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## The Administrative Capability of the Barangay Governments in the Municipality of Jolo, Philippines

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to assess the administrative capability of the barangay governments in the Municipality of Jolo, find out factors adversely affecting the capability of these barangays, and propose an alternative capability-building approach suitable for the subject barangays. This study utilized a descriptive method which involved one hundred nineteen (119) study samples determined through Purposive sampling. The administrative strength of the barangay governments in Jolo is mainly confined to the construction of rock-caused-ways and footbridges. Other pressing problems in the community remained poorly addressed to the dismay of their respective constituents. Their capability of discharging the devolved function as required in the LGC of 1991 is minimal. By and large, the barangay governments in Jolo failed to fully realize the expectations of the code and to address the daily concerns of their constituents with utmost efficiency and effectiveness. Their capability is adversely affected by factors such as scarcity of resources, inadequate training, insufficient political support, poor inter-governmental coordination, and lack of accountability. The administration of most of these units is characterized by gross inefficiency, nepotism, and a patronage system. The proposed alternative approach to enhancing the administrative capability of these units focused on the internal value reformation which is mainly anchored on the Islamic system of leadership which are suitable due to the fact that all barangay officials in Jolo are Muslims. Besides, any approach toward improving administrative capability will be doomed to fail if the local officials do not have the proper moral values. Local units possess a different levels of administrative capability. Hence, decentralization has to match with local capability and endowments. Thus, there is a need to revisit the code should the benefits of local autonomy is to be fully reaped.

### 1. Introduction

The underlying concept behind local autonomy is to maximize popular participation in governance and to ensure efficient and effective delivery of basic services. Towards this end, the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 was formulated to facilitate the delegation of powers and functions from the central government to the Local Government Units (LGUs). With the code, it is assumed that LGUs will be able to attain their fullest development as self-reliant and self-sustain communities, and transform themselves into

dynamic partners of the central government in the attainment of national goals and agenda.

In the Philippines, a very basic unit exists – the barangay. Brought about by the country's historical experience, this unit is considered as the bed rock of governance long before the Spaniards reached the country's shorelines. The barangay provides opportunity for the people to have themselves directly involved in running their own affairs, in realizing their aspirations, and in experiencing government services on a face to face basis. With the barangay system, both



individual and community issues and concerns are easily resolved as the stool of governance is within everybody's reach.

Local autonomy encompasses the entrustment of authority and responsibility to all tiers of local government. However, local units began experiencing issues on their administrative capability when additional mandates, powers and duties were devolved to them. Yet, problem on administrative capability has always been a common concern among LGUs since the national government made decentralization as its main framework of governance. It is indeed a fact that there are local units that exercise the same level of powers and responsibilities but vary in terms of output. This also holds true to local units with almost similar endowments. This disparity clearly attests to the truism that no two local units are exactly identical especially in terms of the management aspect. For instance, some municipalities in other areas have been converted into city, while others remain unchanged. This scenario clearly demonstrates that some local units are more capable than others in their quest for local autonomy. This sense of being incapable hinders the attainment of the goals of the LGC.

Being the basic government, barangay governments in Jolo must possess the required capability to satisfy the needs of their respective constituents. As such, the need to improve local capabilities as criteria for the delegation of powers is indispensable. National government financial backing will be rendered futile without the required capability of the local units.

This study is designed to assess the administrative capability of the eight (8) barangay governments comprising the Municipality of Jolo. The assessment is entirely anchored on the performance of the basic functions delegated to these units - as prescribed in the LGC - as indicators of the extent of their capability. Finding out the factors adversely affecting the capability of these units is also within the realm of this research. Finally, this study aims to propose an

alternative paradigm that is deemed appropriate to enhance the administrative capability of these units.

## 2. Methods

This research utilized a descriptive method. The data were generated via a Six-Point Likert-Type Questionnaire (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2– Disagree, 3 – Slightly Disagree, 4 – Slightly Agree, 5 – Agree, and 6 – Strongly Agree), Interview Checklist, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and the researcher's objective observation. The analysis of data is done using Weighted Mean, Frequency Count, Percentage Distribution and Ordinal Scale via manual computation.

