

Profiling and Needs Assessment of Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail Inmates: Towards a Creation of a Baseline Profile and Generation of Meaningful and Functional Community Extension Services

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Abstract This study profiled the needs of provincial jail inmates and created a meaningful and relevant community extension program for the inmates to be provided by faculty members of the social sciences department of saint Mary's university.

Keywords: *community extension program, inmates*

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1. Introduction

Life behind jail bars is probably the worst situation an individual could have. Opportunities like having a good paying job, wandering around to appreciate beautiful things and places, having a happy and wonderful family, going to church, school or any institution and the like are halted. Aside from the curtailment of freedom (of all sorts), the inmates have to contend with the inconvenient living conditions they are in. Justice for those who are imprisoned as a consequence of their actions committed against a person or people but deprivations of rights and privileges for those who are not guilty of a crime they are accused of.

In Nueva Vizcaya, the Provincial Jail caters to different individuals with various conditions from simple to complicated cases. Some are able to resolve their cases to the formal courts with private lawyers while others relied with the services offered by the government. In terms of social condition inside the prison bars, the inmates are contended with the few activities allotted to them by the Jail Administration. In several instances they are visited by the academe and few socio-civic organizations to conduct outreach and extension services.

From these knowledge and observations, while meaningful and substantial in facts, they are not yet fully written and documented. Hence, in order to have a more objective view of the inmates' conditions in Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail, there is a need to conduct a formal profiling and needs

assessment. This will provide a baseline profile for the creation of meaningful and functional community extension services for the inmates.

Hence, this study generally aimed to provide an objective view of the characteristics and conditions of the inmates of Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. Find out the nature of the inmates in terms of the following:
 - a. demographic,
 - b. family and personal condition, and
 - c. case, profile.
2. Determine the knowledge and level of perception of the inmates towards the Philippines' Judicial System.
 - 2.1. Knowledge of inmates'
 - a. rights and privileges and
 - b. legal protection and remedies.
 - 2.2. Attitudes and Perceptions of inmates in terms of
 - a. judicial system in general;
 - b. adequate information about the justice system;
 - c. adequacy of legal defense;
 - d. unlawful or unreasonable delays, and
 - e. defective remedies for disadvantaged inmates.
3. Identify the needs of the inmates as reflected in their
 - a. family and personal condition;
 - b. case profile, and
 - c. knowledge and level of perception of the inmates towards the Philippines' Judicial System.

2. Research Methodology

This research utilized the descriptive – evaluative survey method. A structured questionnaire was used but the researchers guided the respondents, clarified and expanded the questions. Statistical and qualitative analysis was employed after gathering data from the respondents. The qualitative data needed by the study are implicitly stated in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) so that the respondents were the ones who provided the data rather than the researchers. Analysis and clustering of data gathered was performed after the data gathering.

The study was conducted in the Provincial Jail of the province of Nueva Vizcaya. The Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail is a place of confinement managed by the Provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) which are under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Inmates here are confined while waiting for their trial, or while being investigated or serving short term sentences.

The research is set first as a population study of all the inmates at the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail. However, a total of 115 were able to return their questionnaire. During that time from September to October 2014, there are about 130 inmates based from the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail Delinquency Chart.

In the narrative presentation of data, some of the respondents were given fictitious names to hide their identity and for more personal discussion of their responses. All the questions were translated to Filipino for greater apprehension and for the inmates to fully understand the objectives of the research.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Nature of the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Inmates

3.1.1. Demographic

1. Home Address

Most of the inmates are from Nueva Vizcaya with 100 or 87%. There are 37 or 32.2% have Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya as their home address before incarceration and next is Solano, Nueva Vizcaya with 20 or 17.4%.

2. Age

There are 30 or 26.1% inmates who are between ages 17 – 26; there are 29 or 25.2% inmates who are between ages 27 – 36 and ages 37 – 45 while there are 25 or 21.7% inmates whose ages are 46 and above. The youngest inmate is 17 years old while the oldest is 62 years old. The computed mean age is 36.04.

3. Sex

There are 108 or 93.9% male inmates and 7 or 6.1% female inmates in the study.

4. Religion

Most of the inmates are Roman Catholic with 87 or 75.7%. There are 5 or 4.3% who belong to the Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC), 4 or 3.5% Methodist and Dating Daan, only 1 or .9% entry for Pentecost and Islam and 2 or 1.7% entries for Born Again, Evangelical and UCCP.

