

CURRENT POLITICS OF FORESHORE RECLAMATION IN TAGBILARAN CITY: THE EMERGING PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Prof. Erika Barbarona

Holy Name University
barbaronaerika@gmail.com

Dr. Frederico B. Ticong

Holy Name University
fredericoticong@gmail.com

Maeveen Marie R. Durban

Holy Name University
maeveendurban73@gmail.com

Minette Almedilla

Holy Name University

Elne Galon

Holy Name University

-Abstract-

The study aimed to assess the current status of foreshore reclamation in the City of Tagbilaran. The City of Tagbilaran sets the demands of the increasing urbanization, facing the challenge of economic expansion in foreshore areas. Using the quantitative and qualitative method, the researchers were able to assess the current politics of foreshore reclamation based on the analysis of its emerging challenges and prospects. The data revealed that the respondents have seen the challenge of having an increase of transportation and population explosion that would result to high level of noise and disturbance of the ecosystem and nature. The possibility of a highly competitive and more urbanized city, expanding infrastructure, more workers creating economic stability and new attractions does not compensate the challenges. The researchers found out that businessmen who are in the government are holding back the people in deciding about the existence of foreshore reclamation. In fact, there are still more public land areas available to

utilize and develop that would not lead them to resort for foreshore reclamation. Hence, people in Tagbilaran City were not yet ready to become a highly urbanized city.

Keywords: *Environment, Foreshore Reclamation, Current Politics, Prospects, Challenges*

JEL Classification: Q56

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Foreshore reclamation is being introduced on the account that this can contribute in alleviating poverty and uplifting the living conditions of the marginalized sectors inhabiting coastal communities. This also becomes a popular way of expanding economic activities. Environmental planners, urban planners, and other professionals, meanwhile, also see the possible positive economical financial market that reclamation can bring into the country, as is seen and done in other cities like Singapore, Hong Kong, Manhattan, Tokyo, and Dubai (Palafox, 2014).

However, dealing with this activity will also have an adverse impact on the environment especially if being undertaken at a very haphazard manner such as uncontrolled coastal development and utilization of the coastline areas. Environmental cost will mainly arise from mismanagement of foreshore activities.

To address the issue undertaken in foreshore reclamation activities, management activities are regulated and governed by the foreshore laws and policies of the government. These laws and policies governing foreshore in the Philippines illustrate the legal and regulatory maze that characterizes the natural resource management and environmental governance in the Philippines (Batongbakal, 2005).

However, the implementation is underscored by the continuing poor enforcement of foreshore and other natural resources and environmental laws. Still, there are many occurring violations that indicate the failure to implement such laws that sets a bad precedent for enforcement.

The selection of Tagbilaran City is anchored on these reasons. First is the consideration of the geographical location. The location of the city being at the side of the shore served as an illustration where several foreshore reclamation activities are undertaken. Second, Tagbilaran City is a business capital and center of governance in the Province of Bohol. Third, the city is a start-off point to Bohol province's attractions. Lastly, it is in the city where demands of increasing urbanization are prevalent and tourism usually set the flames for economic and social growth.

With the above-mentioned insights, the researchers believe that there is a need to assess and examine the implementation of laws and policies in Tagbilaran City which defines its current politics on foreshore reclamation.

1.2. Theoretical Background

The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 defines the term “foreshore” as a “string of land margining a body of water; the part of the seashore between the low water line usually as the seaward margin of a low tide terrace and the upper limit of wave wash at high tide usually marked by a beach scarp or berm. In Department Order No. 34, issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 1999 appears to give a simpler definition; it says “foreshore” refers to that part of the shore which is alternately covered and uncovered by the ebb and the flow of the tide.”

It is in the foreshore lands where mangroves are found; mangroves are important coastal habitats that nurture marine life. It is also in the foreshore where wharves, piers, ports, dockyards and fish canneries are established. Beach resorts, including hotels, rest houses and restaurants are also found in the foreshore lands. The foreshore provides sand and gravel construction and offers a place for fishers to dry their fish and for farmers to dry their copra (Managing the Philippine Foreshore: A Guide for local Governments 2004). This area is converted and reclaimed to pave way to residential, commercial, and industrial uses and also to expand economic activities. The sprout of tourism motivates paving way to foreshore reclamation (Palafox, 2014).

