

GOVERNANCE OF THE BARANGAY CHAIRPERSONS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF UBAY BOHOL

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—Abstract —

Barangay governance plays a vital role in the empowerment of the local government units in the country. This is linked with the leader's accountability, fairness, and transparency in the exercise of his duties and functions as a servant in his community. This study aimed to evaluate the governance of the Barangay Chairpersons in the Municipality of Ubay, Bohol. The researcher employed the descriptive survey questionnaire using quantitative design and a key informant interview using a qualitative approach. Results showed that the higher the IRA (Internal Revenue Allotment) given to the barangays, the more programs and projects are implemented because funds had been given to them as a subsidy for continuous developments. The results also indicated that majority of the Barangay Chairpersons were able to deliver very satisfactory public services in their barangays which also indicated that the core values of governance namely fairness, transparency and accountability were strengthened by the barangay chairmen during their term of office. The study concluded that the Local Government Code of 1991 paved the way for greater local autonomy to bring government closer to the doorsteps of the people.

Key Words: *Governance, Accountability, Fairness, Transparency*

JEL Classification: Z00

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Overview of Good Governance

Governance is an act or process of governing with authoritative direction or control. It is also a leader's continuous exercise of authority over and the performance of functions for a political unit like the barangay. It refers to the organization, machinery or agency through which a political unit is exercised, authority and performs functions with distribution of powers to official or governing body. According to Robert Presthus (1975), political interest permeates the whole fabric of Government- a machinery or agency in which the political unit exercises authority and performs its functions. Public administration or governance works in a highly political environment. Politics searches for ends as well as means for the betterment of the society it serves: in terms of structure, political exercise, influences and attempts to bind communities on political issues. According to Lipson (1965), Politics involves the fundamentals of social order with the formation of groups. Society is a system of groups which are the breeding grounds for politics. Good governance can foster public participation in policymaking and promote inclusion in decision-making processes. A society that is well governed should provide maximum opportunities for every individual to realize his full human potential. Thus by practicing good governance in a basic political unit such as the barangay, it can be an effective tool for the promotion of the general welfare of the people, thus would serve as an assessment for the performance of the elective barangay officials. This inquiry notes that good governance of a barangay can be affected by the lack of capabilities of officials; indecisiveness during assumption of duties as officers-in-charge. Influence of their siblings and family relatives and sensitivity of the issues and concerns being addressed. We cannot deny the fact that most of the people who run for political positions were mostly influenced by their family of traditional politicians, if not, most of them just rose to fame and won the election due to popularity, without considering the capability of that person, hence, disregarding their merits and competencies. The barangay being the basic political unit has always been at the forefront of local development undertakings in the country. Collectively, the barangays are partners of the national government to respond to development challenges because of their strategic situation at the grassroots level especially in the effective and efficient service delivery to the community. The synergy created

by the barangays in service delivery reflects the state of governance of the city or the municipality. As the basic political unit, the barangay serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government programs, basic services, projects and activities and as a forum in which the collective views of the people in the community may be crystallized and considered. Through the barangay assembly, people at the grassroots level may legislate directly on matters of local concerns, making it the nearest conduit to direct democracy in the Philippines. In the same manner, Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991 mandates that the barangay discharges three seminal functions: a) as a political unit b) as a primary planning and implementing unit and c) as a forum. As a basic political unit, the barangay is the smallest body politic used for governance in the country being a political subdivision of the national government. As a primary planning and implementing unit, the barangay is mandated to plan development projects and programs and implement government policies and activities in the community, create projects in its territory and to deliver basic services of the government to the people. As a forum, the barangay gets the sound views of the people on various political topics. Moreover, it also provides a venue for settling disputes amicably. In society today, man has always encountered management challenges and peculiarities everywhere he goes. However, it does not necessarily mean that man has to enter politics in order to serve his people. Although, in today's trend, man usually renders service to his fellowmen, if one positions himself in an elective office. Our society is increasingly dominated by the belief of individual merit. This belief is that people should achieve success through hard work and ability. This is seen as the fairest and most especially an efficient way to distribute the social status and marital rewards within the society. We need to have competent government leaders that can promote the general welfare of the public especially the grassroots level.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

