

Assessment of Crime Prevention Programs of Selected Barangays in Cabanatuan City

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Abstract:- The study determined the Assessment of Crime Prevention Programs of Selected Barangays in Cabanatuan City. The result is 10% of the total number of administratively subdivided 89 barangays in Cabanatuan through random sampling. Using a descriptive survey method, the study revealed that the most reported case of selected barangays in Cabanatuan City is Loan sharking from April to June. The law enforcers and barangay authorities' prevention programs revealed Regular Patrolling, Conducting Checkpoints, and Reprimand. Patrol operations were rated effective by most of the respondents. Thus patrol operations have something to do with being visible to the community's people, which gives them a feeling of security while taking away the opportunity from the would-be criminals. However, facing some problems concerning resources and the lack of cooperation among the barangay constituents.

Keywords:- Crime Prevention., Crime Prevention Programs, Cabanatuan City, Crimes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Causes of crime were studied way back numerous centuries ago, hoping to end this socially dangerous phenomenon. Those studies and curiosities led to law and policymaking by the government's different agencies from ancient up to the present time, around the world.

In ancient times, the conjoint response to criminality was revenge or retribution—the victim or the victim's family would do precisely what they felt to be an appropriate response to the crime committed against them. However, as time goes by, many scholars propose that a more humane way of punishing crime is way better for handling delinquencies, as it favors both accuses and victims. They also believe that punishment can be an essential factor in averting future criminals.

The Philippine National Police indicates that the decrease in crime volume is attributable to the PNP's crime prevention programs. Specifically, the PNP has reportedly increased police visibility, made use of foot patrol officers, established checkpoints, and deployed motorcycle police. The police are the first line of defense against crime. It has been concluded that crime will be reduced if the number of authority will be increased. (Crime Statistics, 2019). "There

are certain crime types that are 'seasonal' in terms of frequency which become more prevalent when the element of opportunity is present such as during the holiday season when the objects of crime abound," Mr. Albayalde also said. Mr. Durana, for his part, said, "We have improved our capability in terms of knowledge and expertise. The President gave us a huge amount of funds to purchase tools to solve crimes; that's one. At the same time, *siguro motivated naman ang kapulisan kasi mataas naman sahod nila* (At the same time, our policemen are probably motivated by their higher salaries). Also, there's no greater cooperation among the public in helping the police solve crimes. Mr. Durana also cited "Police visibility, police patrol, law enforcement operations, checkpoint operation para ma-reduce ang oportunidad ng mga kriminal na mag-commit ng crime (to reduce the opportunity of criminals to commit crimes)."

According to Patalinghug (2017) on his Implemented Crime Prevention Strategies of PNP in Salug Valley, Zamboanga Del Sur, Philippines, Crime prevention strategies adopted by the police forces in Salug Valley Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines was much effective in reducing the crime rate in the area, wherein the Integrated Area Community Public Safety Process, obtained the highest level of effectiveness among the researcher's indicators—Police Integrated Patrol System, Barangay Peace Keeping Operation, Anti-Criminality Operations, Bantay Turista and School Safety Project. The crime committed in the area would have been very high if the PNP did not implement these strategies to reduce crime in the four municipalities of Salug Valley. Younger personnel of the PNP are active and vigorous in their campaign against criminality. The PNP of Salug Valley's crime prevention strategies is useful to minimize the crime rate that helped the community drive for peace and order. The partnership of the PNP and the community is the best way to solve criminality.

In another study by Vicente, Et al. (2014) on their The Crime Prevention Programs in Baguio City, there were five strategies used to implement these programs that were claimed as effective in preventing crimes. Among these strategies, foot patrolling is considered the most effective in preventing crimes by all the barangays. In implementing the crime prevention programs in the top 10 crime-prone barangays, no unique or other practices are implemented, specifically to address their description as crime-prone areas. It was as well noted that these barangays implement visibility

and neighborhood watch less frequently. Further, a barangay with zero crime rate implements "oplan sultipak" and is claimed to be useful in crime prevention. There are still problems encountered, even if strategies are fully implemented to prevent crimes.

The researchers believed that crime prevention would continuously change due to different factors; these factors, such as time, place, and era, could have a massive effect on crime prevention. Thus, precluding crimes in ancient times are more on the reactive practice of handling wrongdoing and harsh punishments. On the other hand, police visibility will still be one of the best crime prevention programs that law enforcers could serve, as statistics show above.

➤ *Crime*

In ordinary language, a crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority. The term crime does not, in modern criminal law, have any simple and universally accepted definition, though statutory reports have been provided for specific purposes. The most popular view is that crime is a category created by law; in other words, something is a crime if declared by the relevant and applicable law. One proposed definition is that a crime or offense (or criminal offense) is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society, or the state ("a public wrong"). Such actions are forbidden and punishable by law. (Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition, 2009)

In the Philippines, crime is an act committed or omitted in violation of a law forbidding or commanding it and for which a punishment is imposed upon conviction. In the Philippines, the Revised Penal Code (Republic Act No. 3815) serves as the fundamental law that defines criminal offenses and provides the penalties for the commission of such.

