

Implementation of the Privileges of Senior Citizens in one Municipality in Batangas, Philippines

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Abstract –*The study aimed to determine the level of awareness of the respondents of all the privileges under the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010; to identify other benefits provided to the Senior Citizens of Taysan, Batangas, Philippines which is not included in the law; assess the Implementation of Section 4 of the Expanded Senior Citizen Act in the municipality; identify the problems encountered in the implementation of the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010. The study employed the descriptive method. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents are female, married, vocational graduate and unemployed. Senior Citizens in Taysan, Batangas can sometimes avail other benefits not included in Sec4 of RA 9994. Sec 4 of RA 9994 is less implemented in the Municipality. The respondents agree that the implementation of Section 4 of RA 9994 in the Municipality is a problem. There is no significant difference in the implementation and problems encountered when respondents were grouped according to profile variables. A proposed plan of action is recommended to enhance the implementation of Sec 4 of RA 9994.*

Keywords –*Senior Citizen, Batangas, elderly, Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010*

INTRODUCTION

Senior citizens are beset with a number of problems in terms of health maintenance and services where they are somehow already deprived to avail due to lack of financial support from the family and pension. The most conspicuous problems are those relating to board, lodging, shelter and medical facilities. Esteban [1] emphasized that the effects of population aging on individuals, societies and governments are still largely unknown. Nonetheless, experts, governments and global organizations express alarm about the pressures that aging exerts on two critical policy areas, namely, the pension systems and health services. Senior citizens often complain that they are not getting the fair treatment from the family and society [2]. But with the

Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010 might somehow alleviate the challenges encountered by the senior citizens.

Filipino values and traditions say that the family's elderly have to be taken-care of at home, be loved, respected, and valued [3]. There is no such clear and universally accepted definition for senior citizens. In most developed countries, it has been accepted the chronological age of 65 years as a definition of 'elderly' or older person. But the United Nations (UN) agreed cut-off is 60+ years to refer to the older population (www.who.int). In the Philippines, Sec.2 of Republic Act No.9994 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010) (a) defines Senior Citizen or elderly refers to any resident citizen of the Philippines at least sixty (60) years old.

With people working longer, it's increasingly important that we recognize the importance of supporting senior citizens within our society. When a person retires, he/she becomes isolated from the society, some of them are still keen to work and in fact some of them are rendering their services for both Government sector organizations and private sector organizations at different capacities. However, the majority remains not doing any work and tends to depend on their monthly pension income alone. As far as national productivity is concerned, this severe waste of knowledge, experience, time, etc. [4].

In the Philippines, there exists a law granting a number of benefits to people upon reaching the age of 60. Republic Act No. 9994, is a social welfare legislation intended to benefit our Filipino elderly and provide them additional benefits. Pursuant to RA 9994, Senior Citizens are entitled to discount privileges, free services, exemptions, incentives, government financial assistance and priority in express lane.

Carlos [5] noted that the significant concerns of the elderly have only recently been offered serious considerations. One of the issues is the security in old age. Poverty is perceived as an obstacle to a secured old

age. Health status is one of the primary concerns among elderly. Carlos also mentioned, as people age, their bodies undergo changes which can make them less resistant to chronic, debilitating and disabling conditions. Consequently, the elderly tend to be more at high risk of developing disabilities and contracting diseases. In developed countries like the US, the rate of growing old population increases due to medical and public health improvements, leading to increased life expectancy. So, providing a special elderly caring service system seems to be necessary [6].

Assessment on the implementation of the law is in order to propose corresponding ordinance to help the senior citizens. It is in this context that the researcher who is a legislator and a senior citizen herself, would like to assess the implementation of Sec. 4 of Republic Act 9994 in one Municipality of Batangas, Philippines, to know the compliance of concerned sectors and proposed measures or possible legislation to enhance its implementation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to enhance and strengthen the implementation of Sec.4 of RA 9994 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010. More specifically, it determined the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, civil status, educational attainment and employment status; determined the level of awareness of the respondents of all the privileges under the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010; identified other benefits provided to the Senior Citizens of one municipality in Batangas, which is not included in the law; assessed the Implementation of Section 4 of the Expanded Senior Citizen Act in the above mentioned municipality; identified the problems encountered in the implementation of the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010; tested the difference in the implementation and problems encountered when grouped according to profile variables; and proposed an action plan to enhance the implementation of RA 9994 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed the descriptive method to obtain information about the implementation of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010. Descriptive research endeavours to describe systematically, factually, accurately and objectively a situation, problem or phenomenon. It seeks to describe "what is".