5. Civil Status

There are 46 or 40% single inmates, 41 or 35.7% married inmates, 15 or 13% are separated, 9 or 7.8% widow/er, 3 or 2.6% indicated that their civil status is under the common law and 1 or .9% has not indicated any civil status.

6. Ethno-linguistic Group

Most of the inmates are *Ilocano* with 72 or 62.6%, second is *Tagalog* with 22 or 19.1%. Other ethno-linguistic groupings of the inmates are *Waray* with 6 or 5.2%, *Isinai* with 2 or 1.7%, *Kalanguya* with 4 or 3.5%, and 3 or 2.6% for *Gaddang*, *Ibanag* and *Ayangan* groups.

3.1.2. Family and Personal Condition

1. Inmates with Children

There are 75 or 65.2% inmates who have reported that they have children and there are 37 or 32.2% who do not have any while there 3 or 2.6% did not respond in this item.

2. Living Situation of Children Prior to Imprisonment

There are 59 or 51.3% of the inmates reported that they have children, 34 or 29.6% indicated that they have no kids or children and there are 22 or 19.2% who did not write any. Of those respondents with children, there are 37 or 32.2% inmates who stated that all of their children are living with them before they were incarcerated while 22 or 19.1% indicated that some of their children are living with them.

3. Family Member Arrest and Imprisonment History

On average, there are 25 or 21.7% inmates have indicated that there are other members of their families who were arrested and imprisoned. Of these arrested and imprisoned, brother or other relative of the inmates have greater in number with 7 or 6.1%. Next to these is father with 5 or 4.3%. Other members of the family like mother, stepbrother and son were also reported but with very little in frequency.

4. Living Condition Prior to Imprisonment

Before incarceration, there are 42 or 36.5% inmates lived with parents, 37 or 32.2% lived with their spouse and 17 or 14.8% lived alone. Others with little in number lived with their relatives, friends and co-accused.

5. Age when first in Trouble

With regard to age, 30 or 26.1% of the inmates have been already into trouble for the first time before they reach the majority age of 18. Others have been into trouble between, ages 19 – 35 (28 or 24.3%) and 36 and above (26 or 22.6%).

6. Reasons for Involvement in Trouble/Crime

Six (6) major themes came out on the reasons for involvement in trouble/crime, namely: 1) Poverty in life; 2) Family related problems; 3) Self – defense; 4) Framed – up; 5) Influence or effects of intoxicated liquor; and 6) Friends/Peer Pressure (*Barkada*).

The inmates revealed that poverty in life is one of the reasons of their commission of problems leading to criminal act, arrest and imprisonment. Of the 115 inmates who were given questionnaires in this study, 13 or 11.3% related that they committed an offense because of scarcity of resources in life. Poverty in life as one of the reasons in the commission of crime or an offense was also cited in the study conducted by Owen and Bloom [1]. In their study, about 15% of 294 respondents indicated that

“economic pressure” is the primary reason for the offense that they have incurred. This was ranked third in their list with the “drug related motivation” as the reason with the highest percentage of 37%.

Some of the inmates claimed that they have committed the offense due to family problems. There are 12 or 10.4% inmates who stated reasons related to this aspect. These are offenses or crimes filed because of conflicts within their families, with in – laws and step families and due to broken family relations. The inmates also reflected in their responses that they were forced to commit an offense because they have to defend themselves. There are 14 or 12.2% inmates who shared reasons that could fall under this category.

Other reasons reported by the inmates are clustered as “Framed – up”. This means that, the inmates perceived that they were innocent of the offense which they have been accused of. Among all the given reasons, the influence or pressure of friends or peer (*barkada*) has the highest percentage, there are 27 or 23.5% responses are included in this aspect. This means that they have committed an offense because of the dictates or influences of their friends or peers. Their reasons range from the negative or pessimistic influences of friendship to the positive or optimistic effects of their friends known as their “*barkada*”.

7. Reactions of Family Members

Most of the inmates were anxious about their condition and how their family members have reacted when they learned about the offense or crime they have committed. From all the reported responses of inmates, three (3) common reactions appeared, these are: 1) Feeling of unhappiness; 2) Get annoyed or angered; and 3) Feeling of humiliation/disappointment.

The inmates related the reactions of their family members which are either having the feeling of sadness, being hopeless, lonely and a lot of regrets. Some of the family members of inmates feel down and they are absorbing a lot of regrets, especially for those who believed that they just defended themselves and were innocent of the crime they have been accused of.