The idea of foreshore reclamation is undoubtedly a product of modernization. It is deeply rooted on modernization theory such as that of Rostow's. For modernization theories economic growth is the basis of the modernization-

process, but also a change of values within the population of a society is required (Wehler 1975). Economical changes have strong impacts on societies and these changes are supported by political and social transformations (Rostow 1960).

Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith (2010) also support the same in their “Theory on Economic Development.” They see that it is vital in the sense that it is concerned with the idea that a country is able to develop economically by focusing on the resources that are in short supply in order to expand beyond local industries to reach global market and finance the country’s further development to bring about economic growth.

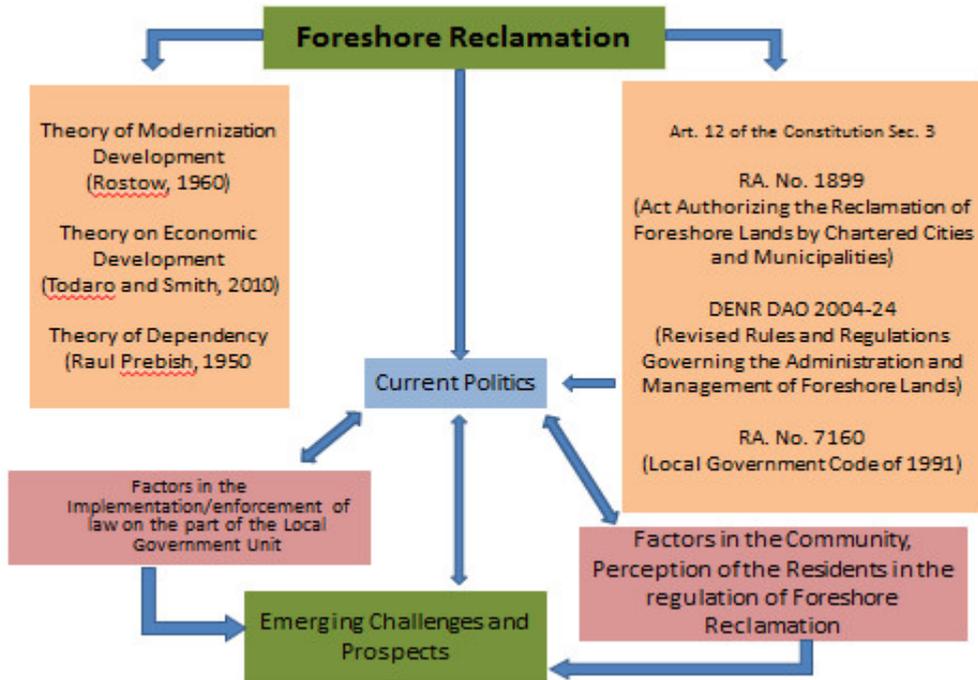
In contradiction, the Theory of Dependency- the antithesis of Modernization Theory postulates that the difficulties in development are not due solely to the internal workings of the country or region in question, but have more to do with the global structures imposed by the developed unto the less developed.

As part of modernization, Hongkong and many coastal cities in Japan, China, Taiwan, and South Korea have changed the outlines of their coastlines for a variety of purposes – industrial, institutional and even agricultural.

Like other East and Southeast Asian cities, Metro Cebu, the Philippines’ second largest metropolis, is also turning to coastal reclamation to expand its urban space. Indeed, the first major reclamation work took place in 1964 when the 160 hectare North Reclamation Area was completed. In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, Metro Cebu experienced rapid economic growth. This led to a boom in export production and real estate development. Along with this boom came increased speculative land buying and sharp increases in urban land prices (Sajor 2001).

However, the practice of reclamation affects both coastal and upland environments. A number of recent studies have shown that coastal reclamation is one of the major culprits responsible for the loss of intertidal flats and other coastal resources in East and Southeast Asia (Kawabe 1998 and Hwang 1999). A case in point is Japan’s Tokyo Bay where massive reclamation projects have been responsible for a decrease in the total area of intertidal flats of more than 90%. (Kawabe 1998)

Figure 1. Theoretical-Conceptual Framework



Coastal reclamation, especially as it is practiced in the Philippines affects both coastal and upland environments. Among its most apparent and well-documented environmental impacts are: (1)The loss of intertidal flats and coral areas, (2) the loss of on-site fisheries, (3) the loss of reef gleaning, (4) the loss of potential recreational benefits from the affected coral reef, (5) the environmental damage from associated dredging activities (Montenegro et.al., 2005).

