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ON THE WAY OUT: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND BUSINESS MINDSET AS ALTERNATIVES MEANS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

Abstract: *Not any community is without ill. Even those who hold the most power suffer the same fate to those who do not. This article reorients the scattered perspective in the dream of mitigating the impact of the most grievous condition that batters the world, poverty, into the right context. It revisits working methods in fight poverty. It was found out as literature provided that there have been many countless means that worked in combatting poverty as documented in some published work. Public awareness, Business Mindset through community education, building cooperatives, empowering start-ups, and community based tourism, are possible means to mitigate impact in the community as this helps provide alternative source of income. Thus, the said suggested means and measures can be adopted as a pattern to cure the perennial problem of poverty in areas such that of the Philippine villages where there is huge occurrence of poverty instances.*

Key words: *Poverty, Public Awareness, Business Mindset, Alternative Livelihood.*

Language: *English*

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Introduction

Poverty is a perennial problem. It is not only the Philippines that battles the problem day by day. It is a reality of the world that is in need of much attention in consideration of the fact that such condition continues to cripple dreams, endanger the future and wastes life of each family that is born to it. It is a global problem that the United Nations have decided to put poverty as the first among the list of sustainable development goals (SDGs) (*Sustainable Development Goals*: *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*, n.d.). There has been quite a number of studies that shows the link between poverty and criminality (Bharadwaj, n.d.). More especially in the context of property crime, that connects in parallel to the increase of drug related crimes, use, and selling. This poverty related crimes are heavily prohibited in the Philippines through a law which provides rules,

regulations, prohibition and penalties of violations there of (R.A. 9165).

In a developing country like the Philippines, poverty is prevalent, some of the causes of this poor condition are as follows, but not limited to the same, considering that each culture have varied causes: Historical Background, Lack of Education, Lack of Skills, Lack of access to available source of income, underemployment and at some point, corruption in ranks of the governmental structure (Blomberg et al., 2013; da Costa & Dias, 2015; Davids & Gouws, 2013). In the recent years however, it can be observed that leadership in the government have done tremendous effort to eradicate these causes of poverty, for instance, the leadership of the current Duterte administration have strongly imposed a crackdown on corruption among government officials and employees (Quah, 2019).

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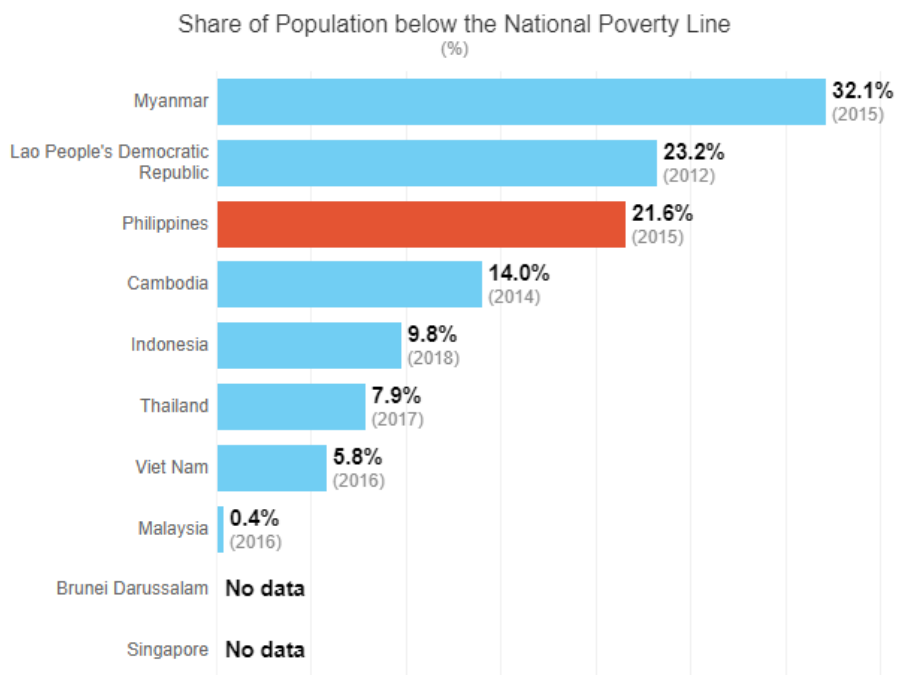
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National and International organizations have emphasized that in order to mitigate the impact of poverty in the community, Non-Government organizations and Industry Partners must participate in the quest towards the eradication of poverty(Haig, 2014). That, companies including those Government Owned and Controlled Corporations are highly encouraged to participate in activities and projects that enables social progress. This means that corporations must perform, Corporate Social Responsibility and adopt communities for Extension Programs(Blocker et al., 2013; *The Role of Education and Income in Poverty Alleviation*, n.d.).

Methodology: This paper gathers statistical data from the Government, Non-Government Agencies of

the Philippines including statistical data and reports from United Nations and its instrumentalities. The consolidated reports rages from the year 2015-2019. After gathering such reports, analysis and inference was formulated for this article.