Participants

As of November 2014, the Municipality under study has a total of 3,054 senior citizens, 1,019 are male and 2,035 are female. The participants were senior citizens from the three largest barangays in the Municipality under study. From the total population of 639 from three largest local villages in the Municipality, 132 senior citizens were taken as respondents of the study. The local villages under study have numerous numbers of senior citizens as compared with the other local villages in the municipality. The researcher also believed that they have the capacity to answer the questionnaires and assess this study.

Instrument

The data that the researcher used in this study were gathered through the use of descriptive survey. Descriptive survey was utilized to assess the implementation of the RA 9994 and to determine the problems encountered in the implementation. Data were gathered through the use of survey questionnaire which served as the primary instrument in gathering information. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents and were collected at the completion of the responses. The questionnaire prepared by the researcher was divided into four parts. The first part dealt with the demographic profile of the respondents such as gender, civil status, educational attainment and employment status. The second and third part included the questions intended to gather respondent's awareness and implementation of the privileges for senior citizens. Lastly, the fourth part included the questions answered the problem encountered in the Implementation of Section 4, RA 9994 Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010 in the Municipality.

Procedure

To have a full understanding to the topic, the researcher utilized the researched-made questionnaire patterned from Section 4 of RA9994, journals, different books, clippings, researches and other materials related to the topic with modification to suit the present study. The researcher used the SHL Media Center to gather the initial data. Through the internet, the researcher was able to formulate the first draft of the questionnaire. It was presented and validated by the OSCA-Head, President of the Federation; President of Senior Citizens Bel-Air. After it was validated by the OSCA - Head and the president of the federation, the researcher wrote a letter of request to the Municipal Mayor and concerned Local Village Captains of the target respondents to conduct the survey. After the permission

was granted, the questionnaire was reproduced to 132 copies and started the data gathering.

In doing the survey, questionnaires were given to the respondents and then the researcher assessed and guided them in answering the question that needed explanations. In processing the data, questionnaires were tallied, computed, analyzed and then interpreted.

Data Analysis

Weighted mean was used to determine the level of implementation of the RA 9994 and problems encountered. ANOVA was utilized to determine the difference of responses in the implementation and problems encountered when grouped according to profile variables and local villages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Profile	Categories	f	%
Gender	Male	34	25.80
	Female	98	74.20
Civil Status	Single	1	0.80
	Married	79	59.80
	Separated	9	6.80
	Widowed	41	31.10
Educational Attainment	Master's	6	4.50
	College	33	25.00
	Vocational	48	36.40
	High School	54	40.90
Employment Status	Elementary	39	29.50
	Employed	16	12.10
	Unemployed	116	87.90

The Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents are female consisting of 74.20% or 98 out of 132, married 59.80% followed by widowed at 31.10%, high school graduate (4.50%), vocational (36.40%) followed by elementary (29.50%) and unemployed (87.90%) or one hundred sixteen out of the one hundred thirty two respondents. This signifies that Senior Citizens in the Municipality of Taysan, Batangas need all the help they get of their day to day existence. The privileges they can avail from the implementation of RA 9994 will be a big help to them.

Awareness of the Privileges for Senior Citizens

Data revealed that there is a computed composite mean score of 2.79 which implies that the respondents are aware of the privileges for senior citizens. Among the privilege cited, "actual fare for the land

transportation travel in public utility buses (PUBs) public utility jeepneys (PUJs), Asian utility vehicles (AUVs), shuttle services and public railways, including Light Railway Transit (LRT), Mass Rail Transit (MRT), and Philippine National Railway (PNR)" got the highest weighted mean score of 3.24 and considered the top item from which the respondents are aware of. This could be due to the fact that most senior citizen respondents live far from the town proper and they use the public transportation often on a 20% discount. They have inquired on all possible means to make their travel less expensive as possible. It was followed by "In actual transportation fare for domestic air transport services and sea shipping vessels and the like, based on the actual fare and advanced booking" 93.14), "purchase of medicine including influenza and pneumococcal vaccine and the other essential medical supplies, accessories and equipment" (3.13) professional fees for attending physician in all private hospitals, medical facilities, out-patient clinics and home care services" (3.09) and "provision of express lanes for senior citizens in all commercial and government establishment" (3.07). This could be due to the fact that retired individuals, they are more inclined in relaxation and traveling. They have more time allotted for themselves with regards to their physical health

On the other hand, there were privileges that the respondents are less aware of which include "Retirement benefits of retirees from both government and public sector shall be regularly reviewed", "To the extent practicable and feasible, the continuance of the same benefit and privileges given by GSIS, SSS and PAGIBIG," "The exemption from training fees for socio-economic programs", "Exemption from the payment of individual income taxes of senior citizen who are considered to be minimum wage earner", and "educational assistance to senior citizen to pursue graduate, tertiary, vocational and technical, and secondary education" with 2.42, 2.41, 2.35, 2.31 and 2.15 respectively. Reason for these could be lack of information dissemination on the privileges for senior citizens as stipulated in RA 9994.

