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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY'S
RESETTLEMENT PROJECT FOR THE HOUSING BENEFICIARIES FROM
PAYATAS, QUEZON CITY: A CASE STUDY OF KASIGLAHAN VILLAGE I**

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Abstract:

Having a roof over one's head is a basic human right. Still, a large fraction of the world population is deprived of the said right. Indicative of the intensity of the housing crisis is the emergence and growth in the number of so-called "visible homeless". In view of the serious socio-political repercussions of the ever-increasing enormity of homelessness which has ballooned to the present back log of 4 million units, and the pump priming role of housing in the economy, it is crucial that the government confer the highest priority to housing and urban development. The national government has numerous housing projects that specifically cater to the needs of around 1.2 million informal settler families in the country. One of the housing programs espoused by the National Shelter Program is that of National Housing Authority (NHA)-Administered Resettlement (NAR) Project.

The study area, Kasiglahan Village I, was a CISFA-funded NHA-Administered Resettlement Program that was originally intended for Pasig River Rehabilitation Project (PRRC) through its Pasig River Environment Management and Rehabilitation Sector Development Project (PAREMAR-SDP). However, residents from other places were relocated to the said project area due to inopportune circumstances. One of the groups that were relocated there is the Payatas group that was victimized by the Payatas trash slide. Since the area originally provided for the PRRC beneficiaries and has the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funding, monitoring and assessment of the said project is limited only to the said group. Regrettably, other groups were not included in the monitoring and assessment scheme. Further, it is a common observation that most, if not all, socialized housing government-initiated projects do not have an assessment scheme with regard to the physical, social, and economic aspects of it.

This research aims to answer this research question: "How effective, impact-driven and sustainable is the NHA-Administered Resettlement Program in Kasiglahan Village I in improving the lives of its project beneficiaries, especially that of the Payatas group?". It further aims to:

1. Assess the availability and accessibility of the following services:
 - (a) Community infrastructure; (b) Economic services; and, (c) Social services
2. Assess the perception level of the project beneficiaries towards the resettlement project;

3. Assess the effectiveness of the resettlement project in improving and enhancing the lives of the project beneficiaries; and,
4. Provide policy and program recommendations for future housing resettlement of projects.

The study formulated a conceptual framework wherein it identified the independent variables and the dependent variables while concurrently outlining their relationships. The independent variables (IVs) are (a) the individual and/or household characteristics, preferences and resources of the beneficiaries, and (b) the characteristics and quality of the government-initiated socialized resettlement project, which are entirely dependent on the national government's policies and financial allocation in the housing sector. These inputs will result in outputs, either positive or negative that will subsequently affect the outcome of the resettlement project. The dependent variables (DVs) focus on the outcome of inputs provided. The dependent variables are the following elements: socio-economic impact on the lives of the beneficiaries, satisfaction of the beneficiaries regarding the resettlement project, and project sustainability.

The research design utilized for this study is the Non-equivalent Control Group Design, wherein the project beneficiaries comprise the experimental (or intervention) group, composed of 60 households. The intervening factor is the relocation project. Since the Payatas group was relocated in July 2000, the pre-relocation time (O1) is set at 1995 and the post-relocation time (O2) is 2005. Further, a control group is utilized in order to compare results between the intervention and non-intervention groups. Such was done in order to verify if the intervention group's lives have improved solely due to the resettlement program or due to other yet to be identified factors. The control group was composed of 30 households from Payatas, Quezon City, and they have not been recipients of any housing projects. Survey and Key Informant Interviews were the data collection methods used. Surveys were conducted among both intervention and control groups, while key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of LGU, NHA, NGOs, and Homeowner's Association. Systematic random sampling was utilized by selecting every 10th item beneficiary in the said master list until the sample size of 60 (for the intervention group) is obtained. Apart from those primary data gathering techniques, this study likewise reviewed existing data and studies of Implementing Agencies (IAs). Progress Reports from PRRC and NHA were also reviewed and to some extent validated. Actual site observation was also done in order to gather spatial data and to validate secondary data.

To assess project impact, Before and After comparisons were made, that is, comparisons between the 1995 and the 2005 profiles were made, the data gathered were consolidated and the responses on selected variables are presented. Frequencies and percentages were utilized in order to describe the respondents' general profile and their perception towards the resettlement project. The researcher conducted several tests such as T-test, One-Sample Test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine whether the mean difference (Average Value of Variable of Interest Year 2005 - Average Value of Variable of Interest Year 1995) is significantly different from zero. This is to test the study's hypothesis that: Average Value of Variable of Interest Year 2005 > Average Value of

Variable of Interest Year 1995. After finding out which mean differences are significantly different from zero for experimental group, the researcher did the same test for controlled group with respect to significant mean differences for experimental group. After finding out which mean differences are significantly different from zero for both groups, the researcher conducted Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This is to test if there is significant difference of mean differences for both groups.

