

Gendered Work Relations Systems in Agriculture: Implications to Women's Participation, Good Governance and Sustainable Development

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In recent years, feminist epistemology has allowed philosophical discourses and literary writings to be written through women's eyes. Women have played important roles, most often unrecognized, in setting the texture, pace and values of social, cultural, political and economic development. Two field level experiences, specifically on sustainable farming and coastal resource management, show how rural women's participation and contribution have engendered work practices through the production systems they engage in. While part of the agricultural production process, women also responded to life circumstances considering crucial needs of their families, organizational responsibilities and community participation.

Keywords: work relations system, sustainable agriculture, rural women's participation in sustainable farming and coastal resource management

Introduction

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, rural women across Asia and the Pacific region play a critical role in supporting the three pillars of food security, namely food production, nutritional security and economic access to available food (FAO, 2005).

In most Asian countries, women's labor contributes to household income. For instance, more than 50% of working women in the Philippines are engaged in agriculture. In mountainous Yunnan province of China, women perform 80% of agricultural work, specifically cultivation, crop management, harvesting and marketing. Younger and middle-aged women are engaged in agriculture and forestry activities, such as collecting fuel wood, non-timber products and pine leaves for barn yard manure. In Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, women contribute half the total labor input in rice production. In India and Bangladesh, women perform as much as 80% of the work in agriculture (FAO, 2005).

The roles of men and women in the farm vary depending on the agricultural production system, the area's agro-ecological conditions and the extent of productive work each of them performs. Women, however, have to bear the dual responsibilities in the farm and the home. In recent years, women's work in rural areas has become more difficult and time-consuming due to effects of ecological degradation and climate change, male out-migration, and changing household roles.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2005) cites that women have active roles in farming, livestock production, forest and water resource use, inland fisheries, food processing, trading and marketing of agricultural products. They transplant seedlings and perform weeding and post-harvest activities. Traditionally, women stored, managed and decided which variety of seeds would be planted for the next cropping season. Despite women's contributions to household income, however, their labor is unvalued, underestimated, unrecognized and unpaid.

In fishing communities, while it is the men who primarily go out to fish, there are times when women go fishing with them. The women also perform shore-based tasks such as fixing fishnets and tools, vending, fish drying, fish processing, fish-shrimp fry collection, fish marketing, fish culture in ponds, cages, pens, and hatchery, preservation, handling, and packing. Despite these, women in coastal areas get very minimal income. This partly explains why they have poor health, poor nutrition, low productivity, low level of education, and low community

participation (Conlu, 1994). They have least access to basic services and support in production and technology. These are also the findings of the International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM now known as WorldFish Center) from two international symposia held in Chiang Mai (1998) and Kaoshiung (2001).

At the macro level, this ‘invisibility’ of women in farming and fishing production systems means the exclusion of women in the overall national planning.

This article highlights women’s roles and contributions in farming and fishing, which are categorized as hidden and unpaid. The first section provides a general introduction on how women fare in world production, particularly in farming and fishing in selected Asian countries. This is followed by two case studies of organized women in the provinces of Nueva Ecija and Bataan which feature degrees and levels of rural women’s participation in farming and fishing, the strategies and approaches they used to contribute to family income, and their community engagements through membership in people’s organizations, local government bodies and local development councils. The last section provides analysis and conclusions from a feminist perspective on the work relations system in agriculture.

Review of Related Literature

The review of literature includes relevant and related topics on the following: work relations system and women’s work; sustainable agriculture and sustainable development; people’s participation; and, good governance.

Work Relations System and Women’s Work

Work relations system involves types of work relations emanating from a certain type of work one or more people are engaged in. This is defined by the means of production and ownership of these means of production. This has been clearly and historically established in the works of Marx and Engels (Marx & Engels, 1846).

Farming and fishing are common forms of natural resource utilization for food production and survival. Eviota (1992) defines these as work where processes re-shape and transform resources and materials to become useful and productive. She further distinguishes between productive work and reproductive work. In a market economy, productive work has monetary value. This happens when one works for an employer or is self-employed, and produces output to be sold in the market. Reproductive work, on the other hand, refers to home-based activities such as house cleaning, cooking, washing, child bearing and child care.