Hence, the legal framework of foreshore reclamation is embodied under the constitutional and other pertinent laws. Art.12 of the Constitution Sec. 3 states the various classifications of land. In addition to the pertinent laws, Republic Act No. 1899 is “An Act Authorizing the Reclamation of Foreshore Lands by the Chartered Cities and Municipalities” , providing authorities of local government units to engage in foreshore reclamation but has the responsibility for managing the foreshore areas. These rules and regulations were issued pursuant to the provisions of Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Public Land Act in order to rationalize and regulate the utilization and occupation of foreshore lands (Managing the Philippine Foreshore 2004). In consonance with the Coastal Resource

Management Plan, several laws have been enacted governing the use of foreshore lands and its management, under Section 3 (i) of Republic Act 7160 otherwise known as The Local Government Code of 1991.

The effective management of foreshore land is best determined primarily on the implementation of such policies in the local level. The realization of this can be boosted by local initiatives and processes designed to promote effective management of foreshore areas which would take the ability to effectively implement it and regulate such use of the foreshore areas as deemed necessary by exercising local legislative power for it to become an active power of contributing to economic development (Osorio, 2003).

However, in Tagbilaran City there are numbers of unauthorized reclamation projects. Six of them are considered huge reclamation used for commercial purposes and smaller reclamation for public purposes. In 2009, there were 328 pending applications for Foreshore Lease Agreement (FLA) at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources since then no application has been awarded with an FLA. Of the 328 applications, 302 or 93.9% are in barangay Poblacion 2, City of Tagbilaran.

The City of Tagbilaran sets the demands of increasing urbanization facing the challenge of economic expansion in foreshore areas. In such, the researchers believe that there is a need for an assessment of the current politics of foreshore reclamation in Tagbilaran City, specifically the implementation of an effective foreshore management. This will enable the determination of the extent of awareness of the residents, the degree of the implementation of the policies and the emerging challenges and prospects of foreshore reclamation in the City of Tagbilaran.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to assess the current politics of foreshore reclamation in Tagbilaran City based on the analysis of its emerging challenges and prospects. Specifically, this sought to answer the following:

2. What is the perception of the respondents on foreshore reclamation in terms of:
 - 2.1. benefits,
 - 2.2. challenges,
 - 2.3. prospects?

3. What factors that causes foreshore reclamation existence in Tagbilaran City?

1.4 Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. It has a total land area of 3,270 hectares, including about 13 kilometers of coastline. It is a second class city composed of 15 barangays, namely: Poblacion 1, Poblacion 2, Poblacion 3, Cogon, Bool, Booy, Cabawan, dampas, Dao, Manga, Mansasa, San Isidro, Taloto, Tiptip and Ubujan. Among the 15 barangays, the researchers selected 3 barangays mainly because of the reclamation activities conducted specifically in: Barangay Poblacion 2 (Bohol Quality Mall, Jj’s Seafood Village and Ramiro Hospital), Barangay Mansasa (Villa Alzhun and Crabhouse) and Barangay Cogon (Bohol Tropics Resort).

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative research covered the survey-method.

Table 1. Total Number of Respondents

Barangays from the Classified Foreshore Area	Number of Households	Number of Respondents	
		near foreshore	Outside foreshore
Poblacion 2	1,158	16	16
Mansasa	1,221	14	14
Cogon	3,021	37	37
Total	5,400	134	

In addition to this, this research instrument allowed the researchers to carry out the quantitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation. To determine the number of policies implemented in Tagbilaran City regarding foreshore reclamation, percentage and statistical means will be employed. The formula below will be used:

$$f = \frac{f}{tf} \times 100\%$$

where:

RF=Relative Frequency

F=frequency of category

tf=total frequency

To get the weighted mean of the perceived effects of the reclamation projects to the community within and outside the foreshore area, the formula below will be used:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum xf}{\sum f}$$

Where:

f=frequency

x=number of points

For the qualitative research approach, the researchers conducted a Key Informant Interview (KII). The KII was done after getting the results of the survey to validate the responses. For the study, the researchers interviewed the following key informants, namely: the City Mayor, head of the City Planning and Development Office, head of the DENR-CENRO, the head of BONACONSO, the barangay captains of the 3 selected barangays, and 6 business stakeholders who are involved in reclamation activities. The KII includes questions pertaining to the impacts of foreshore reclamation specifically on the economy, environment, affected residents and policymaking process.