This study is also an occasion for us to clarify our ideas on issues which are significant in today's administration. The philosophies of good governance and the strategies to realize it are eminently significant today. Before we proceed further to examine the issues we have to be clear about what we mean by good governance. Only then we will be able to work out effective strategies to realize the goal of good governance. We can look at the issue of good governance by examining from each dimension where we are today, what are our weaknesses and

think of strategies by which those weakness can be overcome and we can make meaningful strides towards achieving good governance. This study aimed to benefit the electorate as this provides them with hints in choosing the right persons who are capable enough in handling electoral positions and have the ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of a barangay official. In the process of engaging their local government officials and agencies, they learn about its possible advantages and limitations in the concrete as well as clever tactics and various forms of participation. Consequently, there have been positive changes in the perceptions and attitudes of civil society towards the barangay governance, and vice versa. The grassroots is the best place to promote people's participation. Efforts that assume that capable municipal or city officials will by themselves take care of mobilizing people's participation while recognizing their local knowledge and respecting their sensitivities, often don't work. These motivated the researcher to conduct a study in the Municipality of Ubay Bohol, to assess the governance practices of the barangay chairpersons in the said municipality.

1.3 Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on theories propounded by the professors of government like Antal Szerletics, Gerry Stoker, and B. Guy Peters.

Successful sustainability and responsibility programs not only do great things for the society, they also are governed and engaged in a way that connects with the people and their leaders horizontally and vertically. In order to achieve this, establishing a good governance structure to guide and manage sustainability and responsibility is essential. By doing so, the leaders responsible for driving sustainable practices allow to set direction, establish goals and create policies to execute the strategy. According to Antal Szerletics (2000), the notion of good governance can be conceived as a basket of many practices, including, for example, professional civil service, anti-corruption policies, transparency and accountability, democratic decision-making, the principle of the rule of law, protection of human rights and independent judiciary. The constitutive elements of good governance vary according to the particular international organization and the particular document we examine.

On the other hand, Gerry Stoker (2008), in his book entitled “*Governance as theory: five Propositions*”, governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government. It is rather a matter of a difference in processes. Governance is on occasions used to provide the acceptable face of spending cuts. It is a code for less government. The rise of governance undoubtedly reflects to a degree a search for reductions in the resource commitment and spending of government. It involves a recognition of the limits of government. Yet its rise reflects a range of broader forces. Governance is not the narrow product of fiscal crisis. The governance perspective works if it helps us identify important questions, although it does claim to identify a number of useful answers as well. It provides a reference point which challenges many of the assumptions of traditional public administration. The discussion of governance in this paper is structured around five propositions. The aim is to present a number of aspects of governance for consideration rather than make a series of statements that can be shown to be either true or false. The five propositions are: 1. Governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government. 2. Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues. 3. Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action. 4. Governance is about

autonomous self-governing networks of actors. 5. Governance recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide.

One of the most important elements of governing is goal setting, or the determination of priorities. The old adage that "to govern is to choose" remains true, and indicates that priority setting is a central feature of governing. The basic argument here is that one organization, or a single government, is the most probable source of governance in the sense of priority setting and coordination of policies. This argument has been made within national governments, as the need for increased levels of priority setting through the budget process, for example, tends to drive decisions upward to central agencies or perhaps even to chief executives, even in spite of, or perhaps because of, continuing pressures to deconcentrate and decentralize as many aspects of government as possible. (B. Guy Peters, 1998)

Due to their natural sociability, men have eventually gathered in a politically organized community. Once realized, this association is required to demonstrate its superiority and this thing can be established by means of its ability to perform the functions for which it was "invented." Aristotle lays the basis for both the theory of good governance and the ways to achieve it. The purpose of a regime that is underlain by good governance should be the happiness of the members of the political community.

Tracing back the history of barangay administration, the punong barangay (barangay chairperson) plays a very important role in planning and implementing government policies, projects and programs for the people being governed. And such certain qualifications are considered in the succession of one person to the position of the chief. One must be a heir of the chief. However, if there were no qualified heirs, anyone could rise to that rank by virtue of wisdom, physical strength, power and wealth (Sonia M. Zaide, 1997).

In section 16 of the Local Government Code of 1991, states that every local government unit such as the barangay exercises the powers expressly granted by law, those necessary implied therefrom, as well as powers necessary, appropriate or incidental for its efficient and effective governance and those which are essential to the promotion of general welfare.

There is a need for these public officials to possess a more thorough, complete or at the very least adequate knowledge to acquire merit to the demands of their

constituencies of making them truly functional. They must also possess the necessary professional training and competencies that will keep them confident and knowledgeable in their duties.

