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A STUDY ON THE EFFICIENCY OF KATARUNGANG PAMBARANGAY LAW IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN CABANATUAN CITY: BASIS FOR COMMUNITY EXTENSION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL) was institutionalized to promote peaceful dispute resolution at the community level, reduce court congestion, and ensure the speedy administration of justice. This study assessed the effectiveness of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law in the administration of justice in selected barangays of Cabanatuan City. Using a quantitative research design, data were gathered from Punong Barangay and Lupon Tagapamayapa members through structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly the weighted mean, based on a five-point Likert scale. Findings revealed that KPL is highly effective in resolving disputes at the barangay level, ensuring speedy disposition of cases, and decongesting court dockets, with an overall weighted mean of 4.69 interpreted as Strongly Agree. Respondents strongly affirmed that KPL promotes amicable settlement, reduces litigation time, and supports judicial efficiency. Despite its effectiveness, the study recognizes the need for continuous capacity-building to prevent procedural lapses, particularly the premature issuance of Certificates to File Action. In response, a community extension project titled "Strengthening Barangay Justice Through Capacity-Building: A Mandatory Training Program for Lupon Tagapamayapa Members" is proposed to enhance the competence, compliance, and effectiveness of barangay justice implementers, thereby sustaining the objectives of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law.

INTRODUCTION

Crime is a common aspect of any society, existing regardless of its socio-economic condition, in line with the theory that "crime is a component of a healthy society." As society continues to evolve, so does the way crimes are committed, from the early centuries up to the present time. Consequently, formal legal proceedings are often used to resolve disputes, leading to a large number of cases being filed in courts. This results in docket congestion and delays in the resolution of cases.

In response to these challenges, legislation was introduced. In 1978, then President Ferdinand E. Marcos enacted Presidential Decree 1508, commonly known as the Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL). This law was designed to create a mechanism for peacefully resolving conflicts within the barangay, avoiding the need for court intervention and ensuring a more efficient administration of justice.

Although the law was enacted to address these concerns, numerous cases still end up being filed in court due to the premature issuance of Certificates to File Action by the Lupon or Pangkat Secretaries. As a result, this undermines the very purpose of the law.

On January 1, 1992, the Revised Katarungang Pambarangay Law was enacted through Republic Act 7160—also known as the Local Government Code of 1991—specifically outlined in Sections 399–422, Chapter VII, Title I, Book III, and Section 515, Title I, Book IV. This law repealed Presidential Decree 1508. To ensure that the true intent of the law would not be compromised by the indiscriminate, improper, or premature issuance of Certifications to File Action by the Lupon or Pangkat Secretaries, the revised version introduced significant reforms. These changes not only expanded the authority of the Lupong Tagapamayapa but also improved the procedures to be followed in settling disputes under its jurisdiction.

This research study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law in facilitating the administration of justice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Method

Using a **quantitative research design**, the study was conducted in selected barangays in **Cabanatuan City**, focusing on the Barangay Justice System (BJS) as a localized mechanism for dispute resolution. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires distributed to Barangay residents, Lupon Tagapamayapa members, and officials involved in administering justice. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analyze respondents' perceptions, satisfaction levels, and the overall efficiency of the BJS.

Data Gathering Tool

This study employs a quantitative rsearch design to examine the effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility of community-based justice systems, with a focus on the Barangay Justice System (BJS) in selected Barangays in Cabanatuan City. The researcher will utilize purposive or judgment sampling technique. Bernard (2002), Lewis and Sheppard (2006) as cited by Tongco (2007), purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. The

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respondents of the Study include selected Punong Barangay, Lupon Members and police officers. The study will utilize questionnaires to elicit responses from the respondents involve.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher will personally administer and explain the mechanics and concepts in answering the questionnaire, and that is, within the subject and setting of the study. The researchers likewise made an individual and personal approach to facilitate the expeditious and early retrieval of the duly accomplished questionnaire checklist, monitoring of the responses also undertaken to enhance the making of interpretation and validation of the results of the study.

Treatment of Data

In this section, the researchers will discuss the statistical treatment of data used to tabulate the gathered data from the respondents. Here, the researcher will utilize the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This treatment describes the main features of the study conduct and summarizes the data collection.

Statistical Treatment

Average Weighted Mean. This will be used in assessing the efficiency of Katarungang Pambarangay Law in Cabanatuan City. It could be computed using the formula:

$$WM = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

where,

WM = Weighted Mean
f = Frequency
x = Mean or average value
N = Number of respondents

Likert scale:
5-Strongly Agree
4- Agree
3- Neutral
2- Disagree
1-Strongly Disagree

RESULTS

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the respondents regarding the efficiency of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL) in the administration of justice in Cabanatuan City. The data were analyzed using weighted mean to determine the level of agreement of the respondents on the indicators under each variable.