Other reactions from family members, though they express their sadness, are optimistic and that they understand well their kin in relation to their imprisonment. Of the 115 respondents, 25 inmates or 21.7% have written that their family members get annoyed or angered regarding their imprisonment. Other responses are clustered under the feeling of humiliation and disappointment. This means that the inmates’ family members show their feeling of frustration and disillusionment to what happened to them. There are 11 or 9.6% of all the surveyed inmates indicated the reactions of family members which could be classified under this cluster.

3.1.3. Case

1. Length of Stay in Jail

Most of the inmates indicated that they were imprisoned for less than a year (44 or 38.3%). There are 13 or 11.3% of the inmates reported that they are already imprisoned for a year, 20 or 17.4% stayed in jail for 2 years already and 14 or 12.2% reported that they have been behind bars for 3 years. A frequency from 1 – 4 or .9% – 3.5% covers

those inmates who have been incarcerated from 4 to 25 years.

2. Offense/s Committed

The violation on RA 9165 or the Dangerous Drugs Act received the highest frequency, 25 or 21.7%. Next to this is the Violation Against Women and Children (VAWC), 14 or 12.2%, then murder, 12 or 10.4% and rape, 10 or 8.7%. In comparison, the crime/offense that has the biggest number enlisted by the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail administration as of December 2014 is also on RA 6425/9165 Dangerous Drugs Act, a total of 41 or 28.3%. Of these 41 inmates, most of them are male adults with a total of 31, only 2 are female adult and 8 male youths.

3. Status of Case

Most of the inmates are waiting for the schedule of their trial in courts. The provisions, submissions and representations of their lawyers, public or private, are on-going, 99 or 86.1% of the inmates. Other cases with frequency ranging from 1 – 2 or .9% to 1.7% are either under amicable settlement, for dismissal, no hearing yet, waiting for medical clearance, for preliminary investigation and under investigation.

3. Representation during Trial

More than half of the inmates, 59 or 51.3%, are represented by a public lawyer, that is through the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO). There are 38 or 33% of the inmates are represented by private lawyer, 6 or 5.2% have no representation and 1 or .9% was represented first by a public lawyer then succeeded by a private.

4. Number of Inmates who have Received Sentence

Only 4 inmates are already sentenced, namely: 1 or .9% sentenced for 1 – 2 year imprisonment, 3 or 2.6% for 7 – 9 year imprisonment and 1 or .9% was sentenced for life imprisonment. More than half of the inmates are still waiting for their cases to be heard or their cases are still under trial, 69 or 60% and 41 or 35.7% have no idea about the sentence that they will receive from the court.

5. Frequency of Imprisonment

Most of the inmates, 88 or 76.5% are imprisoned for the first time. There are 10 or 8.7% inmates who are imprisoned twice, 5 or 4.3% inmates are jailed three times, 2 or 1.7% are jailed four times already and 1 or .9% serves jail punishment for ten times.

6. Age when First Imprisoned

Many of the inmates were previously imprisoned when they were younger (18 – 21 years old = 42 or 36.5%). Others have been first imprisoned when they were already older, 22 years old and above with the frequency from 4 – 9 or 3.5% - 7.8%.

3.2. Knowledge and Level of perception of the inmates towards the Philippines’ Judicial System

3.2.1. Knowledge of Inmates Regarding Their Rights and Privileges

1. The right to bail

More than half of the surveyed inmates, 72 or 62.6%, have knowledge about this and 43 or 37.45% admitted that they do not have any idea about this particular right. However, even though bail can be posted in most of the

crime cases, there are limited number of inmates who are posting bail because of poverty.

2. The right to involuntary admission of guilt

More than half of the inmates, 68 or 59.1% believed that they have knowledge about the right against involuntary admission of guilt and 47 or 40.9% have no knowledge regarding this right.

3. Right to legal counsel, knowledge on the existence of PAO and offices or agencies that help the poor or disadvantaged inmates

Most of the inmates indicated that they have knowledge about the right to legal counsel (76 or 66.1%), the existence of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) before detention (70 or 60.9%), offices that help the poor when they have cases in court (63 or 54.8%). Conversely, more than half, 80 or 69.6%, do not have any knowledge about offices or agencies that accept complaints against delays in the prosecution of cases in court.

3.2.2. Knowledge of Inmates Regarding Legal Protection and Remedies

1. Serving warrant of arrest

There are more inmates, 75 or 65.2%, who have no knowledge about the nature of a warrant of arrest. Less than half, 40 or 34.8%, of the inmates sampled have knowledge on the issues of warrant of arrest.

