

# **T'BOLI ARCHICULTURE: A VISUAL INTERPRETATION DECODING THE SPATIAL FORMS AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS AMONG THE TRADITIONAL T'BOLI SETTLEMENTS IN K'LUBI, LAKE SEBU, SOUTH COTABATO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Vernacular architecture serves an important role in weaving together the interrelationship between the architectural form of traditional houses and the indigenous culture and social values embedded in them. This approach demands a need to also look at architecture in a multidisciplinary lens, where academic fields in social science such as anthropology, ethnography, literature, and ethnolinguistics come into play. This paper focuses on decoding the spatial and architectural elements among the traditional T'boli settlements in Klubi, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. The researcher conducted a field study where he did a photo documentation and interview with T'boli cultural masters and local residents, as well as in collaboration with various agencies. He also gathered archived photos of the T'boli traditional settlements from the Santa Cruz Mission School during the fieldwork and compiled these together with the present documented photos and those of Casal's (1978) work for future research reference. The documented architectural elements and spatial forms of the T'boli settlements are then analyzed through a multidisciplinary approach. Results show that there is an intricate intersection between the T'boli spatial forms and the people's culture and values. Moreover, the behavior and lifestyle of the users highly reflect the architectural elements present in the T'boli settlements investigated in this paper. These socio-cultural aspects include the group's marriage culture, social status, belief system, daily activities such as having a wide space flooring for their t'nalak weaving, and their world view. These results, however, have been observed in only some households investigated in the fieldwork site, with modernism seeping in to the place. There is a need to restore these culturally defined indigenous settlements in Lake Sebu. As such, the researchers addressed the sociocultural needs of the community and translated the architectural character of T'boli into a culturally defined community-based design. This paper further recommends that these traditional architectural sites also be adopted in places where other T'boli people have settled, such as in Molopolo, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur.

*Keywords: vernacular architecture, spatial concepts, indigenous culture, T'boli settlements, architectural elements*