In addition, there is one privilege that the respondents are not aware which is "Educational assistance to senior citizen to pursue graduate, tertiary, vocational and technical, and secondary education". Most Senior Citizens are no longer interested in pursuing higher, technical or vocational education, probably because of their age. Most Senior Citizens have problems with their eyesight, some feel that education are best for the younger generation.

Farolan [7] stated that it appears to be done with regards to the implementation of Senior Citizen law. There is a need to educate not only the concerned establishments but also the senior citizen themselves about the law especially given to them as stipulated in RA 9994.

Other benefits provided to the Senior Citizens

They have wellness in activities like taichi, zumba, taebo, etc. (2.62) followed by medical and dental mission (2.30) and can avail free vaccines for influenza (2.03). On the other hand, the lowest mean score was obtained by free rice from OSCA and there was only during the yuletide season.

They have never participated in livelihood training programs. Reasons for this could be the fact that there is no movie house in the Municipality of Taysan and the local government does not have enough funds to provide free rice to senior citizens, however, during Christmas season, the indigent senior citizens are privileged to receive rice and can goods and free admission to cinema in SM Lipa to selected indigents senior citizen during the yuletide season. Livelihood training programs are provided to the younger ones who are healthier and more productive than senior citizens.

Implementation of Section 4, RA 9994 in the Municipality of Taysan

The implementation of Sec 4, RA 9994 in the municipality of Taysan, Batangas is less implemented with a composite mean of 2.47. Topping the list are items on “In actual transportation fare for domestic air transport services and sea shipping vessels and the like, based on the actual fare and advanced booking” (3.36), followed by “On the utilization of services in hotels and similar lodging establishments, restaurants and recreation centers,” (3.28), and “Provision of express lanes for senior citizens in all commercial and government establishments,” (3.16). This could be attributed to the fact that the Senior citizens have more time to assess their wants and needs. If they are retirees, they tend to find it more attractive to travel and explore with reasonable budget to make up for the time that they were busy raising their family. On the Less Implemented items on the privileges “To the extent practicable and feasible, the continuance of the same benefit and privilege given by GSIS, SSS and PAGIBIG” with a weighted mean of (1.52), then “Death benefit assistance of a minimum of two thousand pesos (P2,000.00) shall be given to the next servicing relative of the deceased senior citizen” with a weighted mean

(2.01), then “Retirement benefits of the retirees from both government and private sector shall be regularly reviewed” with a weighted mean (2.05). Possibly it is due to lack of funds of the LGU to adhere with the set forth by Sec.4 RA 9994 on the death benefit assistance since LGUs give only one thousand five hundred pesos (P1,500.00). On the Not Implemented privileges the “Educational Assistance to senior citizen to pursue graduate, tertiary, vocational and technical and secondary education” with a weighted mean of (1.31), followed by “The exemption from training fees for socio-economic programs”, with a weighted mean of (1.39), the ‘Exemption from payment of individual income taxes of senior citizen who are considered to be of minimum wage earner” with a weighted mean of (1.47). Senior citizen would rather engage in other activities that are less stressful, less memorization. These are the same privileges stipulated in Sec.4 of RA9994 that the respondents are aware of.

Problems encountered in the implementation of Sec 4 of RA 9994

The respondents sometimes encountered problems in the implementation of Sec.4 of RA 9994 with a composite mean of 2.25. Item on lack of educational assistance to senior citizens to pursue graduate, tertiary, technical and vocational education; Lack of information regarding RA 9994 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act); Lack of livelihood training programs for senior citizens; lack of medical equipment given especially to the disabled senior citizens like wheelchairs, nebulizers, BP apparatus, thermometers, etc. were often encountered by the respondents. Refusal of some government health facilities on granting of free medical & dental services, diagnostic and laboratory fees such as but not limited to x-ray, computerized tomography scans, blood tests, etc; Lack of organized senior citizen group in the area; None attendance to monthly meeting; Lack of physical Fitness Programs for Senior Citizens were Sometimes encountered. Most senior citizens find it difficult to avail of the benefits of RA 9994. Some government health facilities do not give free health services. Senior citizens cannot afford to pay for these even if they are given 20% discount.