2. Laws and rules on protection of juvenile offenders

There are 50 or 43.5% of the inmates having knowledge of such policy and 65 or 56.5% of the inmates have no knowledge about this. Though, there are more who do not know about the policy on the protection of juvenile offenders, the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail have a policy in place, separating the juvenile offenders. Young offenders are detained together with the women offenders.

3. Legal procedures after the arrest.

Less than half of the inmates have knowledge about the procedures after the arrest, 46 or 40% and more than half have no knowledge about these, 69 or 60%.

3.2.3. Level of Perceptions of Inmates towards the Judicial System

The inmates agree that: the Philippine judicial system can be trusted (M= 1.99); judges in courts are honest, trustworthy and incorruptible (M=2.48); judges in courts are just and fair (M=2.23); and judges in courts are fully knowledgeable of legal procedures.

The inmates are undecided on the statements that: the justice system treats both the rich and the poor equally (M=2.73); only the rich could have treatment under the law (M=2.68); and the poor could not expect fair treatment under the law (M=2.53).

3.2.4. Perceptions of Inmates on the Adequacy of Information about the Justice System

The inmates agree that there is: adequacy of access to information on how the justice system works (M= 2.43); adequacy of access to information concerning one's right (M=2.19); adequacy of access to information concerning available legal remedies or options to the poor (M=2.32); and adequacy of access to information concerning where to file complaints about delays in cases.

3.2.5. Perceptions of Inmates on the Adequacy of Legal Defense

The inmates agree that: Everyone has access to adequate legal defense under the country's justice system (M=2.06); their legal counsel is concerned about protecting their rights as clients (1.91); their legal counsel has knowledge and expertise in law (1.96); their legal counsel is doing their best in protecting their rights (2.09); their legal counsel explain to them the progress of their case (2.06); and their legal counsel explain to them possible strategies regarding their case (2.06).

3.2.6. Perceptions of Inmates on the Unlawful or Unreasonable Delays

The inmates agree on the condition that the accused are forced to confess to a crime in order to expedite the litigation of his/her case (M=2.46). The inmates are undecided if: the accused are tortured in order to confess a crime (2.94); their cases are proceeding at a reasonable pace (2.6); and their cases are proceeding at a faster pace (3.07).

3.2.7. Perceptions of Inmates on the Effective Remedies for Disadvantaged Inmates

The inmates agree that they could have avoided incarceration if only they have money to post bail (M=2.37). They also agree that the poor are more likely to be detained while waiting for trial (M=2.26) and the poor have access to free service of a lawyer (2.24). The inmates are undecided on the idea that the poor have access to effective service of a lawyer (2.53) and the poor are likely to be tortured or forced to confess a crime (2.9).

3.3. Needs of the Inmates as Reflected in Their Family, Personal Condition, Case Profile and Condition as Detainees of the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail

Taken together, the profile of the inmates' family, personal condition, their cases and general condition as detainees of the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Jail, four (4) categories of unmet needs are needed to be addressed, namely: Family and Personal Issues; Community Intervention; Monitoring and Expanding of Present Projects/Programs; and Access to justice by the Inmates.

Family and Personal Issues

With reference to the information gathered from the inmates' family and personal issues, it is highly recommended that family based interventions must be crafted to help the inmates in making up with their families. Child-related issues, family problems/conflicts and abuse of prohibited drugs must be taken into consideration. Problems on parenting and counseling (group and individual) and family re-unification programs.

Community Intervention

Vocational training, social programs highlighting the needed lessons for women and juvenile offenders in the reintegration to the society and religious teachings are very much desirable and always being related by the inmates and jail administrators during the focused group discussion (FGD) and one-on-one interviews.

The finding that the violation of the Dangerous Drugs Act received the highest frequency of commission among the inmates suggests that there is a need for community intervention regarding drug abuses. In-prison programs should be integrated with the current events in the community or society outside the jail so that the treatment of the inmates shall not only be temporary but long-lasting, if not permanently absorbed.

Monitoring and Expanding of Present Projects/Programs

There is a need to monitor and expand the existing activities, projects and programs for their functionality and practical application.

The inmates revealed that the Jail administrators provide them of various activities; for recreation, an avenue for them to hone their creativity including their talents, family time and acceptance of visitors. Some religious groups like the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Inc), Dating Daan, etc. are also visiting the inmates and giving them spiritual encounters. At last, the academes also do their share in Jail Visitations. PLTC, Inc. College, Nueva Vizcaya State University (NVSU) and Saint Mary's University (SMU) also have their annual or semestral outreach activities.

Notwithstanding, all these efforts aiming for the inmate's recovery and development may not be fully realized when these will not be re-program following a process or series of activities that shall be monitored and evaluated every after each undertaking.

Access to justice by the Inmates

The findings on the perceptions of inmates towards the Philippines' judicial system point to critical issues that are highly recommended to be acted upon. It could be discerned that the inmates suffer from physical obstructions relating to their access to both the legal aspects of justice system and the remedies that could be utilized on the litigation and proceeding of their cases. The inmates also have complications accessing useful information about their rights and privileges and have problems on where to get assistance relative to their cases. In particular, the inmates' perceptions on unlawful and unreasonable delays of their cases are very low. They have no idea if their cases are proceeding at a reasonable and faster pace.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

From the above stated findings, the research concludes that:

1. The inmates have general and specific nature in terms of demographic, family, personal and case profile.
2. There are physical and intellectual barriers that impede the inmates' access to justice, especially in the litigation and period of proceedings of their cases. They agree to some aspects of the justice system but are undecided or have no idea with other provisions relative to their case and that these may lead into oblivion.
3. Four categories of unmet needs must be taken into considerations, these are: family and personal issues;

community interventions; monitoring and expanding of current programs; and inmates' access to justice.

4. The task of rehabilitating the inmates must not be carried by the institutions of government alone. The private sector should also share a great part, particularly in relation to the professional works and services of the different disciplines that students and teachers are capable of.
5. The profile and needs assessment provided general and specific information about the nature of the inmates and their needs relative to demographic, family, personal and case profile. These information are very helpful for the jail administrators, the private sector who shall be offering their expertise and professional services, the business sector for their social corporate responsibility and the various civil societies who may realize the prevailing needs of the inmates and persevere to share their part.

4.2. Recommendations

- 1) That a sustained profiling and needs assessment of provincial jail inmates be conducted every two (2) years, including those that commit juvenile delinquencies (youth) for appropriate capacitation and extension services;
- 2) Since it has been found out that there are barriers on that impede the inmates' access to justice, the following are strongly recommended:
 - 2.1. There is a need to address the problems on the inmates' access to justice like the lack of information on the government's legal aid program, remedies, rights and entitlements, and legal aid procedures; and
 - 2.2. The inmates' rights and privileges to pertinent information regarding their cases must be re-affirmed.
- 3) Given the four areas of unmet needs, the following are recommended:
 - 3.1. The inmates must be educated with the possible solutions for the family and personal issues. These are lessons on parenting, counseling by group and individual, family reunification, physical/sexual abuse treatment and the rehabilitation of those dependent of prohibited drugs, intoxicated liquors and cigarettes;
 - 3.2. Programs regarding pre-release of inmates must also be given a consideration so that they shall have a successful and meaningful re-entry to the society;
 - 3.3. Building of additional units or rooms to accommodate more inmates as the Nueva Provincial Jail sometimes exceeds its capacity resulting to overcrowding and lack of facilities;
 - 3.4. Programs to be implemented for the inmates must be based and coordinated with assessed inmates' needs related by them and not thought or imposed by people who did not even experience being incarcerated; and
 - 3.5. Monitoring and expansion on the provisions for the acquisition of basic necessities for inmates.

- 4) Since most extension services are carried by government institutions, the following are recommended for private sectors:
 - 4.1. Religious programs must be developed so as not to just have sporadic religious activities of different groups;
 - 4.2. Programs and opportunities for the performance of jobs and trainings of skills must be expanded for the inmates' self-sufficiency and economic productivity;
 - 4.3. Cultural programs must also be implemented for the inmates to be still integrated with their own culture;
 - 4.4. Programs on sex and gender sensitivity must also be implemented and this must include not only heterosexual but also homosexual inmates; and
 - 4.5. Community based programs must be developed for the inmates to be updated with the changes and current trends in the society. These programs must include opportunities for the performance of jobs and trainings of skills for the inmate to be self-sufficient and economically productive;
- 5) Given the information on the profile and needs assessments of the inmates, the following are greatly encouraged to be fulfilled:
 - 5.1. Inclusion of activities being conducted by volunteers, the business community, and visitors in the Jail's programs;
 - 5.2. Evaluation and monitoring of the programs must be established to determine the effectiveness and functionality of the programs; and
 - 5.3. A need to translate the various and random activities being performed for the inmates by the Jail administration, private groups and the business sector following the appropriate and professional correction and rehabilitation programs.

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