

BEST PRACTICES IN MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA'S) STEWARDSHIP IN THE CONTEXTS OF PARTICIPATORY ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE, EMPOWERED FISHING COMMUNITIES AND THE ECONOMICS OF ITS SUSTAINABILITY IN CORTES OF CARAGA REGION, PHILIPPINES: A DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

The study presented the socio-demographic profile of the fishers in Cortes, Surigao Del Sur, a coastal town in Surigao del Sur. It presented the Organizational Culture of the MPA's and the extent of support in MPA governance by the following agencies: Barangay, MLGU, Provincial Fishery and Aquatic Resources, Bureau of Fishery and Aquatic Resources, NGP Program of DENR and the NGO's which had worked in the site. It was found out that the program of Cortes LGU in MPA management/governance was "holistic" enough that it encompasses the economic, health, cultural, tourism, education, food security and was anchored on sustainable governance of the sites/MPA's. Further, Cortes MPA's aimed to harness people's empowerment and responsibility that's why MPA indicators in its monitoring were well in placed such: monitoring of coral covers, mangrove reforestation, providing economic interventions (livelihood projects) and extent of people's empowerment in the community level was widely manifested. The other approaches in MPA promotion can be rated as "Very Effective" such the use of radio program, bill boards, the utilization of the LGU Bus in MPA promotion. The trainings attended by the MPA members in MPA governance were sufficient enough. There was an active collaboration in capability/capacity building of the MPA members, NGO's, BLGU, MLGU, BFAR, PFAR, NGP of DENR and it can be deduced that the MPA's were powerful tool in coastal development and management. The awards received by the MLGU of Cortes were manifestations in its achievement in good management of the MPA's thus social preparation / preparedness of the community lead to effective campaign of community stewardship of the MPA's. In like manner the MLGU of Cortes enhances MPA governance by adopting participatory approaches and the same time community based hence empowered the said communities as co-stewards of the coastal environment. Hence, the best practices of Cortes MPA governance is worth narrating indeed.

Keywords: MPA's, Cortes LGU, Fishers, Governance, PO's.