Under the law, the Punong Barangay shall: enforce all laws and ordinances which are applicable within the barangay, negotiate, enter into, and sign contracts for and in behalf of the barangay; maintain public order in the barangay; call and preside over the sessions of the sangguniang barangay and the barangay assembly; appoint or replace the barangay treasurer, the barangay secretary, and other appointive barangay officials; organize and lead an emergency group whenever the same may be necessary for the maintenance of peace and order; prepare the annual supplemental budgets of the barangay; approve vouchers relating to the disbursement of barangay funds; enforce laws and regulation relating to pollution control and protection of the environment; administer the operation of katarungang pambarangay; exercise general supervision over the activities of sangguniang kabataan; ensure the delivery of basic services; conduct an annual palarong pambarangay; promote the general welfare of the barangay; and exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as may be prescribed by law or ordinance (Section 389, The Local Government Code of 1991).

The findings of these preceding studies on the governance practices and strategies of the punong barangays in the Municipality of Ubay Bohol will raise awareness of the barangay government and barangay officials on their state or level of performance viz-a viz the following: benchmark information/data generated necessary for the preparation of plans and budget as well as crucial in the assessment of their skills and training needs; and identified presence or absence of services and facilities which serve as guide in enhancing the delivery of services to their constituents; promote transparency and accountability in barangay governance through compliance to laws and other issuances.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Problem and Its Scope

The study aimed to evaluate the level of performance of governance of the Barangay Chairpersons as mandated in the Local Government Code of 1991 in

terms of the Executive Functions, Legislative Functions, and Judicial Functions. It also aimed to determine the extent of implementation of the basic services and facilities of the barangay as mandated in Section 17 of the Local Government Code of 1991, namely the Agricultural Support Services, Health and Social Welfare Services, Services and Facilities Related to General Hygiene and Sanitation, Beautification and Solid Waste Collection, Maintenance of the Katarungang Pambarangay, Maintenance of the Barangay Roads and Bridges and Water Supply System, Infrastructure Facilities, Information and Reading Center, and Satellite or Public Market, where viable.

2.2. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature that used both the quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. A descriptive study describes and interprets what it is. It is concerned with the relationship or conditions that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, and trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influence as they relate to present conditions (Best, 1989).

In this study, it covered the 44 barangays in the Municipality of Ubay Bohol. It considered several conditions, procedures, and information in order to seek relationships and to test hypothesis. The researcher used a self-made questionnaire in collecting the data, secondary information were used to obtain the demographic profiles of the barangays and the barangay chairmen, and also conducted an interview to the key informants of this study. Furthermore, it evaluated the governance of the 44 Barangay Chairpersons in the Municipality of Ubay Bohol that measures the effective delivery of the basic services and facilities in the performance of their duties and functions as mandated in the Local Government Code of 1991.

3. FINDINGS

Based on the data presented, analyzed, and interpreted, the researchers were able to formulate the following findings:

Table 1. The Barangay Chairmen’s Level of Performance of Governance

Level of Performance						
Functions	URBAN BARANGAYS		RURAL BARANGAYS		TOTAL	Description
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description		
Executive Functions	4.1	VS	4.0	VS	4.1	VS
Legislative Functions	4.0	VS	3.9	VS	4.0	VS
Judicial Functions	4.0	VS	3.9	VS	4.0	VS
TOTAL	4.0	VS	4.0	VS	4.0	VS

The results showed that all of the three indicators namely the Executive Functions, Legislative Functions and Judicial Functions gathered a total weighted mean of 4.0 which indicated a “Very Satisfactory” rating. The results indicated that majority of the 44 Barangay Chairpersons in the Municipality of Ubay were able to deliver a very satisfactory public service in their barangays, hence they were able to cope up in all the roles and responsibilities that would be of greater impact in local governance and community development. This also indicates that the core values of governance namely fairness, transparency and accountability were strengthened by the barangay chairmen during their term of office. It is good to note that these barangay chairpersons were always supported by the Local Government Unit in the implementation of the basic services and facilities in their respective barangays. Not to mention, the Municipality of Ubay was awarded in the aspect of “Good Financial Housekeeping” (formerly the Seal of Good Housekeeping) for the Calendar Year 2014 given by the Department of Interior and Local Government. Hence, “leading by example” is a good factor in making others an effective and efficient leader in a community.

