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## Research Article

### Legislative Performance of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Sorsogon City in Disaster Risk Reduction Management

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#### ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the legislative and official decisions made by the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Sorsogon City regarding disaster management from 2022 and 2024. The research groups these legislations into the four phases of disaster management: Prevention and Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Rehabilitation and Recovery. By categorizing these legislations, the study indicates how these help the city to be resilient and emphasize areas which improvements in these policies are needed. A qualitative design was used, applying document and thematic analysis to review official city records. Findings indicates that the city government has made consistent progress in fund, resource allocation, and disaster risk management planning. However, the analysis indicates a lack of proper post evaluation. The study suggests that the Sangguniang Panglungsod should utilize a monitoring tool to bridge the gap on policy enactment and ground level enforcement of DRRM policies.

**Keywords:** *Disaster risk reduction, Legislative measures, Local government, Policy analysis*

#### Introduction

The Philippines is high susceptible to natural hazards every year. Local government units (LGUs) are always the first to help when hazards hit. The Sangguniang Panglungsod must make local laws that fit their specific Sorsoganons. These laws follow national rules but focus on local needs. The success of these laws depends on four areas of disaster management. These are the four main phase of disaster, the

prevention phase, preparednessphase, response phase, and recovery phase. As the dangers keeps on growing, it is the local laws and legislations that serves as the primary tool for making the Sorsoganons safe. For these laws and legislations and governing to be effective, the Sorsoganons need these to be actually effective on ground during disasters. There are some studies points out that LGUs struggle with on how they will utilize their resources, often

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leading to quick help rather than the long-term planning. In the context of Sorsogon City, based on the findings of the study, the researcher found out that the city have passed several important legislations and resolutions. Resolution No. 136 in particular is a good example because it had allocated 32 million pesos for disaster funds which resulted to procuring radio systems to improve the disaster communication in the city.

Some scholars frequently emphasized the concept of the term "storm politics" and the problems that come with the said concept. It is observed that sometimes some leaders primarily focus on the quick responses and mostly might end up not being properly prepared and for a long-term recovery and didn't even gave time to plan the prevention phase. Some of the LGUs didn't manage to check if their laws and legislations take a good effect on the communities. Which is usually hapening is this "policy-practice gap" where law makers just pass a law doesn't necessarily fix the actual problem for long term. This study is evaluating the Sorsogon City's laws and legislations created and mandated from 2022 to 2024 that emphasize disaster management and support

**Methods**

**Research Design and Study Site**

In the study, the researcher employed a qualitative design to evaluate the laws resolutions and ordinances created and adopted by the Sorsogon Sangguniang Panglungsod. The primary goal of is to assess ho these specific laws affect or contribute the Sorsogonans and the city in all phases of disaster management.

**Data Collection and Procedure**

The data gathering procedure the researcher conducted a documentary analysis of all relevant laws and ordinances pased from the 2022 to 2024 window in the city of Sorsogon. These local sourced documents from the Sorsogon website e-library was compared and

analysed against different studies and academic journal. This step is important in order to triangulate the findings with the existitng literature.

**Data Analysis and Categorization**

Thematic analysis was being utilized as the primary method in order to make sense for the gathered data. This process, it involved a meticulous searching for the recurring patterns across the different enacted laws there in the council. Each of the piece of legislation were then categorized and also sorted into one of the four established thematic areas of the disaster risk reduction and management. This approach is very useful, because it highlighted what is the specific priorities of the Sangguniang Panglungsod, while same time pointing out where is the gaps that could potentially leave the population at risk.

**Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the whole process of the data gathering, the researcher followed all the established ethical rules and protocols for conducting research. All of the gathered information from the public and private records were mainly used for the purpose of the study and kept stricly private to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the gathered information form the documents.

**Results and Discussion**

Based on the review of findings for the 2022 to 2024 window, the researcher found out that the LGU is in the critical transition phase wherein the city of Sorsogon is shifting from the reactive governization where they wait for the disaster to being preemptively prepared. Based on the findings, the city has shifted towards focusing on preemptive measures. In the analysis of the findings from the said laws and resolutions, there have been a link between these legislations to strengthen the resilience of the Sorsogonans.

Table I. Sorsogon City Legislative Mapping of DRRM Phases (2022–2024)

| Phase        | Key Provision   |
|--------------|---|
| Preparedness | Adopts Resolution No. 324 (2022) to realign ₱2M for the DRRM fund; Resolution No. 136 (2023) approving the 2023 Investment Plan; and Resolution No. 338 (2022) for academic partnership with Sorsogon State University. |

| Phase                   | Key Provision   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Prevention & Mitigation | Resolution No. 286 (2022) prioritizes power restoration for water facilities; Resolution No. 287 (2022) prohibits makeshift markets in high-risk coastal flood zones. |
| Response                | Resolution No. 285 (2022) allows fund reprogramming for immediate mobilization; Resolution No. 294 (2022) establishes a 64-barangay radio communication system.       |
| Rehabilitation          | Resolution No. 135 (2023) reprogrammed ₱6.08M from 2021 funds to support continuous recovery and response efforts.  |

Based on the findings, as show in the Table 1, the Sorsogon Sangguniang Panglungsod appears to view preparedness as one of their primary duties. According to the Resolution No. 136, with the Sangguniang Panglungsod adopting the 2023 Investment Plan, the city is evidently following the principles of good governance. This emphasizes that the disaster risk reduction management phases are interconnected to each other and is a longterm process of institutional strengthening (Das, 2023).