Lack of implementing guidelines on the 20% discounts in some establishment, Lack of home care facilities, Lack of awareness of the privilege stipulated in the Expanded Senior, Lack of medical equipment given especially to disabled senior citizens like wheelchairs, nebulizers, BP apparatus, thermometers, etc., non-implementation of the privileges for Senior

Citizens as stipulated in the law were also assessed. Implementation of all these programs will alleviate the problems of senior citizens in the Taysan, Batangas, Philippines.

Differences in the implementation and problems encountered when grouped according to profile variables

Only civil status and educational attainment show significant difference on the level of implementation of Sec 4, RA 9994 since the obtained p-value of 0.001 and 0.000 were less than 0.05 level of significance, thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the level of implementation when grouped according to respondents civil status and educational attainment is rejected. This means that the assessment of the respondents on the implementation varies. This was observed from the mean obtained from each attributes as well as the computed difference using the Post Hoc analysis.

There is a significant difference in the implementation of Sec 4 of RA 9994, when respondents were grouped according to status while a highly significant difference exists when grouped according to employment status. A significant difference exists in the problems encountered when respondents were grouped according to civil status and educational attainment.

It can be gleaned from Table 2 that only civil status and educational attainment show significant difference on the level of implementation of Sec4, RA 9994 since the obtained of 0.012 and 0.005 were less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the problems encountered in the implementation when grouped according to respondent's civil status and educational attainment is rejected. This

means that the assessment of the respondents on the problem encountered varies. This was observed from the mean obtained from each attributes as well as the computed difference using Post Hoc analysis.

Table 2. Difference of Responses on the Problems Encountered in the Implementation When Grouped According to Respondents' Profile

	Profile Variables	N	Mean	F / t-value	P-value
Gender	Male	34	2.24	0.174	0.862
	Female	98	2.26		
Civil Status	Single	1	2.58	3.359*	0.012
	Married	79	2.16		
	Separated	9	2.37		
	Widowed	41	2.41		
	Annulled	2	1.92		
Educational Attainment	Masteral	6	2.15	3.854*	0.005
	College	33	2.12		
	Vocational	48	2.20		
	High School	6	2.18		
	Elementary	39	2.45		
Employment Status	Employed	16	2.18	0.795	0.428
	Unemployed	116	2.26		

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

It should be noted that majority of the respondents are married, therefore, it lessened their dependency on the privileges of senior citizens. They have a partner that can support or provide them with their need. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the implementation and problems encountered when grouped according to profile variables is hereby accepted.

Table 3. Proposed Action Plan to enhance the Implementation of RA9994 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizen Act of 2010

KEY RESULT AREA	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
To increase awareness on the privileges for senior citizens.	Conduct information dissemination, seminar and lectures to senior citizens. Encourage participation in Senior Citizens Activities like Senior Citizens Week.	Office of the Senior Citizen Association
To increase incentives and privileges for Senior citizens not included in RA 9994.	To increase the budget and appropriation for Senior Citizens	Sanggunian Bayan Local Chief Executive Office of the Senior Citizen Association
Participation of Senior Citizens in all activities of the OSCA office.	Monthly meeting of Senior Citizens	Office of the Senior Citizen Association and Presidents of Senior Federation in every Barangay
Scholarship grants to senior citizens.	Appropriation in the budget of the local government for senior citizen who would like to pursue higher education and vocational training.	Local Chief Executive Sanggunian Bayan OSCA.
Budget augmentation for senior citizen to be able to provide the medical equipments.	Propose ordinance in the Sangguniang Bayan	SangguniangBayan Local Chief Executive

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Majority of the respondents are female, married, vocational graduate and unemployed. Senior Citizens in the municipality of Taysan, Batangas are aware of the privileges for senior citizens. Senior Citizens in Taysan, Batangas can sometimes avail other benefits not included in Sec4 of RA 9994. Sec 4 of RA 9994 otherwise known as Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 is less implemented in the Municipality of Taysan, Batangas. The respondents agree that the implementation of Sec 4 of RA 9994 in the Municipality of Taysan is a problem. There is no significant difference in the implementation and problems encountered when respondents were grouped according to profile variables. A proposed plan of action is recommended to enhance the implementation of Sec 4 of RA 9994.

It is recommended that the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) may conduct regular information dissemination to promote awareness on the privileges for senior citizens. The Sanggunian Bayan may increase the appropriation/budget allotted for senior citizens so that benefits and privileges not included in RA 9994 can be granted. The OSCA may encourage all senior citizens to attend regular monthly meetings. The local government of Taysan through OSCA may conduct livelihood training programs for senior citizens to provide income opportunities for senior citizens. OSCA may coordinate with other government and non-government organizations which are willing to donate medical equipment and supplies needed by senior citizens that cannot be provided by the local government units. Future researchers may conduct similar research using other variables.

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