Analysis and Discussion: In the year 2015, the Asian Development Bank published a data that shows the jaw dropping reality of countless Filipinos living below the poverty line. Out of the more than a hundred million Filipinos, about 21.6% are living below the poverty line, which means that, around 21 million are poor(*Poverty in the Philippines | Asian Development Bank*).



Source: Asian Development Bank. *Basic Statistics 2019*

Pic.1.

The report added that a large number of Filipinos that are employed barely earn around 1.9\$ or around 90.00 Pesos per day, an income that hardly feed one mouth, but are fed to as many as 10 persons in a family. That number could amount to 7.8% of the total population or about 7 million Filipinos. Twenty Eight (28) out of 1000 babies born, die before their fifth birthday(*Poverty in the Philippines | Asian Development Bank*). The prevalence of underemployment is as high as 13.7%, Stunting at 33.4%, Malnutrition at 7.1%, and Overweight Children at 3.9%. Which by the look at the statistical appearance with render the Philippines, fail, if graded by its score in the SDGs.

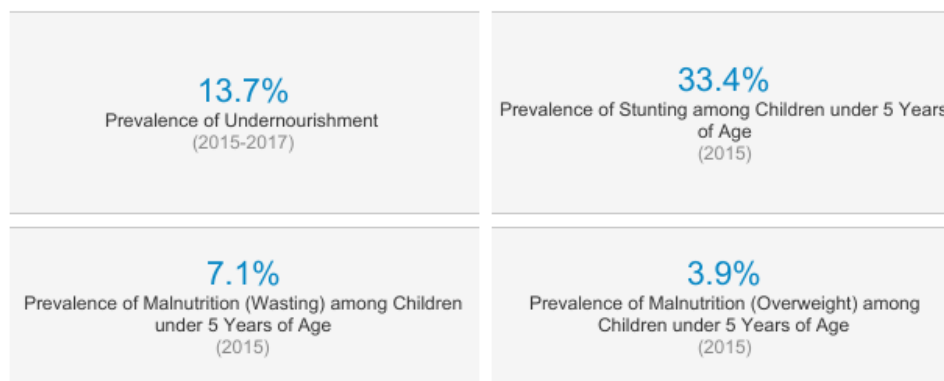
Though it is clear that the government have done efforts in alleviating poverty in both rural and urban

areas in the country, visibly clear, that the said efforts are not enough. Laws have been passed in congress empowering an institution that solely focuses on poverty alleviation. Republic Act 8425, an act institutionalizing social reforms and poverty alleviation program, creating for the purpose the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), and several other issuances that empowers the said commission in fighting against poverty. AO No. 21, 187, 21 s. 2011, Memorandum Circular No. 33, and Executive Order No. 110, to name few of those rules and laws. In the implementation of the law, the government around 62.7 Billion Pesos including that of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. Efforts have been done and poverty is still prevalent.

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Sustainable Development Goal 2: Philippines



Source: Asian Development Bank. *Basic Statistics 2019*

Pic.2.

The government recognized the role of Educational Institutions in the help to curb the rampancy of the poverty. Several studies have been publish to support the idea that, educational institution must not only dwell in the four walls of the classroom but set outside extensions that benefits the community, and help in the governments fight for the eradication of poverty. In fact, it is basic that institution of higher learning must comply the basic functions, such as instruction, research, extension and production (*CHED CMO 52 s2016*, 2016).

Meanwhile, the Philippines, being the hub, central to the neighboring countries between south, and East Asia is an easy target for drug trade. Law enforcement is further complicated by the geographic feature of the country consisting of 7,500+ islands. Tracing these routes of drugs coming into every inhabited islands is hard enough that even the declaration of an All Out War from the Duterte Administration only proves to produce minimal result(HIPP & YATES, 2011).

When TokHang (Toktok Hangyo) which means that, police will approach gently the identified drug dependents in the hope of them leaving the vice, have caught attention from local, national and international organizations due to some allegation of abuse to basic human rights. Not any case was proven though, however the issue continues to penetrate the greater public. There are around half a million drug surrenderees. These crimes are only evidential picture of the totality of prevalent and excruciating poverty present in the country(Bharadwaj, n.d.; HIPP & YATES, 2011; Imran et al., 2018; Laura et al., 2010).

What then, are the measures and programs to counter this continuous perennial problem of poverty and criminality? Through several literatures and researches globally, here are some of the steps provided as a way out of such an undesirable condition:

Public Awareness

Filipinos who are poor do not have access or are not aware of government programs that helps them in moving on with life and make a living. Several literature have provided that one of the causes why programs for poverty reduction does not prosper and die out naturally is because of lack of information(Bratan et al., 2010). The public, especially those who do not have access to sources of information such as, radio, television or the internet, those who are living in remote places and or in heavily congested slums where access to those information are not readily available, does not know or, may have known something in limited sense. The government have provided countless means to help alleviate poor condition in the Philippines, but at some point there has been blurry information have reached the country side, and that such programs is not felt at the bottom(Glaeser & Ujhelyi, 2010; Gottschalk & Solli-Sæther, 2009; Zhu et al., 2018).