Part I. Efficiency of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law

Table 1. Resolving Disputes at the Barangay Level

Indicator	SA (5)	A (4)	Σ(f×w)	WM	Verbal Interpretation
KPL effectively addresses disputes before reaching courts	51	19	331	4.73	Strongly Agree
Procedures are clear and easy to follow	39	31	319	4.56	Strongly Agree
Lupon members are competent	46	24	326	4.66	Strongly Agree
KPL promotes amicable settlement and peace	65	5	345	4.93	Strongly Agree

Table 1. presents the respondents' assessment of the efficiency of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law in resolving disputes at the barangay level.

Table 2. Speedy Disposition of Cases

Indicator	SA	A	Σ(f×w)	WM	Verbal Interpretation
KPL reduces time in resolving disputes	65	5	345	4.93	Strongly Agree
Mediation conducted within reasonable time	63	7	343	4.90	Strongly Agree
Parties are satisfied with promptness	35	30	295	4.21	Strongly Agree
KPL prevents prolonged litigation	40	30	310	4.43	Strongly Agree

Table 2 presents the respondents' evaluation of KPL in terms of speedy disposition of cases.

Table 3. Decongesting Court Dockets

Indicator	SA	A	Σ(f×w)	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Reduced number of cases filed in courts	50	20	330	4.71	Strongly Agree
Prevents burden on prosecutors and judges	63	7	343	4.90	Strongly Agree
Effective in filtering cases	44	26	318	4.54	Strongly Agree
Court congestion worse without KPL	52	18	334	4.77	Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows the respondents' assessment of KPL's role in decongesting court dockets.

Table 4. Summary Table Per Variable

Variable	Category Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Resolving Disputes at Barangay Level	4.72	Strongly Agree
Speedy Disposition of Cases	4.62	Strongly Agree
Decongesting Court Dockets	4.73	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.69	Strongly Agree

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DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the **Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL)** is perceived as **highly efficient** in the administration of justice in Cabanatuan City, as evidenced by an **overall weighted mean of 4.69**, interpreted as **Strongly Agree**.

Resolving Disputes at the Barangay Level

Respondents strongly affirmed the effectiveness of KPL in resolving disputes before they reach the courts (WM = 4.73). The highest rating was given to KPL's role in promoting amicable settlement and maintaining peace among disputing parties (WM = 4.93), highlighting the law's restorative justice orientation. This confirms that barangay-based mediation remains a practical and trusted mechanism for conflict resolution.

Speedy Disposition of Cases

The speedy disposition of cases obtained a category mean of 4.62, indicating strong approval. Respondents particularly acknowledged that KPL significantly reduces the time needed to resolve minor disputes (WM = 4.93). This supports the principle that barangay justice mechanisms contribute to swift access to justice and reduce unnecessary delays associated with formal court proceedings.

Decongesting Court Dockets

The highest category mean (4.73) was recorded under decongesting court dockets. Respondents strongly agreed that KPL effectively filters cases that should not reach the courts and prevents congestion (WM = 4.77). This underscores the crucial role of KPL in supporting the judiciary by easing the caseload of courts, rosecutors, and judges.

Overall Implication

Overall, the results indicate that the Katarungang Pambarangay Law is **highly effective** as a community-based justice system. Its successful implementation contributes to peaceful dispute resolution, timely case disposition, and judicial efficiency. These findings provide strong empirical support for policy recommendations aimed at strengthening training, resource allocation, and sustained implementation of KPL at the barangay level.

Part II. Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law

This section presents the problems encountered in the implementation of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL) as identified by the respondents. Respondents were allowed to check more than one problem.

Table 5. Problems Encountered in KPL Implementation

Problems Encountered in KPL Implementation	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Parties refusing to comply with settlements	38	76%
Limited training of Lupon members	22	44%
Lack of awareness among community members	8	16%
Political influence in dispute resolution	2	4%

Note: Percentage computed using the formula: Percentage = (Frequency ÷ Total respondents) × 100.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the most significant problem in the implementation of the KPL is **parties refusing to comply with settlements**, identified by 76% of respondents. This indicates that while barangay-level mediation and conciliation processes may produce agreements, enforcement and voluntary compliance remain major challenges. Non-compliance reduces the effectiveness of KPL, as unresolved disputes may still escalate to the courts, undermining the law's objective to promote amicable settlement and decongest judicial dockets.

The second most reported problem is **limited training of Lupon Tagapamayapa members**, cited by 44% of respondents. This underscores the need for continuous capacity-building to ensure that members are well-equipped in mediation, conflict resolution, and understanding of relevant legal procedures. Insufficient training may compromise the quality and fairness of dispute resolution at the community level.

A smaller number of respondents (16%) indicated **lack of awareness among community members** as a problem. While less frequent, this highlights the importance of ongoing community education campaigns to inform citizens about the KPL's processes, benefits, and the role of the Lupon in resolving disputes. Community awareness is essential for encouraging participation and cooperation.

Finally, **political influence in dispute resolution** was reported by only 4% of respondents, making it the least encountered problem. Although minimal, any political interference can still threaten impartiality and public trust in the barangay justice system, and thus should not be overlooked.