In determining the study sample, a Purposive Sampling method was employed as the respondents were chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the desired information. Seventy two (72) barangay officials, six (6) personnel from the Jolo Municipal Government and DILG-Sulu, and forty one (41) barangay constituents were identified. A total of one hundred nineteen (119) respondents were taken as the actual study sample.

## 3. Results

### **The administrative capability of the Barangay Governments In Jolo**

On the basis of the devolved duties and responsibilities to the barangay government as stipulated in section 17 of the LGC, this portion presents the assessments of the administrative capability of the eight barangay governments in Jolo as ascertained by the respondents. The code mandated all barangay governments in the country to perform the following functions: 1) Agricultural system support service which includes planting, material distribution and operation of farm produce, and collection and buying stations, 2) Health and social welfare services which include maintenance of barangay health center and day-care center, 3)



Services and facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation, beautification, and solid waste collection, 3) Maintenance of Katarungan Pambarangay, 4) Maintenance of barangay roads and bridges and water supply systems, 5) Infrastructure facilities such as multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose pavement, plaza, sports center and other similar facilities, 6) Information and reading material center; and 7) Satellite or public market, where viable.

### **Agricultural system support services which include planting, materials distribution and operation of farm produce, collection and buying stations**

With 1.00 mean score, the respondents claimed that these services are not applicable to them. Hence, they confirmed of not performing these functions in their respective area. This is highly expected because the subject barangays are located in a partially-urbanized municipality of Jolo. Most of these units lie within the coastal periphery of the municipality, while others are within the economic zone of the town. As such, the performance of agricultural services to their constituents does not certainly make sense, if not illogical. In spite of this, the barangay residents - in an FGD sessions - averred that funds intended for agricultural services can be diverted to the fishery services. For instance, each barangay especially those in the coastal area can establish a buying center for fish and other aquatic goods in their respective are. In addition, the barangay can also provide financial assistance in the form of loans (for capital) to fishermen, fish vendors, and those making life by going to the sea every day should efficient delivery of basic service is to be truly pursued.

### **Health and social welfare services**

The respondents confirmed, with a mean score of 5.62, that they are maintaining both barangay health center and day-care center. They asserted that these centers are well staffed by competent personnel hired on the basis of their impressive educational and

technical how-know. The respondents likewise claimed with a mean score of 5.31 that their health and daycare centers are properly equipped with facilities and amenities necessary for its proficient operation in spite of their limited fiscal resource. To them, said centers are fully functional with satisfactory performance.

The residents considered these centers as very essential community need. Unfortunately, they asserted that little or no amount is earmarked for the maintenance of these centers. They likewise claimed that people manning these centers are mostly relatives and supporters of the barangay officials with no credible credentials and experiences for the job thereby affecting the delivery of health and social services in their area. To them, they have health center that cannot cater to their “first aid” medical needs, and a day-care center that cannot inspire toddlers to learn to socialize in preparation for formal learning.

With the donation from the provincial government, all barangays in Jolo have their emergency vehicle to transport residents (with no personal service) with urgent medical necessity and other related purposes to the nearby hospital. The barangay officials averred with a mean score of 6.00 that they have been serving their constituents with utmost efficiency and fairness, and promptly attended to the concerns of their constituents at all times.

The residents, however, claimed otherwise. In most barangays, the residents asserted that access to this vehicle is never easy unless one is a relative or supporter of the barangay officials. Most often, these vehicles are by the officials used for personal purposes. In addition, in most barangays the residents claimed that social service such as Pantawid, 4Ps, Senior Citizen application and others are not actually reaching its intended recipients – the poorest of the poor and the old folks. Instead, said government benefits are often given to family members, relatives and supporters of the barangay officials - even though they are not qualified to avail such benefits - before the



remaining limited slots would reach the intended beneficiaries. Consequently, most actual beneficiaries are denied of mentioned social privileges.

Although these programs are under the tutelage of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), identifying the beneficiaries or recipients is left to barangay officials since it is assumed that they (barangay officials) know their own constituents, and they would be just to them. Fortunately, the study also discovered that not all barangays in Jolo are perpetrating this disgraceful act of injustice.

