

RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CREATING A NEW PROVINCE TOWARDS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE of DAVAO OCCIDENTAL

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Abstract:

Creating new provinces is said to be the driving factor towards the achievement of social and economic development. Definitely, that statement is commensurate with citing the attainment of the desired level of development that eventually follows after one has uplifted the poverty incidence. This study was pursued to find out how the newly created province, namely the Davao Occidental performed in the aspect of social and economic development.

The study addressed the major development concerns of the province after it was separated from Davao del Sur. A change in the fiscal set up as well as the manpower pooling of the local government would also be taken account of. Precisely, the study desired to know how the improvement in the fiscal aspect and the increase in manpower structure of the local government would give impact on the development of the locality and its living populace.

The study noted that there is growth in the financial resources of the province as well as the manpower makeup. In contrary, its assumed impact on the level of development was not established based on the result of the study. Improvements or positive changes were noted on the aspect of income and education.

On the perception of the people on the impact of creating Davao Occidental Province to its development, the study showed that people all agreed that overall, life is better in the creation of Davao Occidental Province compared to being attached with Davao del Sur Province.

Keywords — Development, poverty incidence, financial resources

I. INTRODUCTION

In the desire of achieving development goals in the arena of local governance, various structures of the government have been effected not only in the Philippines but also, in the other countries. The common changes in the structure includes division of towns to create new province, eventually constitute new offices, and boosting of economic conditions.

In the Philippines, provinces are said to be the primary political and administrative division. They are grouped based on geographical, cultural and ethnological characteristics. Towns of the province of Davao del Sur, for example, were divided in order to create a new one.

In what way does a new province be created? Under Senate Bill No. 117 “a province may be created if it has a locally generated annual income, as certified by the Department of Finance, of not less than Two Hundred Million Pesos (P200,000,000.00) based on 1998 constant prices and eighty percent (80%) during the three years preceding the current calendar year” (Pimentel, 2007).

In the pursuit of the approval by the Congress of the creation of new province, the Local Government Code of 1991 provides for a final requirement which is the concurrence by the constituencies concerned in a plebiscite. No creation, merger, division, abolition or substantial alterations of boundaries of local government units shall take effect unless approved by the majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite called for the purpose in the political unit or units directly affected (Section 10, RA7160).

The Province of Davao Occidental was among of the newly created province in the country. This was created by virtue of the Republic Act 10360 enacted by the 15th Congress of the Republic of the Philippines on July 23, 2012 and signed into law by President Benigno C. Aquino III on January 14, 2013.

The composition local government under Davao Occidental was formerly the 2nd District of

Davao del Sur. It has a total land area of 264,544 hectares. The estimated population of the said province as of 2015 is 316,342.

Improvement in the physical structure of the province is highly visible. There is also an increase in economic activity since investors are now coming in. However, such development cannot give exact measurement as to the level of poverty incidence is concerned. Thus, this has been the main reason in conducting the study, whether the creation of Davao Occidental uplifted the socio-economic development of the entire area.

II STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study was conducted in order to assess whether the creation of new province has impact on the social and economic development. The study aimed to address the following questions:

1. What are the major development concerns of the province?
2. What is the assessment of the people on the impact of creating new province in their daily activities?

Objective of the Study

The study desired to provide a viewpoint on how the rising of new province would uplift the people’s well-being especially in addressing the major development concerns.

Specifically, the study wished to scrutinize the changes in the provincial and local government concerned, highlighting the fiscal structure and manpower setup. The study looked at the changes in Internal Revenue Allotment and how the province spent it.

The study also analysed as to how far the province gives transformation as far as the level of both social and economic developments are concerned.

METHODOLOGY

The study was primarily an evaluation to answer the question “is it working?”. Further, the research involved descriptive approach in which qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to support research assumptions.

The research also utilized the secondary data. Sources of secondary data included the official documents such as socio-economic profile and Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan of Davao Occidental. With regards to the data involving the fiscal structure, budget allocation, manpower resources of the Province, information from the Provincial Budget Office and Human Resource Department is utilized.

An interview schedule was utilized. Part of it provided the basic information of the respondents and questions on human development, particularly on poverty and income, and education.

