

Level of Awareness on Environmental Laws Possibly Violated by Illegal and Destructive Activities in Biri, Northern Samar

Cho, Celesteste B.¹; Ogoc, Myrna N.²

¹College of Science,

²Center for Environmental Studies and Advocacy (CESA),

^{1,2}University of Eastern Philippines, Northern Samar, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the level of awareness of environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Barangay Poblacion and Barangay San Antonio, Biri, Northern Samar. Specifically, it aimed (1) to identify various programs and projects, activities, policies/ordinances relative to illegal and destructive activities, (2) problems and issues encountered in the strict implementation of coastal; and marine environmental laws.

This study adopted descriptive method of research and employed normative survey technique. It also utilized employed normative survey where focus group discussions and quantitative approach where focus group discussions and interviews were used as tools in data gathering.

The eighty-eight (88) randomly sampled household-respondents were chosen as the respondents of the study. Frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean were employed to analyze the data.

That most of the respondents were average with regard to their overall level of awareness on environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri, Northern Samar.

There are various programs and projects, activities, policies/ordinances relative to illegal and destructive activities in Barangay Poblacion and Barangay San Antonio, Biri, Northern Samar.

The problems encountered by the respondents in relation to implementation of coastal and marine environmental laws include inadequate regulations, poor planning, and weak management and enforcement of regulations and environmental laws since most of the respondents were average with regard to their overall level of awareness on environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri, Northern Samar.

It is recommended that local government units must use its power and authority in order to enforce laws and regulations to protect and manage critical habitats and species within the coastal and municipal waters. The residents of Biri, Northern Samar must change their mindset and engage coastal households and other stakeholders in their roles on coastal and marine environment governance.

How to cite this paper: Cho, Celesteste B. | Ogoc, Myrna N. "Level of Awareness on Environmental Laws Possibly Violated by Illegal and Destructive Activities in Biri, Northern Samar" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-5 | Issue-6, October 2021, pp.1921-1925, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd47741.pdf



IJTSRD47741

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KEYWORDS: Environmental laws, Biri, Protected Area, illegal and destructive activities

INTRODUCTION

The most disastrous even of this century is rapid degradation of our environment. The population explosion has worsened the situation. The people

started exhausting the natural resources on one side and on the other creating pollution on the earth affecting the ecological balance in the ecosystem.

Lack of environmental awareness regarding the preservation of the species, culture and conservation of the forests are responsible for degradation of the environmental procurement at grass roots level. If it continues, the human civilization will face disastrous situation.

Economic growth and growing population have caused tremendous impact on the environment. More specifically, the increased economic activities as a result of the growth of the population have resulted in the deterioration not only of the urban environment but also the rural areas. Simply put, it is the environment that bears the brunt of the ill-effects of economic growth and over-population. One of the areas that are beginning to experience this problem, especially along escalating generation of wastes that accompanies increased economic activities and illegal fishing activities that are destructive to our environment in Biri, Northern Samar.

It is foremost duly to conserve our environmental resources. Tanner (1980), emphasizes the basic aim of environmental education as, “to develop a world population that is aware of and concerned about the environment, its associated problems, so that the population will have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and commitment to work individually and collectively towards the solutions of current problems and prevention of new ones” (UNESCOUNEP EEP Environmental Education Series 6, 1990).

The researcher, being a student of Environmental Studies, proposed this study primarily for her social responsibility as stakeholder and her environmental awareness to determine the level of awareness of environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri, Northern Samar. This tried to offer a context shift in their understanding on the common illegal and destructive activities in the coastal and marine areas and provide options for the

Local Government Units (LGU) in enhancing and implementing the legalities of the law of violators.

Objectives of the Study

1. Determine level of awareness of respondents on environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri, Northern Samar.
2. To fine out various programs and projects, activities, policies/ordinances relative to illegal and destructive activities.
3. To identify the problems and issues encountered in the strict implementation of coastal and marine environmental laws.

METHODOLOGY

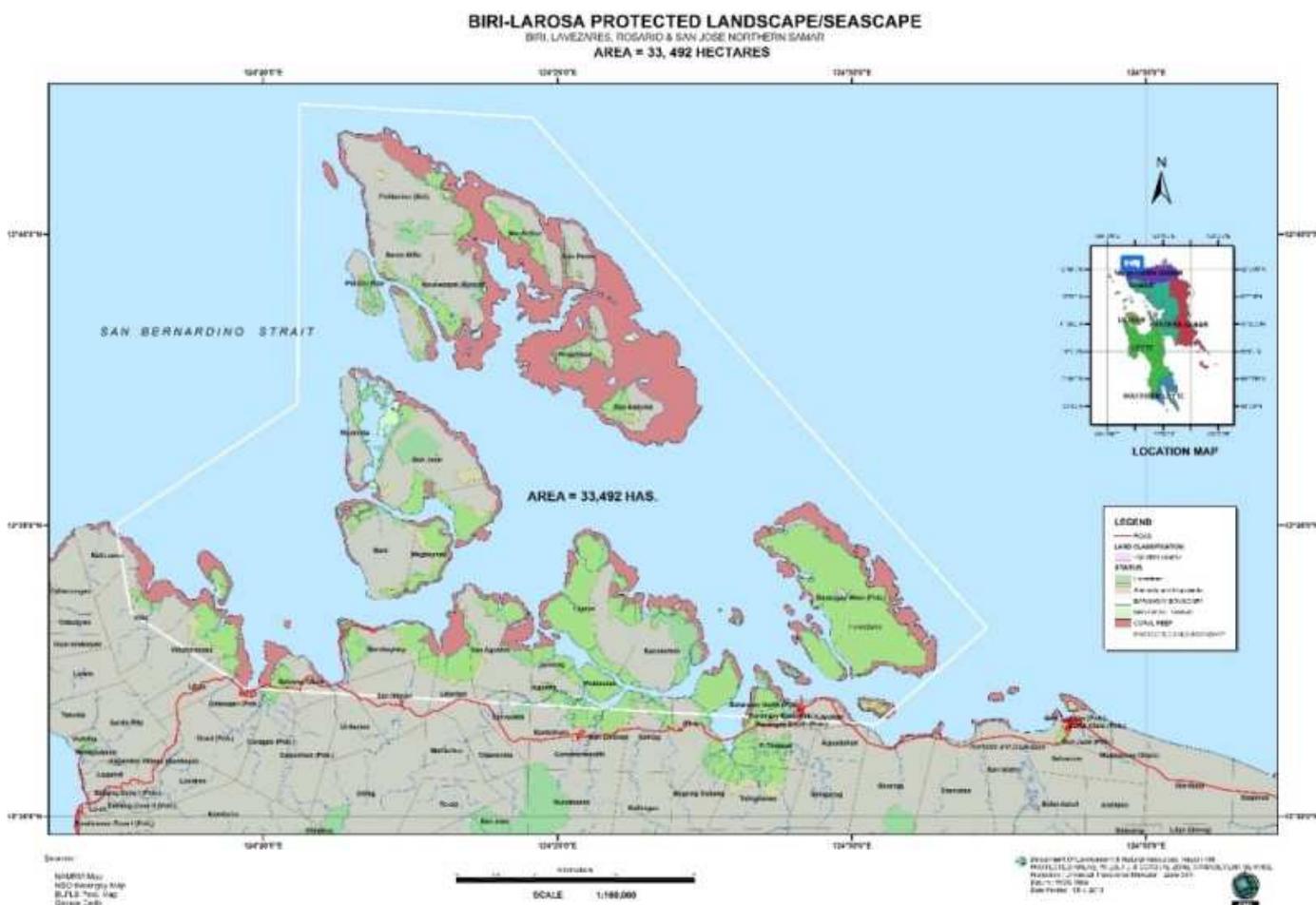
Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the Municipality of Biri, Northern Samar.

Biri is a fifth class municipality in the province of Northern Samar, Philippines. According to the 2014 census, it has a population of more or less 11,500 people. The Municipality consists of several islands off the northern coast of Samar Island, the largest of which is Biri Island. Other larger islands are Talisay, Magesang, and Cagnipa. Biri Island is notable for a large number of unusual rock formations along the northern shore, facing the Philippines Sea. Biri is politically subdivided into eight (8) barangays.

- Poblacion (Biri)
- MacArthur
- Kauswagan (Basud)
- Pio Del Pilar
- Progress or Talisay
- San Antonio
- San Pedro
- Santo Niño

This study was conducted in Brgy. Poblacion and Brgy. San Antonio, N. Samar



Research Design

To assess the level of awareness of environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri, N. Samar, the descriptive-correlational method of research were utilized in this study.

Descriptive designs provide comprehensive information about a problem or situation, its variables and its features. They are more precise in their focus and scope than exploratory designs.

This study determines the level of awareness of environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri, N. Samar.

Sampling Procedure

Buri, Northern Samar has an estimated population of 11,500 as of 2014. To determine the sample size of the respondents, the Sloven’s formula (Sevilla, 1992) will be use.

$$S = \frac{N}{1+n(e)}$$

Where:

- S- sample size
- N- number of population
- e- 0.05 margin of error
- 1- constant

Research Instrument

The interview schedule was the primary tool in gathering data. The instrument was prepared with due consideration to the main and specific problems in this study. Questions were taken from the Manual on Environmental Law Enforcement in Coastal and Marine Areas. Focus Group Discussion conducted to small sectors and groups was done especially for those who are hesitant to answer the questionnaire.

Instrument Validation

The questions to be included in the instrument were pre-tested in Brgy. Cawayan, Catarman, N. Samar for validation. It was done to check if the questions or situations indicated in the interview schedule were adequate to gather pertinent data in this study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Data were analyzed with the use of frequency counts, percentage, and weighted mean. The following formulas will be used:

Percentage

$$P = \frac{f}{\bar{n}} \times 100$$

Where:

- N = total number of respondents
- F = frequency
- 100 = constant

Summary

This study was designed to determine the level of awareness of environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Barangay Poblacion and Barangay San Antonio, Biri, Northern Samar. Specifically, it aimed to: 1) Identify various programs and projects, activities, policies/ordinances relative to illegal and destructive activities, 2) problems and issues encountered in the strict implementation of coastal and marine environmental laws.

There were 88 respondents of this study. An interview/Focused Group discussion (FGD) and survey questionnaire were utilized in order to get the needed data. The data were treated statistically using frequency counts, percentage and average weighted mean.

The following are the summary of findings of the study:

That most of the respondents were averaged with regard to their overall level of awareness on environmental laws possibly violated by illegal and destructive activities in Biri Northern Samar.

There are various present and previous programs and projects, activities, policies /ordinances relative to illegal and destructive activities in Biri, Northern Samar implemented and funded by the international, national, local government and even private sectors for the benefit of the people of Biri, Northern Samar.

There were also laws and policies implemented to protect the environment and impose appropriate penalties for acts which endanger the environment. These ordinances were mostly in consonance with the present environmental laws and policies of the National Government.

The participation, coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders in the community were the very reason that programs have become possible and successful and have contributed to its efficiency and sustainability of environmental projects implemented.

The problems and issues encountered in the strict implementation of coastal and marine environmental laws include inadequate regulations, poor planning and the weak management and enforcement of regulations and environmental laws in Protected areas considering that the municipality of Bitri is covered under Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas system (E-NIPAS) Law.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

1. There are various programs and projects, activities, policies/ordinances relative to illegal

and destructive activities in Barangay Poblacion and Barangay San Antonio, Biri, Northern Samar.

2. The participation, coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders in the community is one of the factors that influence the efficiency and sustainability of the environmental projects/programs.
3. Foremost among the problems encountered by the respondents in relation to implementation of coastal and marine environmental laws include inadequate regulations, poor planning, and weak management and enforcement of regulations and environmental laws.

Recommendation

On the basis of findings, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. Local government units must use its power and authority in order to enforce laws and regulations to protect and manage critical habitats and species within the coastal and municipal waters.
2. Change the mindset and engage coastal households and other stakeholders in their roles on coastal and marine environment governance.
3. Promote coastal habitat protection, conservation and management,
4. Increase knowledge and awareness of all fishery laws, rules and regulations and ordinances enacted by the municipal/barangay councils.
5. Establishment of critical habitats in coordination with the local government unit.
6. Adoption of flag species of local government unit with regard to conservation measures of endemic species in their areas.
7. Raise awareness on how pollution in the coastal and marine areas under their territorial jurisdiction is against the law.
8. Increase knowledge on the fines and penalties for violation of environmental laws.
9. Protection of the environment and keeping ecological balance unaffected is a task which not only the government but also every individual, association and corporation must undertake. It is a social obligation and fundamental duty enshrined in our 1987 constitution.
10. It is recommended that a follow-up study should be conducted with a wider scope and perspective in terms of respondents and objectives.

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