

Symbiosis Between Private Sector and Politics Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on government related services and even to private business operations were overwhelmingly disruptive, more so, when the government decided to put the entire Luzon under the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in 2020, in an effort to derail the statistical climb of infection while there are no clear-cut solutions to the pandemic, nor was there any scientific breakthroughs to control the spread of the virus. This event was unexpected and it affected the lives of everyone, both the rich, and more so the poor members of the society.

In this study, symbiosis is denoted as the cooperation that manifested between parties in an event or setting. Thus, through collective private and government actions that transcends borders, the next phase of combating Covid-19 requires a change of mind on the supposed role of the local government and the private sector. Hence, the study assessed the symbiosis between the local barangay unit and the private sectors that occurred in the respondent-towns in the City of Meycauayan, Bulacan during ECQ.

Based on the data gathered, the challenges encountered by the barangay units in responding to the pandemic include lack of preparation of the barangay units, lack of budget, unemployment and insufficient food supply. To cope with the challenges encountered, the barangay officials generated funds through supplemental budgets, budget realignments, and sought the help of private enterprises, house-to-house delivery of relief goods, utilization of social media and installation of CCTV system which was very helpful during the ECQ monitoring. From the generosity of individuals and enterprises came rice, powdered milk, biscuits and assorted cleaning agents. Residents also received donations like noodles, sardines, coffee and sugar. The Provincial Government and LGU, on the other hand, gave relief goods during the ECQ. Given the combined efforts from the local barangay units and the different individuals and private enterprises to help the residents, it was determined that there was indeed a positive effect on the community. Residents were aware of the contributions of the private individuals and enterprises which help them to go through the hardships of unemployment, being able to eat and survive the ordeal of the ECQ and Covid-19. In essence, the residents of the respondent-towns benefited from the symbiosis between the private and public sector amidst COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: symbiosis, private sector, politics, pandemic