As the context of criminality, surrenderees must be educated well about the laws and regulations that governs criminality in the country. Since many of these surrenderees, especially the young ones do not fully grasp the full force of information regarding these laws. Limited to nothing, is the magnitude of information given to them that could probably be the reason why many still resort to drug addiction and peddling due to this lack of information(Walker, 2012).

This situation can be addressed through a community advocacy and educational program that will constantly inform, persuade and remind drug surrenderees and would be users and criminals about the consequences of their action(Sullivan et al., 2019). With constant reminder, there is possibility the personal restraint against the said criminal action. Institutions of higher learning, the Philippine National Police and other concerned institution must perform collaborative action to address this growing need.

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Education have been undeniably one of the most important aspect of a thriving society. An informed citizenry means a prosperous society. Education therefore plays a very important role in developing society, reducing inequalities and provides opportunities where progress can exist. Several researches published in reputable journals provided that the public must be educated with the current trends laws, regulations and penalties, and measures against criminality(Logan, 2020; Sullivan et al., 2019). With this, concerned institutions both the government and non-government institution must allocate time, effort and resources to inform the public of new ways of clean living.

Alternative Livelihood

Filipinos who are considered poor do not have access to alternative livelihood. They then result to property crimes, peddling drugs and drug addiction which in effect would eventually results into more criminality. The key therefore is to provide alternative livelihood when people are not employed.

Business Mindset. An enabled citizen is the one whose mind is set in the course of progress through a perspective that focused on business. Educating communities where there is existence of poverty, of the new ways of business strategies, empowering methods that encourages start-ups and build small enterprises(Malshe et al., 2017). Molding of future entrepreneurs is one of the best ways to escape the horrors of poverty. Poor communities must be enabled to start their own business by teaching them product development, packaging, and marketing. Through this, those that does not have knowledge on running the business might gain meaningful insights that would help them propel progress in the future(Pouw et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2019; Speelman et al., 2019; Udagedara RMU & Allman, 2017).

Cooperatives. Countries in Africa and some in South America built community cooperatives in order to empower each member to reach a more reasonable and rightful standard of living. Starting cooperatives in poor communities in the Philippines would be a viable strategy in helping curb the growing instances of poverty(Krasnogor et al., 2008). Partnership with the Cooperative Development Authority in the Philippines would be better, most specially in the education of the would be members, as to how to run, manage and maintain the vibrancy of a cooperative. These cooperative perspective is proven to have such a visible effect in the Philippines' countryside. Many of the established cooperatives have helped many members and non-members, send their children to school, employ people and raise standards of living(Chaib-draa & Müller, 2006; Krasnogor et al.,

2008; *Microfinance Lending Program of Cooperatives in Cebu, Philippines: Realities, Benefits and Women's Participation* | CNU Journal of Higher Education, n.d.; Yang & Hung, 2014).

Micro-Enterprises. Starting a new business might be difficult, but studies shows, that when someone have the head for progress and positive change, one must start a small business(Manyara & Jones, 2007; Sedlmayr et al., 2019; Tohari et al., 2019). In this case, partnership with Department of Trade and Industry, and Higher Educational Institution that teaches business and commerce may come in, in order to empower such entrepreneurs for a start-up educative activities. Source funding and start-up capital may be sourced from DTIs programs for Medium, Small and Micro-Enterprises, where the government have provided considerable amount of funding(Fields, 2014; Gindling & Newhouse, 2014; Rogers et al., 2019).

Community Tourism. Sharing the natural resources of a local community with visitors from home and overseas for the sustainable benefit of that local community whilst conserving the natural environment and respecting the way of life(Salazar, 2012). Studies on this trend suggest a shift is required in the attention of donors and policy-makers towards redistribution policies that strengthen the *skills, resources, and conditions of micro, community-based and family entrepreneurship*, together with a stronger orientation towards the domestic markets.(*Can community-based tourism contribute to development and poverty alleviation? Lessons from Nicaragua: Current Issues in Tourism: Vol 14, No 8*, n.d.; Okazaki, 2008; Salazar, 2012; Zapata et al., 2011)

Conclusion: Poverty is not a problem without solution. Though it is apparent that such solution is a challenging quest. With proper management of the resources, though scarce, may have considerable impact on the mitigation of this perennial problem. Researches around the world have resulted to suggest countless ways to battle poverty. Countless means can be resorted to in order to address the same. This paper would end in propagating the concept of social empowerment, where the citizens must be educated well about the laws and regulations about daily conduct, and that opportunity to those who seems not to have be afforded to them. This is where the role of government and non-government institution to fulfill its role in the society, to effect change. With all the available avenue, it was recognized clearly the responsibility handed over to higher educational institutions whose expertise may change the world as we see it.

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