### **Services and facilities related to general hygiene and sanitation, beautification, and solid waste collection**

In terms of hygiene and sanitary services, only few barangays in Jolo are maintaining it as confirmed by the residents. This is in contradiction with the claimed of the barangay officials that they are all in active pursuit of said component as indicated by a mean score of 5.81.

With regards to beautification, the residents averred that their barangay do not have the drive towards beautification of their community. They claimed that not even once a beautification contest is launched for the purpose when it actually brings prestige to their community and pride to the residents.

In term of waste management, most barangays in Jolo display deficiency regarding the matter, although barangay officials asserted otherwise. The program of the national government on the “Three O’clock Habit” of cleaning every corner and street of the barangay is only upheld for a month in most barangays in Jolo in spite of their compensated barangay street sweepers. As observed, only few barangays in Jolo that are continuously doing the practice regularly.

As to solid waste collection, a with a mean score of 4.62 indicates that all barangays in Jolo practice proper garbage disposal and collection. However, their constituents claimed that they can just dispose their garbage anywhere as no designated area for garbage

disposal and collection is available wherein waste is properly segregated.

Garbage disposal in the municipality is located near the public market where residents have to spend money disposing their waste. With no designated area, people in the barangay will just throw their trash anywhere. These barangays do not have a garbage truck collector. Garbage collection is done by the municipal/provincial government which sometimes last for days before such garbage is collected. For their counterpart in this process, the barangay will provide manpower in the collection and disposal of garbage. Unfortunately, only few barangays in town are doing this.

### **Maintenance of Katarungan Pambarangay**

With a mean score of 5.97, the barangay officials confirmed that they are maintaining a Katarungan Pambarangay (Barangay Justice System). They claimed that they are often preoccupied with the settlement of disputes every day. They also asserted with a mean score of 5.62 that most of them have handled amicable settlements which usually involved marital problems, family disputes, youth troubles and thievery. To them, they are regularly attending to an average of four civic problems every month. They also confirmed with 2.31 mean score that cases involving killing were beyond their capability to resolve.

Conflicts involving influential families in their area were usually elevated to the municipal or provincial government for resolution as confirmed by the barangay officials. Maintenance of peace and order in the barangay is enforced by the Civilian Volunteer Officers (VCOs) – who are mostly the relatives and supporters of the barangay officials as claimed by the residents. These CVOs have no training in handling conflict settlement as asserted by the residents. Consequently, residents in most barangays in Jolo claimed that they are not contented with the way barangay officials handle dispute settlements, more so if it involves their relatives (barangay officials),



supporters, and affluent family in the community.

### **Maintenance of barangay roads and bridges and water system**

Construction of rock-cause-way and foot bridges as indicated by a mean score of 5.67 has been the common endeavor among barangays in Jolo. Construction and maintenance barangay roads are often handled by either the municipal or provincial government.

As indicated by a mean score of 1.02, no barangay in Jolo maintains a water supply system. Barangay officials averred that water supply in their respective area is not a major concern since their constituents are availing the sufficient water service of the Jolo Mainland Water District (JMWD)– a government owned and controlled corporation operating in Jolo and in nearby municipalities. However, the residents asserted that they are in desperate need of accessible water supply. They averred that the JMWD can no longer meet the demand of the annually increasing numbers of people in Jolo. They claimed that they have to buy water from private deliveries which costs them an average of 100.00 pesos every day.

Although in some barangays deep-wells are in place, these outlets are no longer functional because it has been left unattended for decades. According to the residents, this is also one of the reasons why fire incidents are difficult to contain because there are no functional water outlets available in the barangay for the fire department personnel to utilize.

### **Infrastructure facilities such as multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose pavement, plaza, sports center and other similar facilities**

With the highest mean score of 5.53, the barangay officials assailed that they have implemented infrastructure projects in their respective area. Only one barangay in Jolo maintains a public plaza.

Most bvrangays in Jolo do not have a multi-purpose hall and sport centers as confirmed by a mean

score of 1.00. Their pavement and drainage system are poorly maintained which often triggered and worsened flood incidence in their area. Most of the time, drainage system are maintained by the municipal government.