The files and other records from the City Government, agencies and organization relevant to the study conducted were also used as secondary sources of this study.

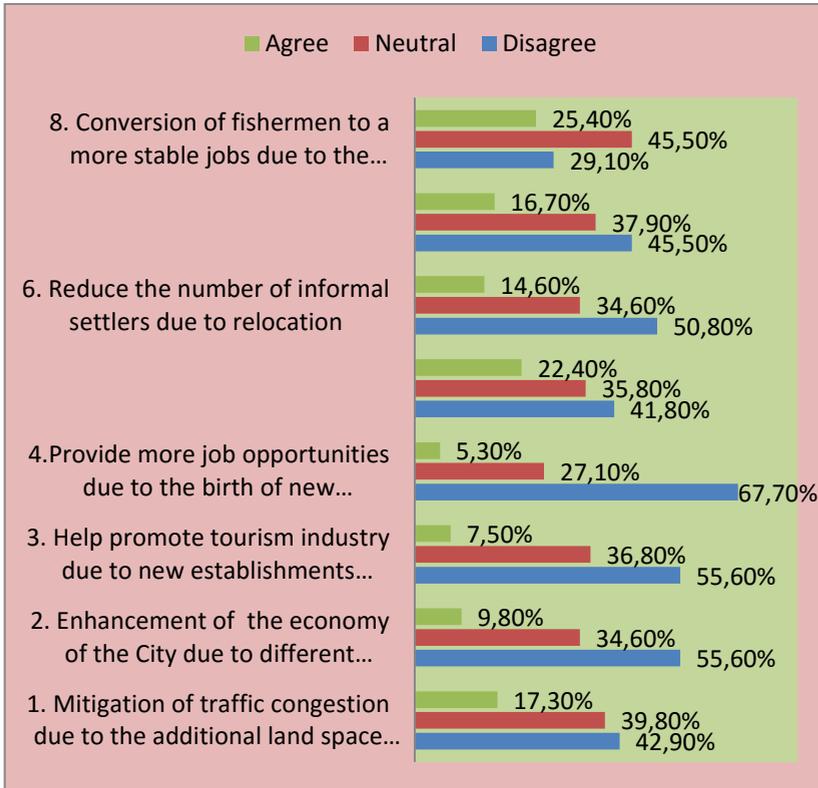
2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

2.1 Perception of the Respondents about Foreshore Reclamation

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the responses per barangay as to their perception of agreement, neutrality or disagreement of the different benefits that may be acquired through foreshore reclamation in Tagbilaran City. Based on the enumerated possible benefits that may be acquired through foreshore reclamation, the respondents perceived to disagree (48.63%) on the overall average. Respondents heavily disagree (67.7%) on providing more job opportunities due to the birth of new commercial industries, followed both by enhancement of the economy of the city due to different business ventures and helping promote tourism industry due to the new establishments created (55.6%). Based on the responses of the respondents, they disagree to what Rostow (1960) and Smith

(2010) claims that part of modernization are having foreshore reclamation to bring about economic development.

Figure 2. Respondents’ Perception as to the benefits of Foreshore



There is also a different perception between the ordinary settlers and the businessmen. For Mrs. Yap, the General Manager of Bohol Tropics, she stated that foreshore reclamation brought additional space for economic ventures. Bohol Tropics have offered new jobs and for this reason, it can help the people who are seeking for jobs.

On the other hand, respondents least disagreed on conversion of fishermen to a more stable jobs due to the increasing number of job opportunities brought by new commercial industries (29.1%). This jives with their great disagreement of the creation of more jobs as a benefit of having foreshore reclamation. Although as claimed by Rostow or Smith that there will be more jobs, fishermen were

meant to be fishermen and may not be accommodate with modern jobs not relating to their skills. Usually, the jobs created in foreshore reclamation projects are not suitable for the skills of the fishermen which will not lead to the conversion of new jobs for the resident fishermen in the city.

