

SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS, AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE IN SALOMAGUE ISLAND IN MARINDUQUE, PHILIPPINES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Not all people in provinces have good access to social, economic, literacy development. Those living in far-flung areas are literally disadvantaged in those areas due to some factors like distance and accessibility, funding support, and interest of those who are in-charge of them. This study aimed to explore socio-economic, political orientations, as and the literacy development of residents of Salomague Island, Santa Cruz, Marinduque, Philippines. In order to achieve the research goals, the researchers explored the place and observed the ways of living of the residents. This study employed phenomenological design with lived experiences, field observation, and interview as data gathering processes. Series of field observation in the island and interview to respondents were done to acquire accurately detailed information about personal perceptions, opinions and knowledge from respondents. This study concludes that people in the island are of great disadvantaged due to its geographical location and limited supply for sustainable living. The island does not have the sustainable source of basic commodities, electricity and water. The absence of social development facilities such as school and facility for recreational activities hinders the growth and development of the residents especially the young ones. These factors contribute to illiteracy rates among residents in the island. Further, the unclear boundary policies and strict implementation of fishing policies made the residents suffer from limited source of income. The findings inspire the researchers to craft an extension program for the residents' socio-economic, political, and literacy development.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Political Orientations, Literacy Development, Phenomenology, Salomague Island

Introduction

Living in a remote location or on an island makes residents worried about the state of development in the area. People in this type of location are trying their best to adapt and develop in terms of social, economic, literacy, and political aspects in order to, at least, cope with the demands of the rapidly-changing world.

Social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential. Investing in people is a key component of social growth. It necessitates the elimination of obstacles so that all people can confidently pursue their dreams. It is about refusing to acknowledge the fact that poor people will still be poor. It is about assisting people in advancing on their road to self-sufficiency. Every New Brunswicker should have the opportunity to grow, develop their own skills, and make a positive contribution to their families and communities. They are better prepared to meet their basic needs and be competitive if they are well, well educated, and qualified to join the workforce and are able to earn a decent wage. Their families will prosper as well, and society as a whole will benefit.

When it comes to the background of third-world nations, the socio-economic growth has various layers, with the focus of the exploration study ranging from geopolitics to societal economic development. Social growth issues are discussed more in the case of Third World countries than in the case of the other sections. The breadth of growth problems allows it impossible to choose the most appropriate analytical instruments for grasping the spirit of development in concrete terms. As a result of their ongoing search for a proper analytical framework, researchers can establish a series of alternative methodologies for studying and understanding socioeconomic development problems.

The theory of political development links a country's degree of political progress to its total development. The theory is sometimes used to define a democracy's developmental stage. According to Somjee (1992), democratic growth is the rise in people's ability to hold their rulers accountable for their political behavior. The substance of a political growth theory must be compatible with democratic values. Despite the fact that it was not conceptualized at the time of the republic's establishment, political progress philosophy is as strong as democracy. The foregoing hypothesis is founded on the assumption that democracy has incorporated the plurality of established characteristics of democratic growth.

According to Sloan, (2017) geopolitics is the state's ability to monitor space or territories and influence particular states' foreign policies and international diplomatic affairs. However, geopolitics is now seen as a force that can deliver dominion over others; it involves a state's geographical space, people, place, and economic resources. Although geopolitics was once used to control others, it is now used to improve state-to-state ties in terms of economic and diplomatic relations. Geopolitics is complex in many ways, especially in Asia, where it struggles with geographical position, socio-cultural, technological, and political issues. Geopolitics is being used

to connect countries that are struggling with these issues to improve politics, socio-cultural sharing, economic, and territorial borders.

In the Philippine context, the country has more than 7,700 islands. The nation is remarkably diverse in terms of climate, environment, natural resource endowments, infrastructure, race, and community, with a population approaching 90 million inhabitants. After Indonesia, it is the world's second-largest archipelagic territory. There are an approximate 110 ethnic groups and 170 languages spoken there.

Based on Senate Economic Planning Offices, regional socioeconomic indices often differ greatly. Geographical factors, for example, play a role in poverty rates. In 2003, the national capital and two neighboring regions were reported to have a poverty rate of 13%, compared to a composite average of 34% for the other 14 regions. The poverty estimates for the two poorest areas in the world, Western Mindanao and ARMM, both in the southwest, were more than ten times that for the national capital.