Eviota (1992) emphasizes that both productive and reproductive work are part of the process of 'survival and renewal'. Productive work is done to fulfill people's basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing while reproductive work produces and maintains the next generation of humanity. Reproductive work does not simply aim to populate but to develop people to become useful members of society.

During the primitive communal era, assignment of tasks between men and women was flexible and their work contributions were equitably recognized. For instance, men hunted while women foraged for food, but sometimes women hunted with men when conditions allowed them, such as when they were not pregnant and had no small children to attend to. At the same time, agricultural production developed as women enhanced domestic work around their abode; e.g., planting crops for food consumption and eventually processing them for future use (Eviota, 1992).

Productive and reproductive work were both done within the household mostly as kin-based group effort, marked by the 'unity of production and consumption'. What was produced was consumed by the members of the kin; surplus food was exchanged with other kin groups for other needs such as tools or clothing.

As surplus continued to expand, gender division of labor became emphasized. The difference in men's and women's skills became distinct; and because men held the tools (means of production), there arose the birthright over whatever is produced out of such tools (Eviota, 1992).

Exchange of surplus developed into trading, led by merchants who also created wealth beyond the cost of production. This wealth became the commercial or productive capital that allowed merchants to produce for further monetary profit. The concept of work thus evolved from producing for immediate basic needs to producing for the market (Eviota, 1992).

Nowadays, agricultural production is still a family affair. However, with agricultural land owned by a few, many farmers are left with no land to work on. Many have become farm workers living on wages. In traditional farming systems, farmers directly till the land while farm workers help in peripheral tasks apart from actual tilling and harvesting. Family members, mostly women and children, are unpaid farm workers. In this setup, women and children become extensions of men's labor in the farm, with work contributions unaccounted for in the country's National Income Accounts.

Agriculture continues to be the backbone of a developing economy like the Philippines. Rural women contribute in different aspects of farm work. Table 1 below shows female-male contributions in rice production. Notice that women's work can be found in the 'Both' column but is not indicated in the 'Female' column. This connotes female contributions as invisible and unrecognized. Note that women's sole function of 'food preparation' and responsibility in 'accessing capital' for farm production are included in this table.

Table 1: Gender division of labour in rice production

Farm Activities	Female	Male	Both
Land preparation		x	
Seedbed preparation		x	
Ploughing			x
Harrowing			x
Leveling		x	
Care of seedlings		x	
Pulling and bundling of seedlings			x
Planting/Transplanting			x
Irrigation			x
Care of irrigation canal		x	
Care of crops			x
Mechanical weeding			x
Manual weeding			x
Fertilizer application			x
Spraying			x
Picking of snails			x
Harvesting			x
Threshing			x
Hauling			x
Drying			x
Other farm activities			x
Food preparation	x		
Accessing capital	x		

Source: Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, 2004 (cited in FAO Fact Sheet Philippines)

Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Development

Sustainable agriculture aims to attain environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. A broad expanse of discourse has covered some philosophies, policies and practices contributing to reach these goals. Simply put, sustainable agriculture offers innovative and economically viable agricultural practices which consider usage of resources without compromising the needs of future generations. In essence, it is likened to giving primary importance to stewardship to enhance and maintain human and natural resources. Sustainable agriculture also incorporates the systems perspective, i.e., emanating from individual farming activities and its impact on communities specifically the living conditions of the people in the present and succeeding generations (Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform, 2010).

During the 1970s in the Philippines, chemical farming was introduced through the Green Revolution program under the Marcos regime. Twenty years of farming heavily fed with chemicals and insecticides ensued. Years later, agricultural scientists realized the downside of chemical-dependent farming. Chemical solutions sprayed on crops depleted the soil nutrients and made farm insects and pests more resistant to these chemicals, pushing farmers to increase dosages of pesticides and fertilizers. As a result, farmers ended up in debt and remained poor (Ciencia, 2007).

Based on personal observations and assessments of the author's previous engagements with non-government organizations engaged in rural development (such as sustainable agriculture projects of Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement or PRRM and Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan or PKKK), some NGOs opted for organic agriculture as a more environment-friendly alternative and vigilantly engaged the State to practice it. Only the present administration has openly and seriously patronized organic agriculture through the Department of Agriculture (DA), together with the campaign to consume local root crops and unpolished rice, as healthier and cheaper rice complement.