In finding out the perception of the people in Davao Occidental on impact of creating the province on the aspect of development, the following scaling and interpretation were the bases of the respondent’s comments:

Rating	Scaling	Description
4	3.50 – 4.0	Strongly agree
3	2.50-3.49	Agree
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree
1	1.0 – 1.49	Strongly disagree

Relative to the conduct of interview, the researcher adopted the quota sampling with at least five respondents each to represent the following sectors in the society:

Sector / Stakeholder	Criteria of Inclusion
Businessmen	have engaged in local business for the last 5 years
Government Workers	have worked and residing the locality for last 5 years
Farmers	have engaged in farming for the last 5 years
Sidewalk Vendors or Ambulant Vendors	have engaged in such activity for the last 5 years
Barangay Health Workers	have been a BHW of the locality for the last 5 years
Public School Teacher	have been teaching in the locality for the last 5 years

The study utilized descriptive statistical analysis including frequency, mean and percentages. A longitudinal study was used in the observation and investigation of the trend/impact on human development five years before being separated from Davao del Sur and two years after being created as Province.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

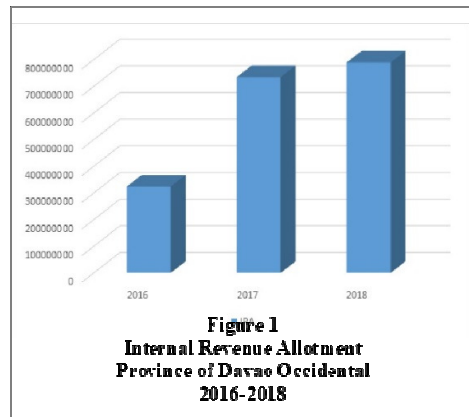
The following are the results of the study with corresponding discussion and interpretation.

CHANGES IN FISCAL AND MANPOWER STRUCTURE

Absolute change was expected in the Province of Davao Occidental after being created. Such changes are also noted with employment on the local government with the assumptions of increase in the number of people working to improve government services in the locality.

Internal Revenue Allotment

In 2016, the Province of Davao Occidental received an Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) of Php. 324.15 million only. In 2017, IRA increases to Php. 734 million. Further increase was observed in 2018 with a total allotment of Php. 789 million.



Local Manpower Resource

The operation of Davao Occidental Province begun on July 2016 with a total regular employee of 164. An increase was noted in 2017 with a total of 182 regular employee. The said increased noted was due to the opening of vacant positions and additional budget for personnel service was given off.

Presently, the total regular employees of the Provincial Government of Davao Occidental rose to 226.

Major Development Concerns

Poverty Incidence

Magnitude of Poor CY 2015

Municipality	Poverty Incidence (%)	No. of Poor Households	No. of Non-Poor Households	Total
Don Marcelino	73.8	5,252	4,244	9,496
Jose Abad Santos	78	11,760	3,401	15,161
Malita	47.54	11,690	12,902	24,592
Sarangani	53.58	3,130	2,712	5,842
Sta. Maria	48	6,546	7,092	13,638
Total	54	37,416	31,313	68,729

Source: MSWDO

The poverty incidence of the entire province of 54 percent is partly due to the low capability of household heads to gain employment because of their low educational attainment. As a result, they turn to farming and fishing as their occupations which are presently low- paying occupations. This gives them very limited capacity to set aside savings and buy insurance to cope with stresses or shocks in everyday life including rise in prices, falling income, injuries and illnesses and to pay for decent housing so they most likely live in illegal settlements on dangerous sites lacking in provisions for infrastructures and services therefore providing very high level for environmental health risk. This makes them highly vulnerable to disaster events.

Degradation of the Environment

Environmental degradation is another pressing issue that needs to be addressed. Overall, the forestlands in the province are classified as environmentally constrained and critical areas. Of the total forestlands, only 28% are still covered with forests although only 7.9% remains with closed-canopy forests.

Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities, Utilities and Services

The province is also beset with inadequate infrastructure facilities and utilities. The situation hampers access and the delivery of basic services. Some of the indicators that the province need to improve and expand access to services include road density of 0.33km/km² compared to 0.65 km/km² regional average and that 43% of the roads in the province is earth type which characterize most of the farm to market roads.