Salomague Island is a hidden gem island located between the territorial boundaries of the town of Santa Cruz and Torrijos, Marinduque. In the past, the island location was strategic due to its geographical location, it was once used for farming cattle by elite people from Santa Cruz. The island also has become important part of ecosystem for marine environment since the location and composition of island has a lot of mangroves. Due to the remoteness of the island the richness of the island has been preserved and marine biodiversity continue to be sustainable.

With all of these, small number of families live in the small island, and fishing is one of their key sources of income, particularly because it bounded by the sea. Over the years, island population continued to increase. This study explored the development of the island in terms of social, economic, political, and economic development of the residents.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study was participated in by the residents of Salomague island, in Marinduque. Since its geographical location and boundaries were not settled yet during the time of this research, the researcher s could not identify whether it is a part of Santa Cruz or Torrijos, both municipalities in the province of Marinduque.

Observation was done with families and residents while interview was participated in by six (6) residents of the island composed mainly of two (2) students, two (2) fisherfolk, and two (2) household members who are elderlies. Proper protocol was considered by the researchers. Permissions were sought from concerned authorities.

The data gathering process was done through lived experiences and exploration done by the researchers. They visited the place daily for two (2) weeks, observed carefully their ways of

living and cultures. Note-taking was done as well as documenting of their everyday activities. Responses to the interview were recorded and transcribed afterwards. Interviews and observation mainly focused on the social, economic, political, and literacy development of residents in the island and the entire geographical location.

3. Results and Discussion

With the lived experiences of the researchers with the residents of the small island called Salomague, it was found out that social, economic, literacy, and political opportunities and development became hard for them. Based on observation and interview results, they became adaptive to social activities like attending mass once a month, while children and youths get engaged in games like basketball in their barangay hall. This usually happens every afternoon. They are provided with facilities, although limited, for recreation.

In terms of economic development, majority of families living in this small island depend on fishing. Families could hardly earn 10,000 a month in fishing, which they contend is just enough to sustain their needs, although they get budget deficit oftentimes. They buy their basic commodities and other needs from the neighboring barangay where they have to travel by boat. There is no source of clean water in the place. Power source is through solar panels and generator sets. No electricity in the place. Street lights use solar panels.

When asked about government support, assistance from the government also reaches them. They receive medical attention also with medical supplies, vaccination (especially during the Covid-19 pandemic), and other relief operations.

In terms of literacy development, even of children attend schools, most of them help their parents in earning a living. They accompany their fathers and other siblings in fishing and even sell fish the next day. These activities of children affect their attendance leading to a poor performance in school. Also, children need to travel by boat to reach school. No school exists in Salomague island. Some parents are not literate enough to assist their children in doing their homework. Some cannot even read and write their names. Some can hardly count.

These findings prove that people in Salomague island struggle to cope with the challenges of daily living from purchase of commodities to the acquisition of knowledge through school attendance. These made the researchers come up with an intervention program for children and adult literacy in the island to at least address some issues of illiteracies in the area.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was then concluded that people in Salomague island are deprived of an ideal living environment where almost everything is accessible – from basic commodities to recreational facilities and schools. Although they receive government support, still a great portion of their need for clean water and electricity was not properly addressed until the time when this research was conducted. In sum, the island needs proper intervention – from social, to economic, political, and literacy activities for people living there.

5. Recommendations

With all the results gathered, the researcher hereby recommends that:

1. To the Municipality of Torrijos and Santa Cruz, there may be settlement of boundary dispute and clear implementation of fishing ordinances in consideration of the social, economic, literacy and political conditions of residents of Salomague Island.
2. To the Municipality of Santa Cruz, it may be possible through these extension programs;
 - Partnership to State College to conduct series of trainings regarding other livelihood programs and projects that could sustain the needs of the residents as well as literacy training for both children and adults in the island;
 - Partnership to Local Government Unit to improve social recreational facilities and conduct sports training safety rules and guidelines to develop social skills vital for development of the young;
 - Partnership with Rural Health Unit to conduct series of medical drives to the area;
 - Partnership with Philippine National Police to discuss in an open table the fishing regulations imposed in the municipality.
3. Future researchers may conduct follow up study regarding these conditions in the island.

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