The major conclusions of the study are:

- Almost all of the infrastructure facilities that are required of a resettlement project are already available in the site. These facilities were provided for by the multi-stakeholders' efforts in providing the beneficiaries a new lease in life;
- Additional facilities and services needed in the area identified by the surveyed beneficiaries, the standards set by the HLURB and by site visit by the researcher are as follows: provision of fire station and a public library within or near the resettlement site, asphaltting the road leading to the new KV1 Elementary, High school and *Pamantasan ng* Montalban buildings and street lighting in Phase 1-D;
- Accessibility is high for most of the available infrastructure facilities, although the reasons for not accessing these facilities were also identified, and it is mainly due to the fact that such unused facilities do not reflect the current demographic characteristics and needs of the residents;
- Infrastructure facilities intended to provide for skills training enhancement and livelihood opportunities are not available in the area. Factories, warehouses and other livelihood-related infrastructure are not available within or near the resettlement site. The LGU representative and the NHA KV1 Unit Manager seconded such observation saying that the geographical characteristics of the municipality and the lack of facilities such as airports and seaports make it even harder to attract investors and locators in the area;
- The needed vital services and facilities intended for social development such as education, health, and protective services have been adequately provided for in the resettlement area;
- The Payatas group's involvement in social development organization is quite low. Forty percent of the surveyed households do not have any organizational affiliations while 36.9% are members of the July 10 group, which is an advocacy group, which advances the causes of the Payatas victims;
- Skills training enhancement programs are being offered by the different stakeholders in the resettlement. However, the main bulk of funding comes from PRR; thus, most of its participants are Pasig beneficiaries. Non-Pasig beneficiaries, on the other hand, are being tapped to join the seminars; however, very few are being accommodated. As earlier noted, 80% of the surveyed respondents from the study group have not undertaken any training at all;

- Skills training and livelihood components are largely on a piece-meal basis. After participants graduate from the training programs, a seed capital of as low as Php 5,000 is provided to them by agencies such as DSWD, DTI, etc., through their different loans assistance programs. Unfortunately, most of the time, the seed capital ends up being used for personal expenditures due to its meager amount. After that, intervention usually stops there. The agencies concerned do not have follow-up programs;
- The limited capacity of the skills training and livelihood programs to the study group has a direct impact on the dwindling state of their financial capacities;
- More than half of the surveyed respondents from the target group (pegged at 63.3%) rated the whole resettlement project as poor. This is mainly due to the non-availability of livelihood opportunities within or near the vicinity that would provide them financial capacity to sustain their own needs;
- Another reason for their frustration is the fact that they are being asked to pay for the house and lot's amortization. The target group stressed that then President Joseph Ejercito Estrada gave them the house and lot for free in compensation for their loss. However, NHA representatives negate such claims, as it is not possible;
- According to the data gathered from the intervention and control groups, it is concluded that the resettlement project, as an intervention, is not successful in enhancing the lives of its beneficiaries, specifically in terms of their income, expenditures, assets ownership and present living condition. Most of the residents even divulged that it even made their living conditions worse due to the fact that there is no livelihood opportunity in the area.
- Originally, in the year 2000, Kasiglahan Village I's monthly amortization rate was pegged at Php400 as per Memorandum Circular 11498 issued that year. Such figure was modified and in 2002, as per Memorandum Circular 1693, went down to Php300 until it reached its present rate of Php250. However, even after giving in to the relocatees' appeal, the NHA collection performance is still poor. As per KV 1's collection performance for the years 2002 to 2005 it was learned that although their collection performance rate pose a manual increase annually, it is still not at par with their collection targets. Such was attributed to the bloated targets set by the NHA-Main Office.

The policy and program recommendations given are:

- Since the Payatas group is an "incidental beneficiary" to the project, a proper appraisal should be provided that would give vital information as to what they can expect from the resettlement project and what are their responsibilities and duties as beneficiaries.
- During the pre-relocation period, a socio-economic survey among the beneficiaries should be provided in order to come up with beneficiaries' profiling so that the

resettlement managers will have an idea as to the composition of the relocates, their capacity to pay their need and wants, etc. This undertaking will provide concerned agencies and project management with crucial data as basis for planning and strategy setting specifically to improve the provision of assistance to settlers towards sustainability.