Overall, the results suggest that operational and compliance-related issues pose the greatest challenges to effective implementation of the KPL. Addressing non-compliance, enhancing the training of Lupon members, and sustaining community awareness initiatives are recommended to strengthen the law's effectiveness and ensure speedy and fair administration of justice at the barangay level.

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Proposed Community Extension Project to Enhance the Residents' Disaster Preparedness, Awareness and Resiliency

Project Title:	**Strengthening Barangay Justice Through Capacity-Building: A Mandatory Training Program for *Lupon Tagapamayapa* Members**
Proponents	**Cindy DC. Cariaga, MCJE**
Partner Community/Agency	Barangay Councils Lupon Tagapamayapa Philippine National Police (PNP) – Advisory Role Academic Institutions / Legal Resource Persons
Rationale	The Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL) plays a vital role in the administration of justice by promoting amicable settlement, speedy disposition of cases, and decongestion of court dockets. Although the findings of the study indicate that KPL is highly efficient, continuous capacity-building for Lupon Tagapamayapa members is necessary to sustain and further enhance its effectiveness. Lupon members serve as frontline mediators in community disputes; hence, they must be equipped with updated legal knowledge, mediation skills, ethical standards, and restorative justice principles. Institutionalizing regular and mandatory training will ensure consistency, professionalism, and fairness in barangay dispute resolution.
Project Goal	To further strengthen the implementation of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law (KPL), it is recommended that the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with local government units, institutionalize regular and mandatory training programs for Lupon Tagapamayapa members. These capacity-building programs should focus on mediation and conciliation skills, conflict resolution techniques, legal updates on Katarungang Pambarangay, ethical standards, and restorative justice principles. Mandatory participation will ensure that Lupon members are consistently equipped with the necessary competencies to handle disputes professionally, impartially, and effectively. The institutionalization of such training will promote uniformity in the application of barangay justice procedures, enhance the quality of dispute resolution, prevent escalation of minor conflicts to formal courts, and sustain public trust in the Barangay Justice System.
Specific Objectives	1. To improve the mediation and conciliation skills of Lupon members. 2. To update Lupon members on relevant laws, rules, and issuances related to Katarungang Pambarangay. 3. To promote ethical standards and impartiality in dispute resolution. 4. To institutionalize restorative justice principles in barangay-level mediation. 5. To ensure uniform and professional handling of disputes across barangays.
Target Beneficiaries	• Lupon Tagapamayapa Members • Punong Barangays • Barangay Secretaries (as record keepers) • Community members seeking barangay justice services
Project Components and Activities	**Orientation on the Katarungang Pambarangay Law** • Comprehensive review of pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 7160, relevant DOJ circulars, and established barangay justice procedures. • Facilitated by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in collaboration with legal experts. • Objective: Ensure Lupon Tagapamayapa members are well-informed of the legal foundations and procedural requirements of the Barangay Justice System. **Mediation and Conflict Resolution Training** • Focus on the practical application of mediation techniques. • Conducted by certified mediators through workshops, role-playing exercises, and case simulations. • Objective: Strengthen participants' skills in facilitating effective dialogue, managing conflicts impartially, and achieving amicable settlements.

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	Ethics and Professional Conduct Seminar • Emphasizes neutrality, confidentiality, integrity, and accountability in barangay dispute resolution. • Led by the DILG and ethics resource persons. • Objective: Reinforce ethical standards and prevent bias or undue influence in the mediation process. **Restorative Justice Workshop** • Introduces and deepens understanding of restorative justice principles in resolving barangay disputes. • Facilitated by representatives from the academe and the DOJ. • Objective: Focus on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and promoting community harmony rather than solely adjudicating conflicts. **Post-Training Evaluation** • Conducted by the DILG in coordination with the LGU. • Measures knowledge acquisition, skills improvement, and overall effectiveness of the training program. • Objective: Serve as a basis for further enhancement of future capacity-building initiative
Expected Output	1. Trained and certified Lupon Tagapamayapa members 2. Improved mediation and conciliation practices 3. Standardized dispute resolution procedures 4. Increased community trust in barangay justice mechanisms
Expected Outcomes	1. Enhanced efficiency and professionalism in barangay dispute resolution 2. Reduced escalation of minor disputes to formal courts 3. Strengthened implementation of Katarungang Pambarangay Law 4. Sustained peace and harmony within communities
Project Timeline	Month 1 – Planning and coordination Month 2 – Baseline survey and resource preparation Month 3–5 – Demonstrations and activities Month 6 – Monitoring and evaluation Month 7 – Final reporting and turnover
Budgetary Requirements	1. Printing of materials 2. Tarpaulins and posters 3. Training kits and demonstration materials 4. Meals/snacks for participants 5. Token/honorarium for speakers 6. Documentation expenses
Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring shall be conducted through: • Attendance records • Pre- and post-training assessments • Periodic evaluation of barangay case outcomes • Feedback from disputing parties Evaluation results shall serve as basis for improving future training programs.
Sustainability Plan	The training program shall be institutionalized through annual funding allocations from LGUs and inclusion in the DILG's regular capacity-building initiatives. Continuous monitoring and refresher courses will ensure long-term sustainability.

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