Organic agriculture is the production of food and fiber without using synthetic chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or genetically modified organisms. It uses living, healthy soil and relies on natural processes and cycles for managing pests, diseases, weeds and crop nutrition. It uses techniques such as crop rotation, green manure, compost, and biological pest control. These farming methods have been recognized, regulated, and enforced internationally with standards set by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation, and science to benefit the environment and attain a good quality of life for all involved. It is based on the principles of health, ecology, fairness, and care (IFOAM, 2008).

Sustainable development works hand in hand with sustainable agriculture. It is development which 'meets the present needs of the people without compromising the ability of the next generation to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Sustainability is anchored on the following principles: current environmental resources are used within its carrying capacity and in consideration of the succeeding generations; and, interconnectedness of all living things and inter-generationality of life (Palin, 2013).

Across time, gender and women's roles have been located within the changing milieu of our natural resource ecology, economic distortions, and the political marginalization of the less privileged. Women's work and roles can be found in 'gendered property rights' on resources like land and water; 'gender dynamics in local participation in development programs and community institutions'; the 'politics of collective action, mobility and migration', 'environmental indigenous familiarity and knowledge', 'local history', and 'policy debates'. These varied themes and thoughts view gender as relational; that is, involving the interaction of men and women, constructed by norms and institutions, but challenging the position that gender is relevant only within the households. These recent discourses on gender, environment and development (GED) opened up new pathways for analyzing and applying interventions to gender and development programs (Resurreccion and Elmhirst, 2008, p.8).

People's Participation and Good Governance

People's participation can very well be linked with empowerment of the grassroots, which can lead to democratic governance. In present development parlance, this has been referred to as 'civil society participation in governance'.

In the Philippines, highlights of historical stories behind people's participation date back to the Spanish colonization of the Philippines in 1521. The people's struggles against Spain's domination culminated in the 1896 revolution won by the Katipuneros in 1898. This was heralded as the first anti-colonial uprising in Asia (The Philippine History Site, n.d.). Moving fast forward, another so-called Philippine 1986 revolution took place, overthrowing the 20-year Marcos regime in the country.

Many important historical events took place from 1896 to 1986. This section highlights the more relevant ones which enhanced present-day concepts of people's participation, people empowerment, and good governance in the context of Philippine development. To give people's participation a local taste and due appropriation, this paper would like to associate it with the PRRM's history of organizing and mobilizing people and resources in its rural reconstruction work.

Serrano (1989) cites that the roots of rural reconstruction can be traced in Europe during the First World War when Dr. Y. C. Yen, a Chinese scholar, launched a massive education program for the hapless Chinese coolies who worked in the warfronts to dig trenches and build fortifications. He saw that literacy and social awareness play crucial roles in development processes and transformation; this endeavour became the international mass education movement (IMEM). In 1952, Dr. Yen found the Philippine situation as a fitting place to launch a nationalist movement amidst its long-standing agrarian problem. Volunteers from different universities and colleges mostly in Manila were given intensive training on community organizing, resource mobilization, and development, particularly in the four-fold approach on how to combat illiteracy, poverty, ill health, and civic inertia.

Dr. Yen, together with leading Filipino nationalist business people, civil libertarians, and committed student volunteers, continued to extend this mass education campaign in the Philippines to raise functional literacy level, increase plant and animal production, organize buying clubs, have primary health care more accessible, build toilets, organize sectoral formation of men, women and youth, and set model families and communities to emulate rural improvement achievements. Barrio council formations of self-governing political units became one big achievement showcasing democratic governance from the grassroots (Serrano, 1989).

These experiences across various political administrations have not been sustainable enough to materialize into what PRRM dreamt of initially. As Serrano (1989) would say, 'sustainability of micro level development is impossible without a supportive development climate at the macro level'.

PRRM, a struggling NGO in the 1980s, continued with the four-fold approach mission introduced by Dr. Yen in rural reconstruction: education to combat illiteracy; livelihood to combat poverty; health to combat disease; and, self-governance to combat civic inertia. In 1986, a fifth element was added - the protection and regeneration of the environment, which "enfolded" the 4-fold approach (Dela Torre, 2012).

