the sake of Allah. As mentioned earlier, life must be balance pursuing both worldly

interest and *akhirat*. Good intention is the key to balance life. The FGD participants identified four best practices of the employees in the Municipality of Talipao such as team work, conflict resolution process, functional governance of every barangay and application of political dynasty.

Teamwork. The FGD participants described teamwork by way of trusting the employees, delegation of responsibility and tapping the right person. The employees trust the mayor and every head of the offices of the municipal administration in their efforts to promote good governance. They come to agree on good governance as the primary goal and give their commitment to cooperate, collaborate, support one another and work together as one team. As such the employees are encouraged to consult, respect one's opinion and treat each other as one family working together towards the same direction. Therefore, each member of the team must be trusted and committed to attain the goal. The head is also willing to delegate authority and responsibility to other team members.

Municipality of Talipao is four times awardee of Seal of Good Government and this happened due to the spirit of team work among its employees.

Conflict Resolution Process. In order to prevent violence and pacify conflict within the municipality, the mayor established Municipal Peace-Keeping Action Team (MPAT) and also ordered all barangay governments to establish their respective Barangay Peace-Keeping Action Team (BPAT). There are five influential men with strong personality and credibility that composed the MPAT. They are commissioned to facilitate the conflict resolution process. They will coordinate with their counterparts, the BPAT and work together to address immediately any conflict for the purpose of reducing if not eliminating violence at the barangay level. After gathering information, the members of the MPAT will visit each leader of the warring parties and discuss the problem. The MPAT as representative of the office of the mayor will give emphasis the disadvantages of the armed conflict and its impact on social life and safety of the community. The MPAT members use all the ways to persuade the protagonists to come to amicable settlement. They apply the approach to revive the *suratullah* among the warring parties using the spirit of *ukhuwwa* or Islamic brotherhood. Since all Muslims are brother to one another, giving forgiveness to each other is a command of Islam. They always invoked the phrase, "If Allah can forgive His servants, and why servants cannot forgive each other. Forgiveness is always greater than sin."

Functional Governance. Making the Municipality of Talipao into functional governance is the most important success left by Mayor Tambrin. The approach is simple. He brought in new and young employees. He relayed his message that he wanted to make the municipality functional for the welfare of the constituents. He made his vision and goals apparent to the new employees and drew their commitment. The employees are assured for support they need. They were sent to training and provided them the necessary logistic and office equipment including vehicles. The mayor also activated all special bodies and instructed them to work hard. At the same time, the mayor established his command center

composed of key officials in order to help him run the municipal administration of Talipao. Through the command center, the mayor monitors and supervises the entire staff.

Finally, the mayor put up state of the art municipal building in order to house the different offices of the municipal administration. All employees were ordered to report to their respective offices on time and conduct their official business, eight hours per day from Monday to Saturday.

This was the time the Municipality of Talipao embarked to attain the Seal of Good Housekeeping which aims to assess the local government units on whether they attain minimum governance standards. Housekeeping is keeping work areas neat and orderly, maintaining halls and floors free of slip and trip hazards, and removing of waste materials and other fire hazards from work areas. The criteria of good housekeeping have truly reflected the municipal office of Talipao. All visitors are impressed with clean comfort rooms, nice ground, neat floor and 24 hours water supply. The office is equipped with standard conference room and comfortable office for each division of the Talipao municipal administration. Talipao has been a recipient of the Seal of Good Housekeeping for four successive times.

The Talipao municipal administration also wanted to promote integrity and good performance in public service. It embarked for attaining the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). This is an award given by the DILG to successful LGUs. This refers to “an award, incentive, honor, and recognition-based program for all LGUs, and is a continuing commitment for LGUs to continually progress and improve their performance.”³ This award is given to LGUs exhibiting exemplary performance in five areas of governance, namely: administrative, social, economic and environmental governance, and graduated from Seal of Good Housekeeping to Seal of Good Local Governance. In 2016, these criteria were upgraded into six areas namely: financial administration, good financial housekeeping, disaster preparedness, social protection, business friendliness and competitiveness, peace and order and environmental management. Various indicators of these criteria are happening in Talipao. Reduction of violence, adoption of solid waste management program, abundant water supply to community, protection of forest and watersheds are glaring in Talipao. Hence, the Municipality of Talipao has become four times recipient of the SGLG. The awards on Seal of Good Housekeeping and Seal of Good Local Governance to Talipao are the manifestation of transformation towards functional governance.

Application of Political Dynasty. Political dynasty is practiced for good of the people because its leader enjoys political will. It has managed to keep the unity of the 52 barangays as pillar of the Talipao government. Political dynasty adds strength to the personality of the leader’s leadership to sustain the reform. Because of political dynasty at the top, political rivalry has been reduced to the minimum. It is the patriarch of the political dynasty who will choose to lead the barangay and ask the people to support. In return, the barangay leaders give their

³ Philippine News Agency, July 17, 2019

loyalty to the patriarch and follow his direction. The support of the 52 barangays contributed much to harmony and solidarity of the people of Talipao.

The present mayor also continues the legacy of his father and mother. He uses his privilege as the heir of the Tambrin family dynasty to promote the welfare of his people.

V. CONCLUSION

Municipal administration is the nerve center of local development process. It has two facets: the development of administration and the administration of development. It is through accomplishing the two sides of the municipal administration that makes the municipal administration efficient and effective to promote enhanced basic services to the people. Municipal administration has two primary tasks focusing on rule and service. Central to rule task is the maintenance of peace and order through enforcing the policies and laws as the instrument of justice. Basic services such as education, water, road network, health and electricity are currently dealt by the national government but the local government must build a parallel step to enhance these services for the welfare of the people.

There are four program thrusts of the Municipality of Talipao such as 1). Improving peace and order condition, 2). Good governance, 3). Public welfare, and 4). Food security. The impact of these program thrusts has stimulated the agricultural growth of Talipao as well as the reduction of violence like family feud and kidnap for ransom.

The adoption of program thrusts has made the municipal administration functional and has become the showcase of Talipao. With this reform, the municipal leadership was able to sustain best practices which helped much in addressing peace and order condition and poverty.

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