Towards A Policy Framework for Local Governance Addressing Illegal Mining through Cooperative Strategies in Opol, Misamis Oriental

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Abstract

This study examined the development of a local governance policy framework for addressing unauthorized mineral extraction activities in the Municipality of Opol, Misamis Oriental. Unauthorized mineral extraction has emerged as a critical environmental and governance concern, contributing to land degradation, ecosystem disturbance, loss of biodiversity, water resource contamination, and socio-economic challenges within affected communities. These issues underscore the need for stronger institutional mechanisms, coordinated regulatory actions, and sustainable governance approaches to protect environmental resources while promoting community welfare. The study specifically assessed the effectiveness of existing local governance strategies, evaluated the environmental and community impacts of unauthorized extraction activities, and developed an integrated policy framework to strengthen regulatory compliance, stakeholder collaboration, and environmental stewardship. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, utilizing quantitative data gathered through structured survey questionnaires administered to selected respondents from local government units, environmental management offices, community organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other relevant stakeholders. Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were used to determine the relationships among governance practices, stakeholder engagement, environmental outcomes, and policy implementation effectiveness. The findings revealed that current governance initiatives are generally implemented at a moderate level, with notable challenges in enforcement consistency, resource availability, monitoring mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination. Results further indicated that effective stakeholder participation, transparent communication channels, and collaborative decision-making significantly contribute to improved environmental protection and the reduction of unauthorized extraction activities. Moreover, integrated planning processes and community-based monitoring systems were found to enhance institutional responsiveness, accountability, and sustainability outcomes. The study concludes that a comprehensive governance framework anchored on collaborative governance, adaptive policy implementation, strengthened institutional capacity, and active community participation is essential for addressing unauthorized mineral extraction and achieving sustainable resource management. The proposed framework provides practical guidance for policymakers, local government officials, environmental regulators, and community stakeholders in strengthening governance systems, promoting environmental sustainability, and fostering resilient local development. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on environmental governance by offering evidence-based strategies applicable to similar municipalities facing resource management and regulatory challenges.

Keywords: unauthorized mineral extraction, local governance, environmental sustainability, stakeholder participation, policy framework