Another milestone PRRM can claim was its demonstration of how certain villagers can select their own public officials through a system of local governance in the middle of the 1950s. The Philippine Congress then enacted two laws leading to the establishment of elective village councils, strengthening them as the voice of local villagers. This is now the local Barangay Council, supposed to contribute to grassroots democratic processes, where people can directly participate and voice out their sentiments to participate in governance (Dela Torre, 2012).

Women's participation and gender relations

Gender relations can be defined by the extent of women's participation in community activities where men are present (O'Reilly, 2008). For example,

women involved in a drinking water supply scheme may be able to extend gendered roles in the management, operations, and payment of water usage in the village. Initially, women might find themselves in the margins, but once inside the decision-making body, they could make a niche to be part of the project management and evaluating team. In short, women will always be amidst gendered power relations, where they can be initially assigned 'stereotyped for-women positions', especially in a mixed male-female organization. Illo's study (1992) has validated this, particularly in mixed organizations. The struggle to get in and the struggle to get to the top are difficult realities for women.

However, participation can be tyrannical if framed in an unjustified exercise of power (O'Reilly, 2008). What does participation mean to women project participants? How does this form of participation define their roles inside the organization? What contributes to this positionality of women participating? O'Reilly (2008) shares that "women create fluid meanings and engage in shifting practices of participation that enrich the multi-layered dynamics in which they are embedded" (p. 197).

Hence, women's participation is not meant just for inclusive project implementation but also to promote good governance. A study by Biyinzika (n.d.) cites the important role of women in monitoring village projects to ensure efficient implementation, monitor corruption, and promote sustainability. This, however, entails strengthening women's capacity to understand project engagement and management, starting from planning, implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.

Conceptual Framework

The framework in Fig. 1 shows a sexual division of labor featuring a male-female divide in terms of their behavior, physical, emotional and psychological disposition. Biological differences create a natural and inevitable identification and stereotyping of capacities, like 'work for men' and 'work for women', apart from role expectations. On the other hand, these differences also serve to justify social constructs which align and box men and women to certain functions and behaviors.