- Provide for a regular monitoring and assessment scheme for all the NHA-initiated and managed resettlement programs in order to supervise and oversee its operations. Such scheme is vital in appraising if the project is at par in complying with the objectives and targets or if it's too far behind its goals. This might be costly in terms of funding and manpower; however, NHA should look for indigenous ways in order to provide for such a fundamental endeavor.
- The skills training enhancement and livelihood programs in the resettlement area should be linked together so as to ensure its aim of restoring the economic disruption brought about by the resettlement process. As earlier noted, both the training skills and livelihood components of the project are largely on a piece-meal basis due to funding dilemma. Such can be partially remedied by focusing their resources on skills that are really useful to the beneficiaries and those that are highly employable.
- A training needs analysis is very crucial at this stage, which would identify what the resettlers really need and what skills they want to learn in order to maximize the resources being used up for this component and to sustain the beneficiaries' interest in retrieving their previous way of production.
- For livelihood development planning, an assessment of the relocatees' skills and type of employment is likewise imperative. Further, industry demand within the vicinity should also be studied and analyzed.
- Since it is vital to provide livelihood opportunities in the area, the local government unit should employ different strategies in coming up with such opportunities in the area. Since it was realized that enticing locators in the area is not feasible the LGU should consider the area's opportunities. Even though the growing population in the resettlement area is considered a liability, it can be looked at as an asset.
- After the implementation of each program component, a monitoring and assessment scheme should be provided in order to appraise the success or failure of the resettlement's programs. For example, in the skills training and enhancement component, NHA should provide a scheme for monitoring job placement vis-à-vis skills training graduates in order to identify which programs are highly employable and highly productive. In this regard, the agencies mandated to provide the skills training can focus and maximize their funding, time and effort to those identified skills.
- In relation to its collection performance, NHA KV1 unit was rated poor as its collection is not at par with the targets. The NHA Representatives in the area cried foul due to the bloated targets. In the regard, NHA representatives in the main office

should modify the basis of their targets according to the prevailing data. In this case, NHA should update their basis based on the prevailing rate in each resettlement project in order to come up with accurate data as basis for their policy strategies.

- Apart from standardizing collection strategies that would put pressure on NHA collectors to enhance their collection performance and for the residents to pay their amortization duties. Incentive strategies such as paying a minimum of six months amortization prior to connection amortization collectors to collect and for people to pay.
- NHA, by this time, should have already identified several alternatives for their disengagement plan. According to the Project Manager, no resettlement project in the history of NHA was able to disengage. For her part however, she is willing to extricate from the project. It is worthy to note that the Unit already has identified several strategies for disengagement like out-sourcing, especially on the aspect of collection. Pilot projects should be initiated in order to test the effectiveness of such undertakings.
- Another feasibility strategy in the disengagement plan of NHA is the strengthening of its partner NGOs and POs in the area. NHA, in coordination with its other partner agencies, should provide for relevant business and management trainings for the NGOs and POs – with their respective leaders and members – as part of its investment strategies so that in case future partner agencies want to disengage from the project responsibilities in the resettlement project;
- Since one of the major problems identified in the resettlement project is the cooperation of the residents themselves, it is imperative to include an attitude behavior change program for the residents as a component in the program. In this regard, people's previous frame of mind and behavior as "squatter" can be modified. The researcher personally believes that a slow yet deliberate transformation on the individual level can manifest enhancement of their state of mind and behavior at the community level.
- Since resettlement dismantles a previous production system and way of life, all resettlement programs must be development programs as well. And since we are aiming to provide for careful and detailed planning that would be embodied in a resettlement action plan. Therefore, this study suggests that NHA and other housing agencies consider including the provision of a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) during the initialization of future housing projects in order to provide for a carefully planned and well-represented blueprint on how to manage future government-initiated housing projects;
- Provision of a local housing board at the local government level should also be encouraged. The creation of a Local Housing Board (LHB) which according to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has been included in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan as a priority legislative agenda item

provides the administrative machinery that will complement the efforts of shelter agencies to effect the full implementation of the Urban Development and Housing Act and provide a solution to the problem of homelessness, especially at the local government level. LGUs know a locality's peculiarities in housing, thus are in the best position to determine the shelter priorities of its residents.