This paper divided crime according to its category—Index and non-index. Index crimes refer to crimes against persons and crimes against property such as murder, carjacking, physical injury and rape, homicide, and cattle rustling. On the other hand, non-index crimes violate special laws such as illegal logging or local ordinances. (Senate Economic Planning Office, 2013)

➤ *Crime Prevention*

This means an attempt to reduce and deter crime and criminals. It is explicitly applied to governments' efforts to reduce crime, enforce the law, and maintain criminal justice. (Oxford Handbooks, 2018)

In this paper, Crime Prevention defines the decrease or combating against wrongdoings and preemption of would-be criminals by different programs implemented by Cabanatuan City's selected barangays, Nueva Ecija. This includes—Implementation of curfew hours, Constant patrolling, Installation of Closed Circuit Television, Monitoring the residents' activities, Information Dissemination on Crime Prevention, Posting signage of crime prevention tips, Mobilizing the barangay police action team (BPAT), Encouraging the constituents to report crimes, Providing crime prevention hotline and Inspections of boarding houses.

The researchers believe that understanding the Assessment of Crime Prevention Programs of Selected Barangays in Cabanatuan City helps law enforcement and proper authorities in their decision-making towards improving the specific program specifically in combating criminality. Hence, the present study tried to assess the most common cases reported in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, and its crime prevention programs to understand well the trend of criminality.

Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following:

1. What are the most common cases reported in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija?
2. What are the Crime Prevention Programs in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija?
3. What are the problems encountered in the implementation of Crime prevention programs in Cabanatuan City's selected barangays, Nueva Ecija?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive since it aims to study the present condition/situation as it would like to know or assess 'what is' or as exists about the crime prevention programs. The result is 10% of the total number of administratively subdivided 89 barangays in Cabanatuan through random sampling. The researchers prepared a questionnaire validated by an expert supported by an interview upon attaining the respondents' consent. The reliability of the research instrument was determined through Cronbach's alpha. This research was conducted in 2019. The data analysis utilized tallying, frequency counts, Average Weighted Mean (AWM), and ranking.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

➤ *Most common cases reported in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.*

Table I shows that Loan Sharking, theft, and Malicious Mischief, are the top three (3) most common crimes committed in different barangays in Cabanatuan City, followed by Physical Injury, Vehicle Accident, Violation of Rent Control Act of 2009, and Illegal Discharge of Firearms. Loan Sharking has 12 cases usually committed in April to June. The Philippines is a developing country and has a large informal sector comprised of micro-enterprises. Cabanatuan City is a 1st class city in the province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines. According to the 2015 census, it has 302,231 people, making it the most populous city in Nueva Ecija and the fifth-most populous in Central Luzon. The town is undoubtedly composed of severely resource-constrained small vendors like other cities in the Philippines, whose business survival relies heavily on access to financing. Desperate times call for desperate measures. These micro merchants have no choice but to borrow from loan sharks. Despite the excessively charged interest rates, they have no other choice since they badly need the money. Loan Shark or 5-6 is another means for Filipinos to cope with their monetary needs. However, borrowing from loan sharks also means that you have to pay for it immediately; otherwise, you will be

drowning in debt in no time. The respondents answered when the researchers ask on why Loan Sharks are usually committed during April to June, "*Maraming gastosin ang April dahil graduation ng mga bata at ang May at June ay paghahanda at pasokan ng mga bata*" ("April costs a lot because of school fees for graduation and May and June are children's preparation and enrollment").

The second most case committed is theft; the perpetrators usually steal appliances like television and farm and poultry products like banana and chicken. It is generally committed during April. According to Emily Wetherly (2014), in her master's thesis entitled Typhoons and Temperature Impact Crime Rates: Evidence from the Philippines, it is stated that precipitation is the only weather shock to impact theft rates significantly. That an increase of 1 centimeter of rainfall is estimated to yield a decrease in thefts of .365 per 100,000. An alternative way of framing this result is that a drop in temperature could cause increased theft. The Philippines is an agrarian country and heavily reliant on rain to water the crops. As a mostly agrarian country, the Philippines is heavily dependent upon rainfall to water their crops, and arid year will cause crops to have a less than sustainable yield, creating a need for people to steal to support their needs. Nueva Ecija is dubbed as the "Rice Granary of the Philippines" because of its endless farms dedicated to producing rice. It also has lands that produce other crops such as onion, mango, calamansi, banana, garlic, and different types of vegetables. Thus the month of April can affect the people in Cabanatuan because of the lack of rain during this time as it considers as a summer month.