Table 2. The Extent of Implementation of the Basic Services and Facilities in the Barangay

BASIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES	URBAN BRGY.		RURAL BRGY.		TOTAL	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
Agricultural Support Services	3.6	FI	3.7	FI	3.7	FI
Health and Social Welfare Services	4.3	TI	4.2	FI	4.3	TI
Services and Facilities Related to General Hygiene and Sanitation, Beautification and Solid Waste Collection	4.0	FI	3.7	FI	3.9	FI
Maintenance of the Katarungang Pambarangay	3.8	FI	3.9	FI	3.9	FI
Maintenance of the Barangay Roads and Bridges and Water Supply System	3.8	FI	3.9	FI	3.9	FI
Infrastructure Facilities	4.2	FI	4.1	FI	4.1	FI
Information and Reading Center	3.5	FI	2.9	PI	3.2	PI
Satellite or Public Market (where viable)	2.7	PI	2.7	PI	2.7	PI
TOTAL	3.8	FI	3.7	FI	3.7	FI

In the extent of implementation of the basic services and facilities in the barangay as mandated in Section 17 of the Local Government Code of 1991, the indicators were as follows: Agricultural Support Services, Health and Social Welfare Services, Services and Facilities Related to General Hygiene and Sanitation, Beautification and Solid Waste Collection, Maintenance of the Katarungang Pambarangay, Maintenance of the Barangay Roads and Bridges and Water Supply System, Infrastructure Facilities, Information and Reading Center, and Satellite or Public Market (where viable).

The results indicated the 8 basic services and facilities of the barangay and to what extent they were implemented. Based on the findings, the Health and Social

Welfare Services gained the highest rating which was Totally Implemented (4.3 weighted mean) indicating that the said services were fully and effectively delivered in the barangays since they were also getting the full support not only from the Local Government Unit but also from the National Government. Before, health care systems were faced with the challenge of resource scarcity and have insufficient resources to respond to all health problems and target groups simultaneously. Health care competes for resources, along with other services, such as education, water, food, just to mention a few. And this is also the reason why our National Government had implemented this program called “Nurse Deployment Program” for these nurses to be deployed in all provinces in the country to make health services accessible and readily available for free to the poorest of the poor. This study emphasized the idea that greater involvement and accountability among local government units may increase the legitimacy and fairness of priority-setting decisions. Hence, priority setting is an inevitable aspect of every health system.

Meanwhile, the Information and Reading Center, and the Satellite or Public Market gained the lowest ratings as Partially Implemented with the weighted means of 3.2 and 2.7 respectively. As observed in some of the barangays in the said municipality, some of the barangays did not have buildings that would serve as their Information and Reading Center, some of them were just utilizing a portion of their day care centers to have mini-libraries, some of them were lacking the needed books and there were also residents who borrowed some books but were not returned. When it comes to the Satellite or Public Market, only few of the barangays have established proper satellites or public markets because the Barangay Chairpersons also have to consider if it will be viable in their barangays to have such establishments. They were also prioritizing other basic services and facilities that they found more important due to their limited funds in the barangay, and the residents were already used in going to nearby barangays that have satellites or public markets during market days if they have to buy their prime commodities. This is the challenge for good governance – to help people making economic plans to break through these barriers, and in so doing make it more likely that local bodies can meaningfully pursue, and “deliver”, local growth. Hence, the establishment of local enterprises in these barangays is also mandated in the Local Government Code of 1991.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions: Majority of the Barangay Chairpersons were able to deliver very satisfactory public services in their barangays which also indicated that the core values of governance namely fairness, transparency and accountability were strengthened by them during their term of office. The higher the IRA (Internal Revenue Allotment) given to the barangays, the more programs and projects are implemented because funds had been given to them as a subsidy for continuous developments. The Local Government Code of 1991 paved the way for greater local autonomy to bring government closer to the doorsteps of the people.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended: Some Barangay Chairpersons should undergo further studies or at least to be more participative or be involved in the trainings and seminars that are related to effective and efficient governance. More funds should be appropriated for the trainings and seminars related to the improvement of the competencies of the Barangay Chairpersons. There should be an annual evaluation of performance to be conducted in the barangays based on the programs and projects implemented by the Barangay Chairpersons. And a proposed intervention plan to be presented for the barangay officials for review and consideration.

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