As asserted by the residents, most of the projects implemented in their area do not necessarily represent their urgent needs. To them, Waiting Shed, Welcome Sign, and the like do not address their priority needs. They claimed that there are more pressing problems that continuously affect their daily life and thereby necessitate immediate actions from their community leaders.

The barangay officials asserted, with a 4.13 mean score, that their development plans are mainly geared towards the construction of low-budget projects. However, the residents believed that most barangays in Jolo do not have actual development plan. They claimed that if there was any planning, it is nothing but a mere product of a spur of moment decision made by few influential local leaders, notably the Punong Barangay. This is in spite of the codal provision expressing clearly that the function of the barangay officials is to approve the plan (if any) conceptualized by the Barangay Development Council (BDC), not to do the job of the council.

The purpose of the council is to generate more information that covers the determination and prioritization of needs to be addressed, and identification of potentialities and opportunities. In return, this enables the barangays to optimize the utilization of the resources at the right time. The council shall exercise the following (ICBP, 1993:5); 1) Mobilize people's participation in local development efforts, 2) Prepare barangay development plans based on local requirements, 3) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the national or local programs and projects; and 4) Perform such other functions as may be provided by the law or competent authority

The data confirmed that such a council does not exist in most barangays in Jolo. Not surprisingly, most barangay officials averred with 1.53 mean score that



they do not have consultation or assessment scheme as a requisite for project/program conception and implementation in their respective area. In addition, they likewise confirmed with 1.27 mean score of not having a scheme of assessing the social impact of the project or the “input-output analysis”. This points out that the planning and program management aspects of these units are apparently weak.

#### **Information and reading material center**

As confirmed by a mean score of 1.23 together with the FGD sessions result, all barangays in Jolo do not have information and reading material center. In spite of this, the barangay officials asserted that they are planning to construct said center as soon as they have the sufficient funds for it. While the residents consider such centers as another important service, most barangay officials deemed it as a less priority projects, and thus, it can wait.

#### **Satellite or public market, where viable**

Only few barangays in Jolo have satellite market. Others asserted that constructing a mini market is beyond their financial capability as attested by a mean score of 2.21. Most barangay officials claimed that a mini-market is not viable in their area and may only worsen their concern regarding community pollution. This claim, however, is contradicted by the residents. They averred that having satellite market within their reach will absolutely save them time and transportation expenses. They asserted that their barangay can actually afford to establish one should they wish to really make the lives of their constituents easier and more convenient.

#### **Factors adversely affecting the administrative capability of these barangays**

From the data gathered, the study found out the following as adverse factors affecting the administrative capability of the barangay governments in Jolo, such as:

#### **Scarcity of resources**

Scarcity of resources is one of the problems faced by the barangay governments in Jolo that cripple their operation. With a mean score of 5.52, most barangay officials claimed that they find it difficult to meet the expectations of their respective constituents due to this concern. The study discovered that these units merely rely on their annual IRA for their revenue of which most barangay officials considered it to be insufficient as indicated by a mean score of 2.10. Most barangay officials claimed that their IRA can only cater to the personal services (salary and honorarium, etc.). To them, this is one of the main reasons why many of their planned programs and services remained unfunded and undelivered. We can therefore see that resources allotted for projects and programs are so meager to warrant effective addressing of the needs of the constituents. Even the best of plans will be rendered futile without the necessary resources.

Resources – human and material - are the most important assets of every organization regardless of its nature of operation. Resources are considered to be the life blood of the organization. It is regarded as . . . another force in the work environment (Newstrom and Davis, 1972:330). It is indeed safe to say that highly competent personnel will be of no use without the necessary resources. Its contribution to the organization, however, depends largely on how said resources are managed and utilized.

#### **Inadequate training**

Barangay officials in Jolo are inadequately trained as manifested by their mean score of 2.38. Although there was training in the field of barangay administration, interview with some personnel of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)-Sulu confirmed that the Barangay Administrative Training Program (BATP) was only conducted once, and there has been no follow-up training program since then. With a mean score of 5.71, the barangay officials confirmed that training will certainly uplift





their ability to efficiently administer their affairs. To them, higher authority should initiate regular training program particularly in the field of planning and management, administration, and other relevant areas.