Furthermore, there is difference of the perception of the respondents and the city officials as to the mitigation of traffic congestion. While the respondents disagreed on this benefit, the city officials specifically the city mayor as represented by Mr. Nemenzo, Hon. Inting and the CPDO head, they are positive that reclamation will mitigate the problem of traffic congestion. From the DPWH data on traffic counts, it was found out that every 2:00-6:00 pm, there are more or less cars going in or out Tagbilaran City. This serves as the basis of the city officials that there is traffic congestion. This connotes that the city officials believed that there should be an additional land space created because of the shortage of space which results to traffic. But as what the DENR said, there is no actual shortage of space. In fact, there are many spaces outside the foreshore area that's why there is no need to reclaim. He also stated that the only remedy to allay congestion is to open a new business center.

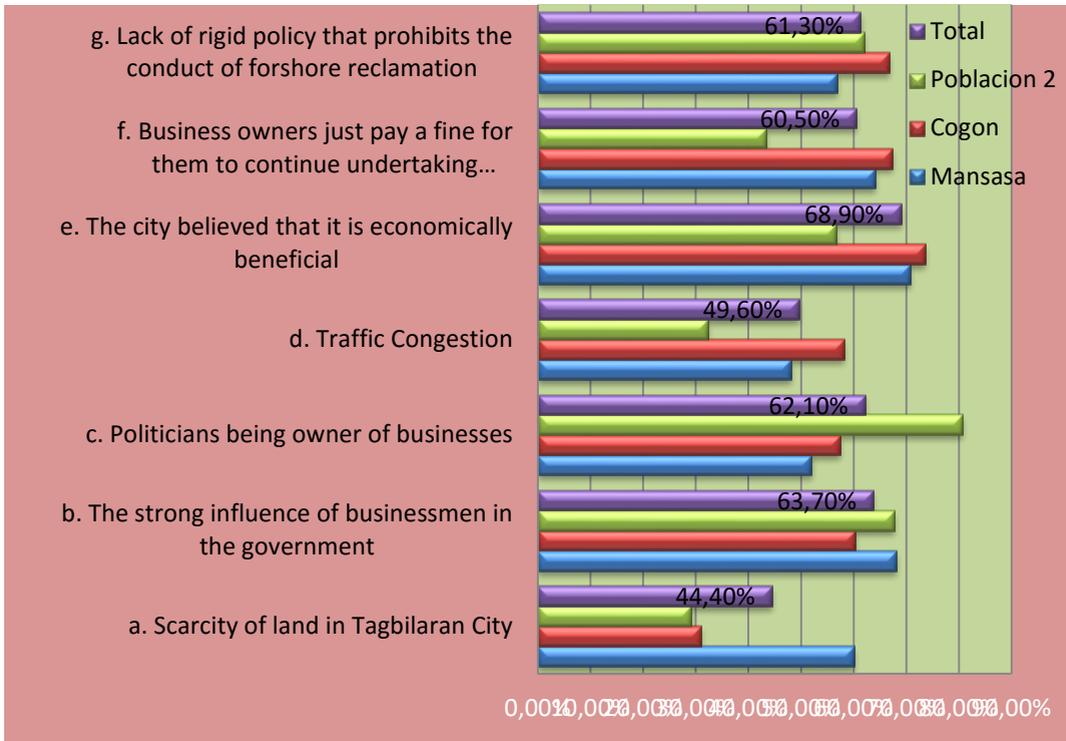
2.2. Respondents Perception on the factors why foreshore reclamation exists

Figure 3 shows the respondents perception as to the factors that allow foreshore reclamation to exist. Based on the results, the respondents perceived that the city believed that it is economically beneficial (68.9%) as perceived to be the main factor of why foreshore reclamation exists followed by the strong influence of businessmen in the government (68.7%) while scarcity of land in Tagbilaran City (44.4%) was the least factor.

Moreover, the respondents of Barangays Manga and Cogon greatly perceived that the city believed that it is economically beneficial (70.8%, 73.5% respectively) while Barangay Poblacion 2 on politicians being owners of businesses (80.60%). On the other hand, least rated by respondents of Barangay Mansasa was traffic congestion (48%), while scarcity of land in Tagbilaran City (31%, 29%) for Barangays Cogon and Poblacion 2 respondents, respectively.

With their responses, respondents foresee that foreshore reclamation is a global practice of transformation and innovation of the city to industrialization. One important factor to consider is the ability of the businessmen to pay for the penalty of not following the complete processes before undertaking reclamation.