Need to Maintain Peace and Security

The maintenance of law and order is an important requisite of socio-economic development. Some concerns and challenges that need to be addressed include the presence of threat groups (CPP/NPA, MILF); crime rate of 245 per 100,000 population with average crime solution efficiency of 47.76 percent and incidences of drug-related crime.

Need to Strengthen Governance

Seamlessness in the conduct of affairs in government with the aim in view of levelling the playing field for the different stakeholders of diverse culture, dreams and interest is paramount.

Perception of the People on the Creation of Davao Occidental

The perception of the people of Davao Occidental is pursued in order to determine how they apprehend the impact of the creation of the province on their well-being. The indicators used to determine such apprehension include poverty and family income, and education and literacy

Poverty and Income Indicator

To determine the perception of the people of Davao Occidental with regards to indicator relating to poverty and income, three questions were formulated and were used to gather such information.

Table 1. Perception of the people in Davao Occidental on the level of well-being two after being created: Poverty and Income Indicator

The respondents were asked if the people of the province have better access to employment

Question	Mean	Equivalent
1. The people of Davao Occidental have better access to employment opportunities two years after being created as Province.	2.71	Agree
2. Active participation on entrepreneurial activities though livelihood opportunities offers better prospect two years after being created as Province.	2.94	Agree
3. There is concrete evidence on the declined number of poor people in the province two years after being created	2.12	Disagree
Mean for Poverty and Income Indicators	2.59	Agree

opportunities two years after the creation of the province. It yielded with a mean of 2.71% which means that the people of the province agree that access to employment opportunities have improved after being created as province.

Table 2. Perception of the people in Davao Occidental on the level of well-being two after being created: Education and Literacy Indicator

With regards to the question on active participation on entrepreneurial activities through

Question	Mean	Equivalent
1. Active participation on barangay-level programs in promoting adult literacy for the people of Davao Occidental have improved two years after being created as province.	3.05	Agree
2. The physical condition such as chairs, conducive classrooms, etc. in public schools has improved and visible two years after being created as province.	3.17	Agree
3. The number of children dropping out in school has significantly reduced after being created as province.	2.54	Disagree
Mean for Education and Literacy Indicator	2.92	Agree

livelihood opportunities, the response showed a mean of 2.54%. This indicates that they believe in active participation on entrepreneurial activities through livelihood opportunities offer better prospect two years after being created as province.

With respect to their perception on the supposed decline in the number of poor people in the province two years after it was created as province was also asked. A mean of 2.12% from the respondents which means that the people disagree that there is concrete evidence of the declined number of poor people in the province two years after it was created.

The overall mean for poverty and income indicator of 2.59% indicates that the people are generally agree on the statements made.

Education and Literacy Indicator

With respect to education and literacy indicator, questions were formulated in the context of level of development of the province. Three questions asked in order to provide visual idea on the situation of the province relative to this indicator.

Primarily, the people of Davao Occidental were asked to comment on the significant participation of barangay level programs specifically in promoting adult literacy in the context of development of the province. As a result, a mean of 3.05% connotes that they actively participated on the barangay level programs in promoting adult literacy gave impact of the development of the province.

Pertaining to the physical improvement of the school were also asked including the chairs, conducive classrooms, reference materials, and comfort rooms. The reactions yielded 3.17% indicating the affirmation of the people on the statement that there is visible physical improvement of school facilities two years after being created as province.

Lastly, for the education related concerns, the people were asked to their perception on the rate of school drop-out. A 2.54% mean came out. This revealed that the people of Davao Occidental agree that there is significant reduction as to the number of children dropping out or leaving the school after the province has been created.

An overall mean of 2.92% indicates that the people of Davao Occidental agree on the statement related to education and literacy well-being of the people.

CONCLUSION

Creating new province to a certain place brings inevitable changes. Such changes might be positive, others may simply be unwelcomed. The conclusion as to whether such creation of the new province is good for the locality is something that is of partisanship.

The assessment of the impact of creating new province on human development noted to be helpful. It was able to provide concrete idea and visible picture proving that in fact, the financial standing of the PLGU increases after being gained as the new province. The manpower set up was also increasingly noted that new positions were created.

The study was able to determine that there is a positive outlook in the context of social and economic development which the creation of Davao Occidental has brought into their lives.

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