

Local Service Delivery System on Decentralized Function of Selected Local Government Units in Calabarzon: Input to Policy Development

Jesse Nelson P. Llana, Jd, Dpa

Batangas State University

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess the Local Service Delivery System on Decentralized Function of Selected Local Government Units In CALABARZON. Specifically, this study aimed to: determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, civil status, plantilla position and number of years in the service; find out what input to policy development may be proposed to enhance the local service delivery system.

The respondents were composed of thirty (30) regular employees of nineteen (19) cities of CALABARZON with a total of 570 respondents. In analyzing the data gathered, various statistical tools were used, namely: frequency/percentage, weighted mean, independent t-test, one-way analysis of variance, quota sampling and GPower. Consequently, the researcher also threshed out the six (6) local service delivery system on decentralized function of local government units.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher found out that in terms of profile of the respondents, most of the employees are ages 36-55, college graduate while in terms of sex, most of them are female. The study also reveals that most of the respondents are married with the position of coordinator, and as to the number of years in the service, most of the respondents are in 7-9 years. Moreover, the study reveals that the assessment of the respondents in the local service delivery system is marginally fulfilled and that most of the challenges encountered by the respondents are negative attitude, interference of councilors and limited knowledge and skills among staff; that there is significant difference in the assessment of respondents in the local service delivery system when grouped according to profile. Based on the analysis an impact to policy development for local service delivery system on decentralized function of local government units has been made

Keywords: Calabarzon. Decentralized Function, Local Government Units, Local Service Delivery System, Policy Development

INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the Local Government Code of 1991, the governance in the Local Government Units (LGUs) is described as a quick change to decentralize governance. To understand decentralization in local administration one has to know what local government is and how it relates to the higher level of government as well as other government instrumentalities. One has to understand also how local government operates and relate to the people who are considered as beneficiaries.

According to Paul Ylvisaker, the purpose of local government is to ensure liberty, equality and welfare. Local government units promotes liberty by providing additional and more readily available points of access pressure and control. It promotes equality by providing for wide scale participation of the entire population and while the government shall practice responsiveness and flexibility in their operations. It provides welfare or service in terms of assessing that demands of the people will be heard and the needs will be served in a sustainable manner. By nature, local government are subordinate entities having no inherent powers and must look up always to the higher government level for logistical and financial support.

In our country, local government units is a political subdivision in governance having subordinate status from

the national government. It has territorial boundary of their governance and has geographic subdivision. It has the presence of a

higher authority and territorial boundary. However, local governments have legal authority to exercise their power through appropriate resolutions and ordinances. By virtue of the Local Government Code, they possess the rights and the necessary structural organization to regulate their own affairs.

These affairs are governed in each local government unit by a group of officials who are locally elected or appointed. These officials know the manner and scope by which services can be provided for the inhabitants of the area within the boundaries provided by law. Within the subordinate local government units hierarchy of authority, the intermediate units of local government coordinate services in a larger area and supervise lower levels of local authorities. These are called provinces. Below them are the basic units of local governments those performing services for people who live together in a community. These are cities and municipalities. They perform services which include sanitation, protection to properties and provision of public utilities, to name a few while the smaller form of local government is the barangay. Henceforth, the Philippines being an archipelagic country has several layers of governance which are attributed to its geographic peculiarities, countryside experiences but with and has verbal basis.

The distinctive element of local government is territorial boundary of operation but the local government should not be confused with field units of the national government. Field units perform specific government functions in designated area and the return of their delegated functions is administrative in nature. Local government performs a number of services and the authority they exercise is political in nature. These political powers include the power of legislation through locally elected or selected officials who also exercise power of taxation. Field offices perform functions and exercise supervision through the issuances of administrative orders. On the other hand, local government officials made political decision like earmarking revenues for different projects for the public good. These decisions generally take in the form of ordinances.

Local Autonomy is the degree of self- determination exercise by a local government units vis-à-vis the central government. To attain local autonomy, a necessary pre-requisite is decentralization.

Decentralization has assured among other power other than deploying power and functions to local level institutions. There are four (4) approaches through which decentralization of the bureaucracy can be operationalized and identified (1) devolution (2) deconcentration (3) privatization and (4) use of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and other alternative channels for services delivery.

Dr. Raul de Guzman of the National College of Public Administration of U.P. averred that devolution connotes political decentralization and involves the transfer of power, responsibilities and resources for the performance of certain functions from national to local government units. It aims to govern greater autonomy to local levels to make them self-reliant and to improve their administrative and technical capabilities. It decongests the national government functions that can well be done by the local government and thereby enables to improve the performance of functions. It update the delivery of services as it minimizes the traditional type of having to deal decisions with the national agencies as a prerequisite to disbursement of public funds. Moreover, it is the transfer of powers to a level close to the people who choose it officials. It is exemplified by the provisions of Local Government Code gaining the responsibility of administering devolved areas such as health, agriculture, environment, natural resources, public works and social welfare which becomes the functions of the local government units.