According to the Resolution No. 338, S. 2022, the Sorsogon City and Sorsogon State University has collaborated to integrate academic and scientific perspectives into law-making. As Ma and Mirandilla (2020) argues that the disaster resilience is the most effective when Sorsogon City moves away from generic plans and adopts solutions that fit the local context of Sorsogon City. With the city’s partnership with Sorsogon State University, this leverages the academic researches for the city to effectively build human capital that is important for sustainability and resilience (Alcayna et al., 2016). While these partneships are important, the success of this kind of advance planning is tested by how effectively these legislations contribute to the Prevention and Mitigation phase of the DRRM.

Sorsogon city has taken a proactive statnce in mitigation. Based on the findings, the city has stopped the construction of make-shift markets in certain flood zones which emphasizes a conflict between economy and long-term public safety. Accroding to De Menezes (2022), this “storm politics” states that the government’s response are influenced by Sorsogon City’s current capacity and needs of its residents. In this framework for instance a hypothetical but realistic conflict in Sorsogon City would involve coastal vendors allowing them to rebuild

makeshift stall for immediate income which is a short-term priority while allowing this will alleviate their needs but it creates a cycle of vulnerability of high risk of casualties in flood zones. The Sorsogon Sangguniang Panglungsod stance on this framework indicates that the LGU is willing to endure the political and economic friction in exchange for long term priorities.

Additionally, the prioritation of the restoration of power for water facilities (Resolutions No. 286, S. 2022) indicates that the city’s understanding for cascading disasters. With these actions of securing the city’s lifeline, the city prevents another crisis that may arise aftermath the disaster (Roshani & Amaratunga, 2010).

When it comes to the response phase, the establishment and investment in the radio communication system accross 64 barangays connected to each other (Resolution No. 294, S. 2022) is a strategic intervention. It basically fixes those critical gaps in communication during an emergency. (Resolution No. 294, S. 2022) is a strategic intervention. As scholars stated that typhoons frequently compromise digital infrastructures, the maintaining of the connectivity is important for information dissemination. This addresses a common failure in DRRM which is the the breakdown of communication between the local government and the community (Ricky & Becodo, 2015). Despite these technological enhancement of the city of Sorsogon, there is a lacking on the legislations that focused on rehabilitation phase compared to the preparedness phase. This often leaves a gap where in Sorsogonans can be vulnerable after the crisis has passed and waiting for an aid from the City rather than making the it localized (Roshani & Amaratunga, 2010).

Based on all the findings of the study, there is a policy-practice gap which is a primary

concern of the Sangguniang Panglungsod. While the Sangguniang Panglungsod has these legislations passed which resulted to allocation of funds to infrastructure, the researchers findings indicates that there is a limited evidence in the post-implementation evaluation of these legislations enacted. In order to bridge this gap, the researchers suggests that the Sangguniang Panglungsod could adopt a Legislative Disaster Risk Reduction Management Scorecard which is a monitoring tool that would require the participation of the barangay to submit reports conforming if the provided infrastructures through these legislations are operational and if these help DRRM enforced properly on ground. This will be a tool for the Sangguniang Panglungsod as a basis in creating, passing and enacting future legislations and make their legislative intents translates to tangible safety of all Sorsogonans.

## Conclusions

The legislative evaluation of the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Sorsogon City of the DRRM related legislations from the 2022 to 2024 window reveals a significant shift in the local level disaster governance. The study concludes that the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Sorsogon City has been successful in shifting from a reactive response towards disaster to a preparedness-oriented mindset. This is supported by the legislations in the 2022 to 2024 that allowed the allocations such as the ₱32 million disaster fund and the institutionalization of academic partnerships for evidence-based policy-making. These efforts indicates that the Sorsogon City Council excels in administrative preparedness and immediate response logistics. Additionally, the Sangguniang Panglungsod has adopted a preemptive approach in the Prevention and Mitigation phase by enforcing the Resolution No. 287 which restricts the makeshift markets in high-risk coastal zones in Sorsogon City. This legislation indicates a strategic approach of "storm politics," where the Sangguniang Panglungsod has prioritized long-term public safety over the immediate priorities. (De Menezes, 2022). Furthermore, under the Resolution No. 286 indicates how the Sangguniang Panglungsod also prioritize minimizing other potential hazards (Roshani & Amaratunga,

2010). However, while these legislations are strategically important, the successful enactment of these legislations are largely dependent to the consistent enforcement and compliance of Sorsogonans. This indicates a critical policy gap as the existence of every mandate does not automatically ensures its success rate when executed on ground. Despite the city's efforts of enacting these legislations, the absence of measurement of its success creates a gap between the Sangguniang Panglungsod's intent and the actual effect of this on the Sorsogonans. This indicates that the focus of the Sangguniang Panglungsod should not only priorities in the policy creation for the DRRM but also put more focus on its policy evaluation.

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