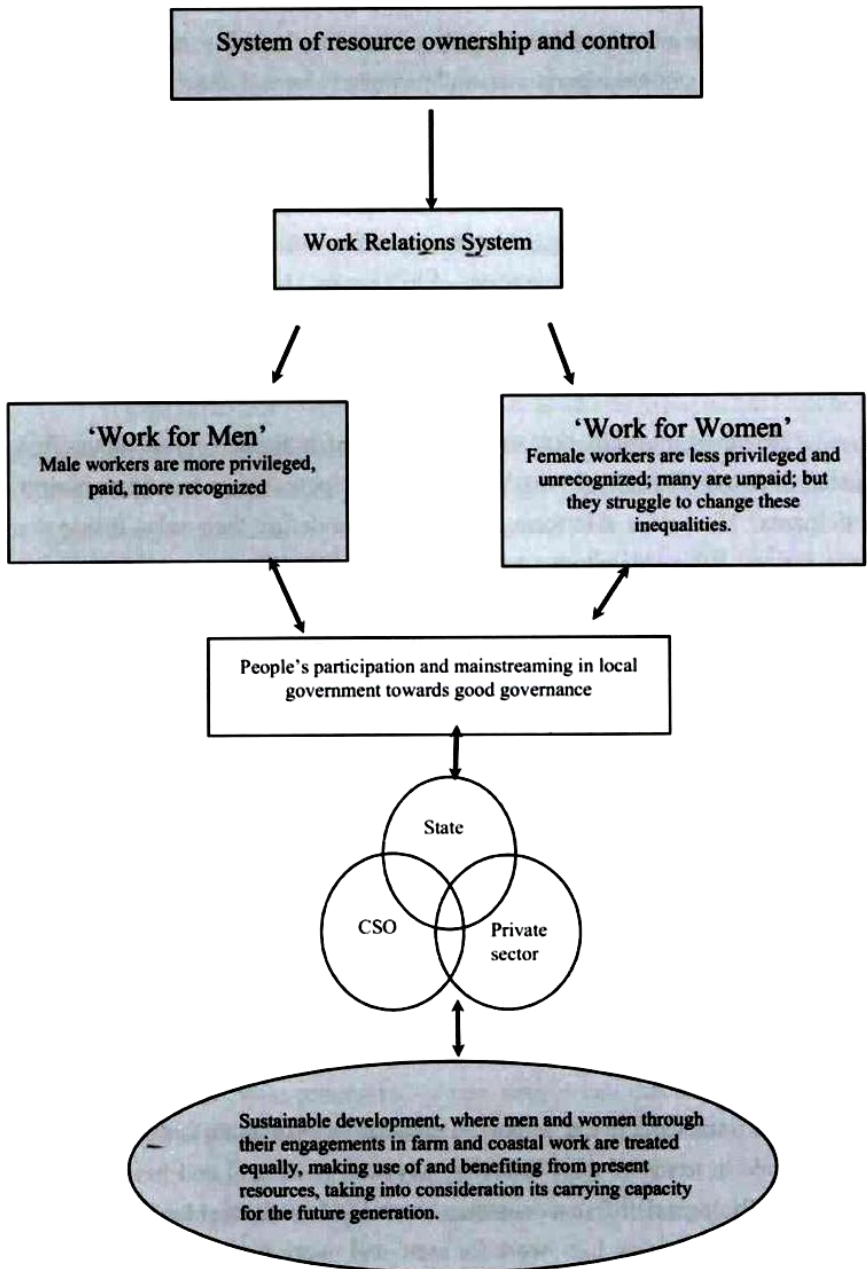


Fig. 1. Multi-resource and stakeholders' engagements for sustainable development

In any stage of society, whether primitive communal slave society feudalism, mercantilism or pre-capitalism, capitalism or socialism, relations between women and men are not equal (Eviota, 1992). The differences in social relations manifest in work roles and job descriptions, including where reproductive roles should be lodged. It is crucial to understand that as societies chronologically evolved, women's work was valued less and their work relations became more peripheral and secondary to those of men, to a point where women's reproductive work has been marginalized, undermined, most often unrecognized, making women sans authority. In other words, the increase in male-female divide also increasingly denied women their rights and contributions.

The framework further shows that with venues for participation, women were able to work with men and other women in many forms of engagements. Women's position in the community was also defined by the extent of their participation. Based on the two cases, participation was done through engagements with their own organized groups, the local government units (LGUs and the State), the private sector where they were either related through employment or in community relation activities, and other civil society organizations as their networks.

Finally, the framework states that the triadic spheres (State, CSOs and the private sector) are major and necessary actors through which people's participation can thrive. Well-balanced dynamics among the three spheres inside the community where women and men participate and from which they equitably benefit from, can provide the path to a sustainable future for all. This will be a non-linear process of growth considering the complexities in community multi-sectoral engagements, but can be set as a guiding framework.

Methodology

This paper used the critical theory of interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Critical research is understood in the context of empowering individuals to inquire. Inquiry becomes the tool to explore and expose inequality, injustice or exploitation. To gather data, field office managers were interviewed and project

reports and documents were reviewed. These project reports were gathered regularly from PRRM project monitoring and evaluation processes, using field work visits, interviews, training assessments, and evaluation reports.

Case studies of organized women in Nueva Ecija and Bataan

Nueva Ecija: Laying the Ground for Farmer Empowerment through Organic Farming and Social Enterprise

The dismal effects of the Green Revolution program of the 1970s far outweighed its benefits (IFPRI, 2002). For one, it led to more expensive farm inputs since the rice varieties promoted by the program were all highly dependent on agro-chemicals which caused the degradation of the ecosystem, resulting in deteriorating soil productivity and groundwater contamination.

As an intervention, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) introduced the Low External Input Rice Production (LEIRP) technology in 1992 to replace the chemical-dependent rice production pattern (Refer to Appendix 1 for PRRM's vision and mission statements). Seven farmers from the towns of Lupao, Muñoz, and Guimba in Nueva Ecija applied LEIRP in a 1.75 hectare farm in July 1992. One of these farmers was Nanay Ligaya. Nanay Ligaya, despite being the lone woman, joined the men to learn the new technology.