Deconcentration according to United Nations Technical Association Programs (UNTAP) is the delegation of authority and responsibility by the national government department to their field units. The arrangement is administrative in nature and implies no transfer of final authority from the national department whose responsibility for that service continues. This is typified of service affected in the early years of martial law government. Privatization is the transfer of responsibility to business firms. The operations of which lies on the hands of business firms and other related cooperatives.

The transfer to Non- Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and people's organization of certain functions usually performed by government which has not been accomplished for local governance. However, their

participation at all levels of policy making and implementation is within the ambit of Philippine constitution.

The Local Tax Code (PD 231) provided local councils the authority to impose taxes to raise the revenues needed for the projects within the ambit of the law. On the other hand, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the local treasury offices are deconcentrated the functions of tax collection.

It should be noted that the fundamental goal of Local Service Delivery System (LSDS) is citizen satisfaction. Therefore, the effectiveness of good delivery system needs to be judged by the capacity of local government structures to provide an integrated development approach to social and economic development issues and to supply essential services congruent with the needs and desires of the local communities. In this regard, local government units should be able to identify and prioritize local needs, determine adequate levels of services, allocate necessary resources to the public.

Development of LSDS is intended to have a major impact on the daily operations of the sectors and should seek a new focus on improving the standard of performance. Thus, in short, it is a means of strong leadership and clear vision for local government. This requires local government officials to discharge their responsibilities with prudence and in an efficient, transparent, and accountable manner thus promoting good governance. Good governance entails the existence of efficient and accountable institutions and systems and entrenched rules that promote development and ensure that employees are free to participate in, and be heard on, decisions and implementation thereof that directly affect their performance. For democracy to materialize at the local level, employees of service delivery have to be given some role in these processes. This will lead to more accountability and responsiveness, and therefore the level of democracy will improve.

Governance is the key in helping catalyze institutional change and improve local service delivery for development outcomes such as quality of life, empowered citizenry, and responsive leadership based on normative entitlements and against the backdrop of development constraints and limited opportunities for reforms.

This study focused only on six variables in order to have a specific approach on the said services. Taking into consideration all other basic services would be in a wider scope and in the nature of other aspect of services.

On the other hand, the challenges encountered in the local service delivery system on decentralized functions of local government units triggered the proponent to conduct this research study namely, (1) Inadequate funding of local authorities, (2) Delays of disbursement of funds from national to local, (3) Limited knowledge and skills among staff, (4) Negative attitude, (5) Interference of councilors, (6) Lack of sufficient and technically qualified human resources and (6) Weak supportive supervision.

The researcher conducted this study to assess the local service delivery systems and practices in selected local government units in CALABARZON. The assessment is made by the regular employees who are working in the particular sector of local service delivery system. It is designed in improving local service delivery on the six sectors to address key issues and challenges of each sector, as well as take into account sector reforms and recommendations based on sector performance as inputs to policy development plans, strategies, and programs.

Objectives Of the Study

On the basis of the creation and implementation of local government code of 1991 (local autonomy), there is a need to evaluate its effects to society to have a clear-cut picture on whether decentralized function is performed in accordance with the existing policies, rules and regulations.

Decentralization should not be put to waste; rather, it must be improved and developed. On the other hand, if it seems that there are challenges in having a decentralized function, such issues will be given a wide emphasis and the challenges must be resolved and overcome.

There are problems that triggered the researcher to conduct the study. For instance, a dedicated employees of

service delivery who is very much willing to perform their duties and responsibilities but due to the delays in the disbursement of funds hinders their performance and affected the delivery system. Hence, despite more than ten years of decentralization, it is difficult to undertake a rigorous analysis of local government performance, particularly in a comparative perspective, and to link this to local government inputs or management practice. Another complicating factor is the persistent complex relationships between national and local governments, even in devolved functions, such that it is difficult to apportion accountability for service delivery outcomes even where such data is available. The health service is perhaps the most prominent local service delivery system, and is the service facing the most public pressure to deliver improvements speedily despite the efforts made by its respective employees. It creates a wrong notion that employees did nothing but the truth of it is not within their domain.

Henceforth, the researcher has a noble intention to evaluate the local service delivery system as faced by the employees with plantilla position on decentralized function of selected local government units in Calabarzon to serve as input to policy development. The history of local government in our country showed a long tradition of centralism foisted by our colonizers.

