



SOCIO-ECONOMICS, HEALTH PROFILE, ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS, AND PERCEPTION OF A FISHING COMMUNITY IN PANUKULAN, POLILLO ISLAND, QUEZON, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT – The Municipality of Panukulan is a coconut-based farming and fishing island municipality in Polillo Island, Quezon. It is endowed with productive and interconnected upland and coastal ecosystems. This study described the socio-economic profile, health profile, existing environmental problems, and perception of the local people in Barangay Libo, a small barangay in the Municipality of Panukulan. Based on the socio-economic profile, the local people were highly dependent on their natural forest, coconut and rice farming system, and fisheries resources. Cash income is on a daily basis, and fishing and farming activities depend on season and favourable weather conditions. Majority of the people are permanent residents with no plans to migrate elsewhere and have acquired high school education suggesting a literate community. Based on key informant interviews, the major socio-economic problems in Barangay Libo are: lack of safe drinking water facility, lack of irrigation facilities for rice farmers, damaged roads, and lack of supplemental and alternative livelihood. Based on the personal observation of the author, the existing environmental problems are reclamation of coastal area, mangrove area degradation, sediment load deposition, and degradation of coral reefs due to dynamite fishing. The local people are heavily dependent on hand-dug wells, and natural spring and rainwater harvesting to supplement their drinking water needs. However, the water quality of traditional drinking wells is vulnerable to contamination. Household surveys revealed that the local people were supportive of plans and activities aimed at improving environmental condition indicative that a community-based coastal resources management project will become successful in this community.

Key words: coconut-based and fishing community, socio-economic problems, environmental problems, Panukulan, Polillo Island