Table 1 also shows the third most common case in Cabanatuan, which is Malicious mischief, defined as the willful damaging of another's property for the sake of causing damage due to hate, revenge, or other evil motives, and it is committed in June. According to the record, vandalism is the most common form of offense they had faced under the case, and students usually commit it. In the Philippines, primary education usually opens in June. According to Irina V. Vorobyeva et al. (2015) in their study "The genesis of vandalism: From childhood to adolescence," It can be assumed that the expression of teenagers' motivational readiness to commit vandal acts is initiated because of the aborted sovereignty of psychological space and thus is a violation of ideas about the acceptable limits of this activity. It is also said that teenagers who have some problems understanding their bodies and physiological needs and are overall dissatisfied with themselves are likely to choose a behavior that involves causing harm to other people's property.

The table also unveiled that the majority of the cases are committed in April. Several researchers have theories that attempt to pinpoint why both violent and property crimes increase during the summer—some researchers guess that having longer daylight hours might contribute to the rise in crime rates. Longer daylight hours encourage individuals to stay outside and away from their homes for more extended periods, increasing the amount of foot traffic in public. Higher foot traffic creates more opportunity for crimes to

occur. Other researchers say students out of school for the summer contribute to increased public foot traffic and higher crime as students have more free time on their hands. Still, others hypothesize that the rise in temperature causes an increase in irritability and aggressiveness, which could cause a surge in violent crimes. Overall, higher temperatures, longer daylight hours, and more foot traffic create an increase in interaction between people, providing more crime opportunities. Theft and Physical Injury are the only index crime being committed. As defined by the Philippine National Police (PNP), these are crimes that involve crimes against persons such as murder, homicide, physical injury, and rape, and crimes against property such as robbery, theft, carnapping/carjacking, and cattle rustling. Non-index crimes, on the other hand, are violations of special laws such as illegal logging or local ordinances. Thus, it is observed that the cases are more on crimes against the property during summer.

Table I. Top cases reported in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

| Agency Commission | Frequency | Rank | Months of |
|--|-----------|------|---------------|
| Loan Sharking | 12 | 1 | April to June |
| Theft | 6 | 2 | April |
| Malicious Mischief | 5 | 3 | June |
| Physical Injury | 4 | 4 | April |
| Vehicle Accident | 2 | 5 | April |
| Violation of the Rent and June Control Act of 2009 | 2 | 5 | April |
| Illegal Discharge and June of Firearms | 2 | 5 | April |

➤ *Crime Prevention Programs in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.*

The study revealed that the law enforcers and barangay authorities' prevention programs are Regular Patrolling, Conducting Checkpoints, and Reprimand. According to Nelson G. Laru-an et al. (2015) on the study Level of Effectiveness of Community Policing. Patrol operations were rated effective by most of their respondents; thus, patrol operations have something to do with being visible to the community's people, which gives them a feeling of security while taking away the opportunity from the would-be criminals. Conducting checkpoints is one of the police visibility practices conducted by law enforcers authorized to do this duty. This action serves as a barrier to avoid violent crimes out of Cabanatuan City. Police visibility is the first line of defense against crime. It has been concluded that crime will be reduced if the number of police increases, according to Philippine Crime Statistics in 2013. The PNP

has targeted a 1:700 police-to-population ratio in 2010; 1:600 in 2020; and 1:500 in 2030. However, the Philippines still considered poor compared to its Asian neighbors; Singapore already had a 1:142 police-to-population ratio in 2012. The respondents included reprimand as one of the crime prevention programs in Cabanatuan since minors usually commit malicious mischiefs because currently, children under the age of 15 in the Philippines are exempt from criminal liability but subject to intervention by the government under the provisions of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006.

➤ *Problems encountered in the implementation of Crime prevention programs in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.*

According to Gilbert Bonnemaïson (2020), crime prevention audits or strategy plans can be grouped into six major contracting categories, each aimed at meeting different specific objectives. The diversity in crime prevention contracting areas is the diversity of causes and types of urban crime. These categories are Practical aspects of prevention, Preventative measures of a social nature, Prevention by proximity, Articulation of a clear policy to prevent the recurrence of an offense or recidivism by offenders, Contracts or funding, Communication. Among the problems above encountered in crime prevention programs, the most common in Selected Barangays in Cabanatuan is contracts or funding. Just like other areas in the Philippines. One of the significant concerns is mostly related to resources, particularly on the financing for barangay tanods and the lack of cooperation among the barangay constituents.

IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the findings, the researchers concluded that specific periods or events of the time in a year could contribute criminality such as what they call "*gaoat/gawat*" in Ilocano or any period during which food is scarce; a period of drought., nevertheless, the visibility enforced by the authorities such as regular patrolling in the selected barangay in Cabanatuan City helps in hindering heinous crimes in the city. This makes their crime prevention program considered adequate despite facing some problems concerning resources and the lack of cooperation among the barangay constituents.

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