Figure 3. Respondents' Perception as to Factors of Foreshore Reclamation



Considering the fact that they have already constructed a structure in the foreshore area illegally, but the city government of Tagbilaran City seemed to have no action regulating this kind of activity which can destroy the environment and could harm the marine environment in the particular area being affected by the creation of structures. First and foremost, the city government of Tagbilaran lacks an ordinance prohibiting and regulating the conduct of reclamation in the city. Second, one of the businessmen among those who undertake unauthorized reclamation is the local chief executive himself. The city mayor having the general supervision and control over all programs and activities of the city government and who is also in-charge of the execution of all laws and ordinances of the city, and supervises the implementation of development plans, it is noteworthy that the reason why the government seemed to be silent as to the issue of reclamation is because even the local chief executive has particular interest over the matter. Aside from that, it cannot be denied that businessmen have a

strong influence in the government for the reason that they have also established close relationship with some of the government officials to which this can influence in the implementation of policy and even in the formulation of policies as to regulation of reclamation. The longstanding culture of Tagbilaran, where most families owning large businesses in the city have close tie relationship with each other taking a collective approach, this could possibly mean that with their power and money they can influence the government to formulate a policy that will protect their interest on foreshore reclamation. It is evident now in the newly deliberated Comprehensive Land Use Plan of Tagbilaran City, that they have extended the area for proposed reclamation compared to the CLUP being used now. As mentioned above, the city mayor might be one of those who have influenced to extend the reclamation area for the city to be able to develop more and particularly to protect his family's interest on foreshore reclamation.

Based on the interview conducted by the researchers, it was also found out that earliest reclamation projects have taken actions such as dumping of solid waste materials in the foreshore and slowly extending the dumping in the foreshore which leads to new creation of land space eventually owning the land. According to the barangay captain of Mansasa, they have received a complaint that during midnight there are some persons who dumped solid waste materials and it was found out that those persons were working in Crabhouse, after receiving the complaint they have made actions to stop the illegal dumping of solid waste.

This happened also in Poblacion 2 where Alturas Group of Companies is dumping their solid waste and eventually they have owned it to be their property. This was an act of illegal reclamation but the DENR have not made actions in prohibiting this conduct. It reveals that lack of rigid policy, no thorough management and regulation of foreshore reclamation are the factors why there will always be a mismanagement of foreshore reclamation, and this will continue if the proper agencies will not act on it.

Aside from the concerned agencies, LGU's being the front liners in resource management-as they are where the foreshore is- are in better position to coordinate effective foreshore management and development. LGU's must resort to their local legislative power to regulate foreshore use but with the statement of Hon. Inting that it would be unfair that they will regulate those who have undertaken reclamation activities for the reason that the government has already a proposed plan to reclaim, that should not be the case, because they have granted

such power to regulate the foreshore use, they must also do their part without biases, without being influenced by the power of the businessmen and without taking into consideration that the government will also reclaim. Regardless of that fact, he being one of the legislators in the city must do his part in formulating policies that will govern the conduct of foreshore reclamation, encourage his co-legislators to draft an ordinance that will prohibit foreshore reclamation because by not doing so, he is also being unfair to the people who will be affected by reclamation activities.

Several groups fought against reclamation. The long standing group- the BONACONSO was among who are environment advocates group. They picked on the grave environmental violations along the Tagbilaran City foreshores and want to assign accountability to agencies that have been mandated to protect these shorelines. They were even gathering signatures to come up with a compelling reason to pressure the government and local officials to rule on the illegal activities in the city's foreshore areas. They have conducted several forums to raise awareness among people. But despite all the efforts, there were still no actions in regulating foreshore reclamation mainly because of the strong influence of the businessmen and the involvement of the city official in introducing foreshore reclamation for the city's development.

3. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers were able to conclude that respondents have seen the challenge of having an increase of transportation and population explosion that would result to high level of noise, as well as disturbance of the ecosystem and nature. The possibility of a highly competitive and more urbanized city, expanding infrastructure, more workers creating economic stability and new attractions doesn't compensate the challenges. Although foreshore reclamation could be beneficial to the city, the influence of businessmen in the government is holding back the people to completely decide that foreshore reclamation is beneficial to them as there are still more idle lands available to use and improve. Moreover, foreshore reclamation activities were done by businessmen, with no ECC permits and there was no proper and thorough management of the DENR or the LGU of the City of Tagbilaran. As far as respondents were concerned, the government has been headed by businessmen, for which the respondents have second thoughts about foreshore reclamation. In

fact, there are still more public areas to utilize and grow, and not resort to foreshore reclamation. Hence, people in Tagbilaran City were not yet ready to become a highly urbanized city. There are still more benefits the government can afford to the people to reach progress.