The barangay is the only indigenous local government unit in the Philippines. Its origin can be traced to a pre-Spanish institution. The other major local government units namely, the province, city and municipality have their humble beginnings in the local government established during the Spanish regime.

During the Spanish regime, the colonizers transformed the barangays into barrios headed by cabeza de Barangay. They also established the pueblo or municipality, headed by an alcalde and the provinces, headed by alcalde mayores. The alcalde mayores were appointed by the Spanish Governor general.

A democratic system of local government was established during the Revolutionary period. The chief of the town, jefe del pueblo was elected by the majority of the inhabitants and the chief of provinces, jefe de provincial, was elected by the chiefs of the town.

The Americans also established a democratic system of local government and renamed the local government barrio, city, municipality and provinces. They also established a highly centralized system of government which lasted until the Commonwealth period under the dominant leadership of President Manuel Luis Quezon. Yet, they saw fit to retain the villages for tax purposes, and the Americans finding the arrangement convenient continued with it, thus centuries of centralization institutionalized and maintained in the country.

The trend towards decentralization occurred during the Third World Republic from 1946 to 1972. This trend was severe in favor of centralization when martial law was declared on 21 September 1972. The martial law regime also introduced a number of significant innovations in the government system. It revived and popularized the barangays and renamed the local legislative councils. It also established the Katipunan ng mga Barangay (League of Barangay Councils), the Kabataang Barangay Pangpook (League of Barangay Youth Organizations), the Katipunan ng mga Sanggunian (League of Provincial and City Councils), and the Kabataang Pambarangay (Barangay Youth Organization). People power, the resurgence of nongovernmental organizations and people's organization after the EDSA revolution in 1986 changed the political climate in the country. These, coupled with the emergence of non-traditional politicians aiming to change the system, led to the enactment of a Constitution, giving a new emphasis on local government and administration and the passage of the Local Government Code of 1991.

The Local Government Code enacted after the lifting of martial law in the Philippines, retained the basic structure of local government consisting of the barangay, municipalities, cities and provinces. The Code which provides for the devolution of powers and basic services to the grassroots and increased participation of the people in governance is changing the long year of centralization which have subjugated local governments to the central government in the Philippines.

The Local Government Units (LGUs) set vehicle of local democracy providing services responsive to the local needs and conditions. Local government exists for the dual purpose of providing for greater people's participation as they provide services consistent with national policies. They perform a number of services and

the authority they exercise is political in nature. These political powers include the power of legislation through locally elected councils which also exercise the power of Taxation. They perform functions and exercise supervision through the issuance of administrative orders. Local government officials make political decisions like earmarking revenues for different projects for the public good. These decisions generally take the form of ordinance. They also provide a better understanding of the relationship between the desired project objectives and the resources available to implement them. In the process of mobilizing local resources, they also promote people's participation.

The creation of local government units gives them local autonomy to perform the devolved functions, powers and services in their respective areas. Its creation is very advantageous for the promotion of rural development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher used a self-constructed survey questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument in the study. A questionnaire is a tool or device for securing answers to the set of questions and will be revised by the researcher from various sources. It is useful to get specific information needed in the study.

The data for this research were collected using a survey questionnaire. The questionnaires were created using suitable questions modified from related research and individual questions formed by the researcher. The survey questionnaires were comprised of three parts of questions, which were related to the respondent's assessment of the implementation of the decentralized functions of local government units as well as to its challenges. After the survey questionnaire were validated, these were distributed to the respondents in the city of Manila for dry run which belong to the National Capital Region (NCR) which is outside Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (CALABARZON). The researcher assured confidentiality of his questionnaire since the identities are not important. The researcher also understood that respondent's consciousness may also affect their honesty and effectiveness in answering the questionnaire, and so, the researcher gave respondents the option of being anonymous. Respondents were given time to respond and then the researcher collected the questionnaires the same day. There were no conditions offered for participating in the research. Next, the researcher proceeded on the reliability result which used the Cronbach's Alpha to measure the reliability of the questionnaire which was .722.

After which, the researcher proceeded to the actual distribution of survey questionnaires and gathering of the same in the selected local government units in CALABARZON particularly the cities. This was followed by tabulation and interpretation. In addition, all entries were rechecked to ensure the precision and consistency of the result. Then, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted. The researcher conducted a focus group discussion at the Bulwagang Batangan of Provincial Capital of the Province of Batangas to obtain more relevant data for his study. This allowed the researcher to facilitate a more in-depth process of generating useful data for the enrichment of this study. It enabled the researcher to ask more probing questions to validate the answers of the respondents and obtain more credible and substantial responses. The activity involved the participation of 19 individuals who represented the employees with plantilla position from different cities in CALABARZON and employed in the local service delivery. These participants are regular employees who hold different positions from different local service delivery in the city government of Calabarzon. They were invited to participate in the focus group discussion to share valuable insights and facts concerning the assessment on local service delivery system as well as to the challenges encountered by the LGU having decentralized functions towards input to policy development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With regards to demographic profile of the respondents, 48.4 percent of the respondents are in the age of 36-55. . With regards to assessment of the respondents in terms of agricultural extension, it got a composite mean of 2.29 with a verbal interpretation of marginally fulfilled. With regard to challenges encountered having the decentralized function of local government units in terms of agricultural extension, shows that "negative attitude" has the highest frequency covering 570 respondents or 29.1 percent of the total respondents, it was seconded by "limited knowledge and skills among staff" with the frequency of 97 or 17 percent of the total respondents. With regard to the significant difference between the assessment of the implementation of the

decentralized function of local government units and the profile of the respondents the p-values in terms of agricultural extension such as adequacy, responsiveness, appropriateness, timeliness, effectiveness, and efficiency are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. The p-values in terms of environment such as adequacy, responsiveness, equity, appropriateness, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency are all less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant.

The p-values in terms of health such as adequacy, responsiveness, equity, appropriateness, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency are all less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. The p-values in terms of infrastructure such as adequacy, responsiveness, equity, appropriateness, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency are all less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant.

The p-values in terms of social welfare such as adequacy, responsiveness, equity, appropriateness, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency are all less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. The p-values in terms of tourism such as responsiveness, equity and timeliness are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since p-values in terms of adequacy, appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency are higher than 0.05 level of significance, the computed values were found to be not significant.

It shows that there is significant difference between the implementation of decentralized functions of local government units and the civil status of the respondents. The p-values in terms of agricultural extension such as adequacy, responsiveness, equity, timeliness, and efficiency are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since p-values in terms of appropriateness and effectiveness are higher than 0.05 level of significance, the computed values were found to be not significant.

The p-values in terms of environment such as adequacy, equity, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since p-values in terms of responsiveness and appropriateness are higher than 0.05 level of significance, the computed values were found to be not significant.

The p-values in terms of health such as adequacy, equity, appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since the p-values in terms of responsiveness and timeliness are higher than 0.05 level of significance, the computed values were found to be not significant.

The p-values in terms of infrastructure such as responsiveness, equity, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since the p-values in terms of adequacy and appropriateness are higher than 0.05 level of significance, the computed values were found to be not significant.

The p-values in terms of social welfare such as adequacy, equity, appropriateness, and timeliness are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since the p-values in terms of responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency are higher than 0.05 level of significance, the computed values were found to be not significant.

The p-values in terms of tourism such as equity and timeliness are less than 0.05 level of significance, then the computed values are found to be significant. Since the p-values in terms of adequacy, responsiveness, appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency are higher than 0.05 level of significance. The proposed policy development in the local service delivery system on decentralized functions of local government units are made.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Many of the respondents, are in the age of 36-55. Majority of the employees in the local service delivery

system are female. With regard to educational attainment, majority of the respondents said that they are college graduate. Majority of the respondents said that they are married. With regard to position, majority of the respondents said that they are coordinator. As to the number of years in the service, majority of the respondents said that they are 7-9 years. The assessment of the respondents in the local service delivery system on decentralized function of local government units is marginally fulfilled. The challenges encountered by the respondents are negative attitude, interference of councilors and limited knowledge and skills among staff. There is significant difference in the assessment of respondents in the local service delivery system of local government units when grouped according to their profile. This study proposed policy development for local service delivery system on decentralized function of local government units.

Recommendations

In the light of the significant findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Agriculture. Enhanced training support from the Department of Agriculture for appropriate and suitable service that will exactly solve problems and issues on agriculture.
2. Environment. The Local Government Unit must have coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Fully implement appropriate and suitable service that will exactly meet the management of solid waste.
3. Health. Allotted budget for medicine and health personnel and information dissemination campaign.
- 4.
4. Infrastructure. The Local Government Unit must always coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).
5. Social Welfare. The Local Government Units must have enough livelihood programs, support to the victims of maltreatment and timely coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
- 6.
6. Tourism. The Local Government Unit must have sufficient funds for the preservation and conservation as well as the safety of tourist attraction.
7. The researcher recommends that, if possible, try to pursue the proposed policy development. This policy development will be of great help in the development of local service delivery system on decentralized function of local government units.
8. For future researchers, they may conduct similar studies concerning other field of local government units.

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