This research found out that at one point, the Municipal Local Government Officer (MLGO) had proposed another training program for the barangay officials. The DILG-Sulu had provided pamphlets, handouts and other training materials. But due to lack of financial support from the upper echelon as well as financial counterpart from the barangays in Jolo, the program did not materialize.

Training is beyond doubt essential to improve one's performance of the assigned tasks. It enables the individual to demonstrate a consistent use of effective training skills actual practice. As Martires (1991:269) pointed out, it is not enough to merely rely on whatever knowledge and skills that one brings to the organization. They should acquire additional capabilities for more responsibilities in their current and future positions. With assistance from the upper authority, training prepares them for any shift in work that may be undertaken within their organizations or even outside. However, the skills and knowledge that people gained through training depends on their "capacity to learn" (Sferra et.al. 1971:55).

### **Insufficient political support**

LGU as political subdivisions of the state have inherent quasi-political power. But for more effective implementation of policies, political support from higher levels of governance is always a necessary.

The study found out that the barangay government in Jolo received less political support particularly from upper tiers of local government in the province. As a consequence, barangay officials find it difficult to implement and enforce barangay resolutions especially on critical issues that demand criminal punishment like drug trafficking and other grave offenses. It was further noted that there were times

when upper authority refused to extend political support to some barangays for unknown reasons. As confirmed by a mean score of 5.47, barangay officials claimed that with adequate political support and the backing of police personnel, they are more than capable of solving problems related to some serious offenses in their respective area.

Adequate political support can be an effective strategy in improving the administrative capability of these units. It has been proven in several instances. At the international level for instance, the Branderberg-Prussia civil service, Italy experiences following the Second World War, and that of Japan are some of the best examples. These countries had once faced the problem of low level administrative capability, but with the strong political support from higher political echelon, the capability of the local government units gradually developed.

### **Poor inter-governmental coordination**

Although the LGC highly enjoined governmental coordination among local units with line agencies and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), barangay officials claimed with 2.44 mean score that they are struggling to establish strong inter-governmental ties with government instrumentalities in the municipality, let alone with those in other areas. In an interview with the Jolo MLGO, it was found out that coordinative effort among local units and with government agencies rarely occurred, except during the conduct of the BATP. The barangay officials claimed with a mean score of 4.35 that government agencies and other organizations seldom coordinate with them in the implementation of certain programs. This is due to the lack of confidence on their ability as confirmed by most barangay officials. In fact, the barangay officials asserted that most of their coordinative efforts with the line agencies were not given proper attention, if not outrightly ignored.



### **Lack of accountability**

Another factor that affects the capability of the local units in Jolo is the lack of the sense of being “answerable” to their constituents. While barangay officials claimed with a mean score of 5.51 that they are aware of the concept of accountability and that they fully are accountable to their constituents, countless irregularities in the performance of their tasks showed otherwise. For example, the residents in most barangays in Jolo asserted that IRA is seldom used for public welfare endeavors. To the, said fund is often misused, misappropriated, and used for personal gain. They averred that most barangay officials perceived IRA as their personal belonging, to be used any time for whatever purpose they see it fit.

The residents claimed that most barangay officials are lenient in performing their duties regularly while continuously receiving their monthly salary. In some barangays, the CVOs - who are supposed to aid the barangay officials in maintaining peace and order in the locality - are not doing their job in spite of their monthly honorarium.

The residents claimed that in the resolution of marital issues in most barangays, if a case is presented to a specific barangay official, a kagawad (barangay councilor) for instance, the rest of the officials will no longer involve or extend assistance in solving the case. It is as if only the one who first received the case is accountable while the entire barangay government is no longer bound to answer. The residents claimed that the same pattern of addressing local problems is also perpetrated in other barangays as well. However, most barangay officials asserted that this practice is part of their attempt to divide functions and duties among themselves for greater efficiency.

Residents in most barangays asserted that some cultural norms like familism, personalism and favoritism are common practices among barangay officials in Jolo. These norms hinder efficient delivery of basic services as influence the commitment of

barangay personnel. In addition, these norms deprived the barangay of having qualified employees in their work force. It is . . . members in the social group face one another to conform to a considerable extent to these values by rewarding those who follow them and imposing penalties on those who ignore them (Arensberg and Niehoff, 1965:2). Consequently, the rule of thumb would replace the rule of law. The special interest would prevail over the general will by satisfying foremost private caprices before the collective needs.

By failing to perform in accordance with the acceptable norms, the barangays lose the confidence and respect of their constituents. What makes public institutions unworthy of respect is their practice of deceit and use of public office for personal gains. The actions of barangay officials, therefore, must follow the will and interest of the people to whom they are ultimately accountable to.

Problem on accountability is not only confined within the local level but in the national level as well. It is not only a minor problem thriving in almost all government instrumentalities, but . . . a central problem for governments which are, or claimed, to be democratic (Carino 1993:539). To ensure public accountability, there is a need for “accountability mechanism.” Aside from the fact that this mechanism will prevent mal-practices among public servants, it will also . . . ensure that agencies and agency leadership . . . as well as barangay officials . . . have a vested interest in maintaining a structure of incentives that benefit the public (Vaughn 1980:21). In the case of the barangay governments in Jolo, the inculcation of the principles of Islamic Leadership as accountability mechanism is highly deemed appropriate and workable since all barangay officials are Muslims.

### **Proposed alternative approach: internalizing islamic leadership**

Any group of individual bonding themselves in





pursuit of common interest cannot be expected to thrive longer without leadership. Even in a simple group of primitive people with their simple primitive affairs, leadership is a necessity still.

From the Islamic perspective, leadership is a requisite when a group comprises of two members, let alone when it reaches a hundred. In fact, among the purposes of God in sending thousands of prophets in various phases of human history is for mankind to have a leader that would guide them to the light of truth, faith, and salvation.

In Islam, leadership is geared towards the implementation of the divine teaching of the almighty in order that a God-fearing society will exist. This notion requires a leader with exceptional qualities that are seldom found in the common man. A leader must have a strong faith and sense of worship. He must be just and knowledgeable in Shari'ah (Islamic Law). He needs to have such traits because he has to stand as a role model for his Umma (constituents). Having these qualities, a leader finds it easy to secure the full support of his subjects. As Hapas (1990:11) emphasized, a Muslim leader is enjoined to have a strong faith in Allah, enforce what is right and forbid what is wrong, and lead as an example in the observance of the exemplary conduct and behavior in accordance with the teaching of Islam and the Sunnah (Sayings and Deeds) of Prophets Mohammad (S.A.W.).

### **Leadership in Islam is founded on some principles that require strict adherence, such as:**

#### **Consultation**

Consultation constitutes a fundamental principle of leadership in Islam. Islam requires that all decisions concerning the daily activities of the community especially critical issues must be resolved through consultation. The process of consultation is described in the Holy Qur'an:

*"And consult them in affairs (of moment) then when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in him)" – 3:159*

Consultation is also a guiding doctrine in the selection of a leader. Although Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) provide no specific procedures about it, it must be ensured that in selecting a leader, leadership competencies, knowledge of Islamic laws, and piousness must be given huge consideration. As Bara (1993:183) pointed out, non-adherence to this principle will likewise open the gate of leadership to the warmongers or to the false leaders who know how to manipulate the situation. Consequently, the rise of inefficient and incapable leader to power will be encouraged. It is, however, saddening to witness that this condition (incapable leader) is apparently becoming the prevailing trend in the local units. With these realities, it is high time to introduce necessary changes in the leadership selection process at the barangay level for a start. In fact, the residents claimed with a mean score of 5.62 that public consultation makes them feel important to their community leader, and that it has to be done to ensure effectiveness of decisions and responsiveness of projects and programs.

#### **Accountability**

Accountability, if fully internalized, averts mal practices like graft and corruption in public and even private offices. In effect, public interest will have priority over individual whims. Enforcing public accountability through the inculcation of sense of commitment, competence, responsiveness among political officials has always been the primary concerns of the central government.

Along this line, the barangay officials confirmed with a mean score of 5.41 that internalizing accountability among them can improve their administrative capability. They likewise claimed with a mean score of 6.00 that accountability in Islam covers the following concepts: 1. a leader is accountable both to his God and his constituents; 2. governance means responsibility to the public, and 3. leadership must be founded upon justice.



“Fear of God” is at the core of all aspect of administration in Islam. The ruler is bound to protect the interest of the ruled and is further required to serve his constituents to the best he can with sincerity and honesty. He must not abuse his authority in order that his subjects will obey and respect him. Prophet Mohammad (SAW) in his Hadith (Cited in Sharaf Annawawi, 1983:183) narrated by Hazrat Ibn Umar (R.A.) said:

*“ . . . A ruler is also a steward (and accountable for those who are put under his charge) . . . ”*

This statement emphasized that the leader is accountable to all his subjects, and that all public funds must be utilized in the furtherance of the interest of the constituents. Moreover, accountability of the leader in Islam is not only towards his subjects, but also to God almighty. As the Hadith (Cited in Sharaf Annawawi, 1983:374) narrated by Hazrat Abu Yaala Ma'qil bin Yasar (R.A.) clearly pointed out:

*“A person who is appointed in the authority over people, and he betrays them, will not be allowed to enter paradise after his death”*

Although the second Hadith refers to the appointed officials, it is also applicable to the elected ones. As long as one is entrusted with authority to look after the welfare of the people, this warning covers him.

## Trust

In all aspect of governance, trust constitutes one of its important pillars – that is, trust of the almighty and trust of the ruled. Trust is one of the commandments of God that is inherently embedded in the political and administrative authority of a leader. It also permeates the social-economic activities outside the administrative system. Hence, those who are given the trust must at all cost discharge it accordingly. As the Holy Qur'an (8:27) stressed:

*“O ye who believe! Betray not the trust of Allah and the apostle nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you.”*

This revelation calls those in authority to exercise

the trust of God righteously. Otherwise, they will betray none other but God. Without knowledge of this divine teaching, a leader is bound to violate it. The barangay officials, therefore, must be made aware of the nature and inherent divine duties of a leader.

Bara (1993:153) classified Amanat (trust) into three broad categories: Amanat of God; the Amanat of the Prophet, and the Amanat between men. The amanat of God in man is to practice the teaching of the Qur'an in their daily activities. Muslims are in fact mandated to act in accordance with what is prescribed in the Qur'an. The Amanat of the Prophet is its Sunnah or way of doing things. Those who are in power are required to pattern the government system of Prophet Mohammad and his companions – how they settle disputes, how they formulate or implement policy, and in general, how they administer. Amanat between men can be examined in this instance: the paternal uncle of a child after the death of his parents is entrusted to keep under his custody the property of the orphan. With this, the uncle is required to give completely the property the moment this orphan reaches the puberty age.

Individuals who are elected or appointed by his constituents are entrusted to safeguard the public property. This asset becomes his trust, and hence, he becomes a trustee – i.e. he is required to disburse it for the welfare of his people in an efficient way with integrity and honesty. Included in the exercise of trust in Islam is the avoidance of accepting bribes, stealing government resources or using it for personal purposes, serving the interest of a particular group or person (particularism), and practicing justice by preventing discrimination.

## Authority and responsibility

Authority and responsibility is another basic Islamic principle of administration that is inseparable in nature because authority connotes responsibility. Authority maybe inherited or by nature. Inherited authority refers to those delegated by the higher



authority to its subordinates as the secular concept of the delegation of power. Authority by nature is best portrayed in a husband-wife relationship where the husband has the authority over his wife and at the same time responsible in providing the wife's needs. On the other hand, the wife is responsible in serving her husband. From this setup, it is clear that the exercise of authority and responsibility is a dual obligation. A person who exercises authority is responsible to God and to his subordinates/constituents. On the other hand, the subordinates/constituents are also responsible to God and to their superior/leader.

Although Islam commands the ruled to obey and respect the authority so as to establish an orderly and disciplined society, the ruler must properly exercise the entrusted authority. It is not amazing therefore, that Abubakar (R.A.), the first caliph, in his inaugural address said (Alih, 1951:19): "Obey me for as long as I am obeying the laws of Allah and his messenger, and do not obey me as soon I deviate from it."

Similar with modern system of governance, Islam permits a to delegate some functions to his subordinates. However, it must be ensured that the amount of delegated duties has to be proportionate with abilities of the latter. As the Holy Qur'an (6:153) emphasized:

*"No burden do we place on any soul but that which it can bear."*

#### **Administrative values**

Internalizing Islamic administrative values certainly halt leaders to abandon his duties and responsibilities. Foremost of these values is Taqwa (Fear of God). Taqwa prevents an individual from committing illicit deeds. It prompts him to discharge his responsibility religiously. Taqwa is supplemented by its sub-values such as Sabar (Patience), Uquwa (Brotherhood) and Ikhlas (Sincerity). With these values instill in one's heart, his commitment in accomplishing his assigned task in the best way possible will be

unprecedented. As Bara (1993:195) emphasized, efficiency and effectiveness are difficult to achieve if one's commitment is not well-cultivated.

#### **Administrative principles**

In the parlance of Western Public Administration, administrative principles refer to the rules and policies forged by higher authority in the organization. These principles serve as guide for the members in performing their duties. These principles likewise prevent undesirable activities among public servants that are detrimental to the attainment of the organizational goals. In Islam, administrative principles are more authoritative in nature as it pertains to the laws set by God which served as command or guide for the person vested with authority. As command, administrative principles require people in authority to carry it out to the best possible extent; and as guide, this means that everybody should act in accordance with its established norms and values.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The objective behind the delegation of powers and functions from the central government to the local units is to develop a sense of autonomy in the latter. However, in the exercise of such mandates LGUs' capability has always been a problem, particularly at the barangay level. Needless to say, this saddening reality necessitates an all-out capability-building endeavor.

The degree in which local units carry out the tasks delegated to them differs according to their capabilities. Some local units are more capable than others. Hence, no amount of transfer of powers, functions and responsibilities will certainly bear fruit unless local units can discharge them effectively.

The LGC of 1991 has to be revisited to make it responsive to the current fast changing society. The provision on devolution of powers and functions has to



be reexamined to make into consideration the capability and endowments of local units as determinants of the degree or extent of the devolved duties and responsibilities.

The delegation of powers and responsibilities such as resource management, planning, and delivery of services is not an elixir that guarantees successful local operations. Constantly monitoring of performance is important in an effort to further strengthen the operation and thereby become an effective instrument of progress at the grass-root level.

The administrative capability of the barangay governments in Jolo is confined to the provision of “less important and less felt needs” of the community. These units were likewise ineffective in both planning and program implementation due to lack of knowledge on these very essential aspects of public administration.

The capability of these units is hampered by both internal and external factors. Left unattended, these factors will perpetrate the status quo or may further worsen the over-all performance of the barangay governments in Jolo.

The most barangay officials in Jolo lack the knowledge of the LGC. This is manifested by their sole reliance on IRA as their only source of funding. Their inability to explore the provisions of the code made them dependent on IRA. Several taxing powers of LGUs are left unutilized by these units, powers that will certainly augment their revenue. In addition, local units are also permitted by the code to engage in business ventures (corporate power) with private institutions in order to generate income of which these barangay governments in Jolo are not apparently aware of.

Barangay dwellers in Jolo do not feel fully served by their barangay officials due to the lack of competence of barangay officials, injustice and numerous irregular practices perpetrated by said officials themselves. Their administration is characterized by gross inefficiency, nepotism,

patronage system, favoritism, and graft and corruption.

Decentralization will bear no fruit without the necessary capability to carry out the given tasks. Hence, local autonomy has to be granted to local units especially the barangays in consonance with their natural endowments and their capability to discharge the delegated functions, along with adequate support system from the municipal government in the form of training and seminars, and political will.

The administrative capability of these units requires further improvement if they are to become successful ally of the central government in nation-building and in service delivery.

The task of developing the capability of these barangays will be effectively facilitated if the identified factors be properly considered as springboard in the formulation of practical strategies. Equally essential are willingness and enthusiasm of the local units concern to support the capability building effort. Without these two important elements, attempts to strengthen these units will be rendered difficult, if not totally impossible.

Finally, unless further studies on the state and operations of the barangay governments in Jolo is initiated and the alternative approach towards capability-building proposed in this study is adhered to, the barangay governments in Jolo remain as feeble as they are in the coming years.

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