REFERENCES

Anda, G. (2011). *The Emerging Challenges of Foreshore Management: a review of foreshore laws and policies, institutional arrangements and issues*. (2015) http://icrmp.dentr.gov.ph/attachments/emerging_challenges_of_foreshore.pdf

A Joint Project of the City Government of Tagbilaran and Region VII. Foreshore Audit of the Tagbilaran City (2013)

Batongbakal, J. A *Crowded Shoreline Review of the Philippines' Foreshore and Shore Land Management Policies*.(n.d.). (2015) from http://www.oneocean.org/download/20020130/a_crowded_shoreline_full_text.pdf

Checklist of Requirements for Foreshore/Misc./reclaimed/Agri.Lease Application
Chiu, R. (2013). *Reclamation Project Faces Opposition*. Retrieved on September 18, 2015 from [http://tubagbohol.mikeligalig.com/breaking-news/bohol-quality-\(bq\)-reclamation-project-faces-opposition/](http://tubagbohol.mikeligalig.com/breaking-news/bohol-quality-(bq)-reclamation-project-faces-opposition/)

Chiu, R. (2013). *Group Petitions Stop of City Reclamations*. Retrieved on September 18, 2015 from <https://www.facebook.com/piabohol171/posts/373300936133939>

Commission Assessment of the Environmental Impact of Land Reclamation.(n.d.).Retrieved on September 4, 2015 from http://qsr2010.ospar.org/media/assessments/p00368_Land_Reclamation.pdf

DENR Administrative Order. (2004). Revised Rule and Regulations Governing the Administrative and Management of Foreshore Land.Executive Local Agenda in City of Tagbilaran

Hwang, M. 1999. Coastal Land-use Change by Reclamation of Tidal Flats along the Western Coast of the Capital Region in Korea. Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea. IPCC. 2001.

Climate Change (2001) Mitigation. Report of Working Group III. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Jiao, J.J. (2000) Preliminary Conceptual Study on the Impact of Land Reclamation on Groundwater Flow and Contaminant Migration in Penny's Bay. Department of Earth Sciences, University of Hongkong, Hongkong.

Kasnda, P. *Rostow's Theory of Modernization Development*. (2015) https://www.academia.edu/3596310/Rostows_theory_of_modernization_development

Katahira and Engineers International. (1993) Environmental Impact Assessment: Cebu South Reclamation Project. Metro Cebu Development Project Office. Mandaue City, Philippines.

Katahira and Engineers International. (1994) Implementation Program for the Cebu South Reclamation Project. Metro Cebu Development Project – Project Management Office (MCDP-PMO). Cebu City, Philippines

Katsillis, J. et al. (2001). *Modernization Theory*. Retrieved on September 25, 2015 from <http://find.galegroup.com/gic/infomark.do?&idigest=fb720fd31d9036c1ed2d1f3a0500fcc2&type=retrieve&tabID=T001&prodId=GIC&docId=CX3404400243&source=gale&userGroupName=itsbtrial&version=1.0>

Kawabe, M. (1998) To Enhance the Environmental Values of Tokyo Bay – A Proposition for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, (41), pp. 19-39.

Kinwing, M. (2014). *A Study of Hong Kong Reclamation Policy and Its Environmental Impact*. Retrieved on July 15, 2015 from <http://hub.hku.hk/bitstream/10722/207670/1/FullText.pdf>

Lin, A. (2000). *The Politics of Harbour Reclamation in Hong Kong in the 1990s*.
Retrieved on July 15, 2015 from
<http://etheses.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/pdf/003803737.pdf>

Matsuoka, S. (1994) Socio Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Land Reclamation
Projects in Japan. Hiroshima Peace Science, (17)

Montenegro, L. (2002) The Re-Appraisal of the Cebu South Reclamation Project:
An Ecological Economics Approach. Unpublished M.A. thesis. University of San
Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines.