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MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENT ORDINANCE IN THE SELECTED BARANGAY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LUNA, LA UNION

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the level of implementation, the level of effectiveness and the degree of seriousness of the problem encountered in the implementation of the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the selected barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union. The study made used of the descriptive survey method. The data was gathered using survey questionnaires. Weighted mean was used to determine level of implementation, the level of effectiveness and the problem encountered in implementing the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union. Based on the findings of the study, the Municipal Environment Ordinance is implemented well in the Municipality of Luna La Union, particularly on advocacy programs on proper land use, sustainable use of water resources and the prevention of illegal logging and proper use of forest resources. The Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Municipality of Luna, La Union is effective in maintaining a clean, safe and sustainable environment with the awareness and cooperation of the community of the policies and programs. The Lack of funds and manpower as well as full cooperation and support of LGU's, NGO's and the community as a whole are the primary problems that implies the full implementation of the Municipal Environment Ordinance. The Proposed measures can address the problems encountered with the concerted effort of all the officials and the community. The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusion of the study. Continue protecting and preserving the ecosystem and biodiversity from human encroachment and from destruction caused by erosion and other calamities that may occur, to have a clean environment for the citizen and for the future generation. Continue the coastal clean-up operation and have enough personnel to collect garbage not only barangays near the town but also in other barangay of the municipality and vehicles to transport garbage to the landfill of the municipality of Luna, La Union. Conduct a regular pulong-pulong related to the ordinance and there must be enough funds in formulating programs. Put a signage in every landmark indicating that illegal dumping of solid waste is prohibited. Adoption of the proposed measure to enhance the implementation of the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union is highly recommended.

KEYWORDS: *Municipality, Environment, Ordinance*

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Scientific research has long recognized the environment as a fundamental factor influencing human development. Yet, increasing population, industrialization, and poor environmental management continue to degrade vital resources such as air, water, and land. The result is a cycle of environmental degradation and societal vulnerability, with natural and man-made disasters causing massive losses.

In recognition of these challenges, the Philippine government instituted Presidential Decree No. 1152, known as the Philippine Environment Code, which underscores the importance of sustainable practices in air, water, land, and natural resource management. Locally, the Municipality of Luna, La Union has taken decisive action through its Municipal Environmental Ordinance, providing a legal framework for protecting and managing its unique environmental assets. This includes the conservation of forests, sustainable land use planning, regulated tourism, and integrated water resource management.

Luna's proactive stance reflects a broader commitment to ecological stewardship, sustainable development, and community empowerment. The ordinance not only seeks to regulate and monitor land and resource use but also emphasizes the importance of involving citizens in environmental protection efforts. With its rich ecological and cultural heritage—including being home to the globally known Shrine of Our Lady of Namacpacan—Luna exemplifies how local governance can align development goals with ecological responsibility.

Research Objectives/Questions

This study aimed to determine the implementation of the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

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1. What is the level of implementation of the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union in terms of:
   a. Water Resources;
   b. Land Resources; and
   c. Forest Resources?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union?
3. What are the problems encountered in the implementation of Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union?
4. What are the proposed measures to improve the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union?

Conceptual Background

This study draws upon the National Land Use Act (NaLUA) of the Philippines ensures the efficient, equitable, and sustainable management of land and physical resources. In line with this, the Municipality of Luna developed its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, focusing on sustainable land use and environmental integrity. Supporting national policies include:

- Presidential Decree No. 856 (Code on Sanitation), which sets national sanitation standards for sewerage, waste disposal, and public hygiene facilities.
- Presidential Decree No. 1152 (Philippine Environmental Code), which provides environmental management policies and quality standards.
- Republic Act No. 7568 (National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992), aimed at preserving native biodiversity through a system of protected national parks.
- Republic Act No. 9175 (Chainsaw Act of 2002), which regulates the use and ownership of chainsaws to combat illegal logging and protect forest resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental issues are intricately linked with human decision-making and survival, echoing John Muir's assertion that everything in the universe is connected. The environment—air, land, water, and ecosystems—shapes the growth and behavior of individuals and societies. Browne (2007) emphasizes that environmental degradation, caused by human neglect and industrial activities, has led to devastating natural and man-made disasters, underlining the urgent need for responsible stewardship.

Montgomery (1992) highlights Earth's unique position in the solar system, pointing out its life-sustaining features like an oxygen-rich atmosphere and abundant surface water. Despite being recent inhabitants in geological terms, humans have made significant and often harmful impacts on the planet. The rapid population growth, coupled with finite natural resources, presents a critical challenge in sustaining life at current standards, particularly in developing nations.

Water, as described by Keller (1988), is one of the most vital yet vulnerable renewable resources. Despite its abundance, over 99% of the Earth's water is either saline or geographically inaccessible. Water use is deeply intertwined with ecological and industrial systems, often leading to conflicts among different sectors. Water pollution, defined as any physical, chemical, or biological degradation, continues to be a pressing issue despite decades of regulatory efforts.

Land, traditionally viewed as a symbol of wealth and power, has become a contested and degraded resource due to improper agricultural practices and land conversion (Keller, 1988). Forest ecosystems are also under severe pressure. Cunningham (1997) noted that while northern forests are relatively stable, tropical forests face critical threats from logging, overgrazing, and habitat loss—an alarming trend given that these areas harbor the majority of Earth's biodiversity.

Recognizing the growing threats to environmental health, the Philippine government enacted Presidential Decree No. 1152, or the Philippine Environmental Code in 1977. This code outlines comprehensive policies for managing air, water, land, and natural resources, and emphasizes environmental quality standards. The law reflects the country's commitment to balancing development with ecological sustainability.

At the local level, the Municipality of Luna, La Union enacted its Municipal Environmental Ordinance, in line with the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160). This ordinance serves as a legal framework for environmental management, encompassing land use, forest conservation, and water protection. It is also geared towards achieving long-term sustainability and supporting the municipality's aspiration to become an industrial and tourist hub. The ordinance mandates the integration of environmental assessments in development decisions, ensuring that progress is aligned with ecological preservation.

Specific provisions in Luna's ordinance focus on responsible land use and water management. With its rich coastal and inland resources, Luna adopts a policy of integrated water resource management to safeguard ecological stability and economic security. Moreover, the municipality envisions itself as a center of eco-tourism and cultural heritage, exemplified by the globally recognized Shrine of Our Lady of Namacpacan.

Forest conservation is also a key component of Luna's environmental strategy. The municipality works with national agencies like the DENR and Land Management Bureau to rehabilitate and protect forestlands, many of which are designated for agro-forestry and reforestation. This effort underscores the broader trend of local governments assuming more active roles in

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environmental governance—a direction enabled by the decentralized framework of the Local Government Code.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of a descriptive survey method in gathering and interpreting the data for the study. Descriptive survey is appropriate in the sense that it determines the level of implementation, the level of effectiveness and the problem encountered of the Municipal Environment Ordinance in the Selected Barangays in the Municipality of Luna, La Union.

RESEARCH LOCALE

This study was conducted in the selected Barangay in the Municipality of Luna, La Union namely; Barangay Alcala, Barangay Cabalitocan, Barangay Darigayos, Barangay Magallanes, Barangay Pila, and Barangay Victoria. The location was chosen due to their representative significance in terms of population density, geographic location, and socio-economic diversity. These barangays reflect a cross-section of the municipality's demographic and environmental conditions, making them ideal for assessing local governance, environmental initiatives, or community engagement efforts.

DATA MEASURE/ INSTRUMENTS

- Survey Questionnaire:
- Likert-scale items captured data on social skill and academic skills.

Data Gathering Procedures (with Ethical Guidelines)

- Participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, and potential benefits of the study before participating. Written consent was obtained from each respondent.
- Surveys were distributed to 383 citizens and 48 barangay officials.
- Participants' identities and responses were kept confidential, with personal information being excluded from the report to protect their privacy.
- Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences.
- The researcher ensured that the data collected was accurately recorded and analyzed, and findings were reported honestly and without manipulation.

Data Analysis

- Quantitative Data: Weighted Mean was used to analyze the survey responses, categorizing results into descriptive equivalents.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Presentation/Report on the Results or Findings

Table 1: Level of Implementation

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Key Observations
Land	2.78	Implemented	The need for enhanced logistical support, regular monitoring, and community participation to strengthen waste handling and enforcement mechanisms.
Water	2.82	Implemented	Water resource management in the municipality is well-implemented, with community cooperation and regulatory compliance playing key roles. Nonetheless, continued investment in infrastructure and personnel could further enhance the sustainability of these efforts.
Forest	2.86	Implemented	This demonstrates a proactive stance by both the LGU and the community in preserving ecological balance and preventing environmental degradation. Continued support, monitoring, and community-based conservation programs could further sustain and strengthen these gains.

Table 2: Level of Effectiveness

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Key Observations
Land	2.83	Effective	Targeted enhancements in infrastructure, manpower, and enforcement mechanisms could further optimize program delivery and environmental outcomes.
Water	2.87	Effective	Water resource initiatives are well-effective and widely supported, combining effective policy execution with public engagement to promote sustainability.
Forest	2.83	Effective	Forest resource policies are well-executed, contributing to sustainable land use and ecosystem preservation, though some aspects may benefit from reinforced oversight.

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• Garbage accumulation in remote barangays	• Improve waste transport efficiency to disposal sites	• Establish a regular schedule for coastal clean-ups and barangay waste collection	• Volunteers and community groups
Conduct regular community meetings (pulong-pulong) related to the ordinance and ensure sufficient funds for program formulation.			
Challenge	**Objectives**	**Proposed Solution**	**Responsible Parties**
• Limited community participation and awareness • Insufficient funding for educational and enforcement programs • Lack of consistent communication channels between officials and residents	• Increase public awareness and involvement in environmental policies • Secure sustainable funding for ordinance-related activities • Foster community collaboration for environmental protection	• Schedule regular pulong-pulong for updates and feedback on environmental programs • Advocate for budget allocation specifically for environmental initiatives • Use local media and social platforms for wider dissemination of information	• LGU officials and Environmental Officers • Barangay Captains and Councilors • Community leaders and organizations
Install signage at every landmark indicating that illegal dumping of solid waste is prohibited.			
Challenge	**Objectives**	**Proposed Solution**	**Responsible Parties**
• Illegal dumping due to lack of awareness or disregard for rules • Limited visibility of existing regulations • Insufficient deterrents to unlawful waste disposal	• Increase public awareness of illegal dumping laws • Deter improper waste disposal practices • Promote a cleaner and healthier environment	• Design and place clear, visible signage in strategic locations • Conduct information drives on the consequences of illegal dumping • Implement penalties for violations with visible enforcement	• LGU's Environment and Natural Resources Office • Barangay officials • Public Information Office

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