The first three croppings brought low yields. Initial yield averaged only 60 cavans per hectare compared to 100 cavans when chemicals were used. Despite this drawback, they continued organic farming. This natural decline in harvest was expected since the soil was adjusting from chemical to organic fertilizers. More trials and replications were pursued as the number of farmers, including women, also increased. Continuous orientation and training were given to enlighten farmers on the advantages of organic farming.

On the fourth cropping season, yields started to increase and the harvest became almost at par with chemical-based farms. TRVs (traditional rice

varieties) consumed less fertilizers compared to HYVs (hybrid varieties), making TRVs ideal for rice production. As a result, they had significant savings. For Nanay Ligaya, this meant additional food on the table. One of the reasons Nanay Ligaya stayed on was that unlike chemical farming, which caused illnesses such as urinary tract infections (UTI), organic farming brought marked improvement in their health.

In April 1993, 34 additional farmers were trained. Eventually, 64 organic farm cooperators formed the Kalipunan ng mga Magbubukid para sa Likas-Kayang Pananakahan sa Hilagang Nueva Ecija (KALIKASAN-NE).

To learn more of the technology, KALIKASAN-NE participated in a collaborative research with the British Council Center for Research and Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture from 1995-1999. The research experimented on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA), an agricultural production system that uses local resources and natural ecological processes with minimal external inputs of seeds, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

DALUYONG (Daluyan at Ugnayan ng Organisasyong Pangkababaihan), a PRRM-organized women's organization, participated in LEIRP training and experiments. The participation of DALUYONG members in organic farming as a promotion of sustainable agriculture did not end in learning LEIRP. As a form of appreciation of their contributions as women, and to raise men's sensitivity and responsiveness to these contributions, a gender sensitivity module was also developed for men and women called Couples for GAD (gender and development). This training did not only change their mindsets and attitudes towards each other but also facilitated the organizing of family models of community leaders-gender sentinels in the community to monitor domestic violence.

By 1995, KALIKASAN-NE had 200 members from 17 barangays. To enhance its income-generating operation, Kalikasan-NE needed a support system to cover area or membership expansion, provide farm inputs, engage in alternative

trading and marketing activities, and handle crop production loan releases and monitoring. Women farmers saw that membership in the cooperative provided access to farm production inputs and technology.

Women participants in the program encountered difficulties, such as multiple burden, which they eventually learned to discuss with their spouses, and lack of food and allowance provisions for their children every time they had to leave for training. However, as women increasingly engaged in non-farm income-generating activities like marketing farm products and micro-lending, they were able to provide for additional domestic expenses.

Outcomes Highlighting Women's Participation

Presentation of major outcomes of the above-mentioned programs will be limited to two fields, specifically on farm production (increased productivity and lower cost outlay, crop diversification, improved soil, enhanced biodiversity, and enhanced traditional farm practices) and gender relations (increased women's active participation, consultation and decision-making, access and control, and having improved food security, health and nutrition).

Increased productivity and lower cost outlay. Organic inputs were found to be more cost effective and led to higher income for farmers. A woman-farmer was able to reduce her fertilizer usage from 46 to 12 bags and had stopped using pesticides. Farmers no longer borrowed from usurers. KOOL-NE (Kooperatibang Likas-Kaya ng Nueva Ecija or Sustainable Cooperative of Nueva Ecija), provided soft loans for farm inputs. KOOL-NE also handled rice trading and offered premium prices for organic rice.

Crop diversification. LEIRP helped women farmers maximize the use of their farm lots through crop diversification, especially when water is scarce. Diversified integrated farming system (DIFS) was used in the production of onion, bitter gourd, garlic, tomato, and other vegetables. They also raised poultry, tended fishponds, and grew fruit trees and herbal plants for family

and community use. They used animal wastes as fertilizers and recycled their resources.

Improved soil. There had been a marked improvement in the quality of soil. Chemical use had been reduced. Farmers used chicken manure, rice straw, and carbonized rice hull for fertilizer.

Enhanced biodiversity. In lieu of pesticides the farmers started to use botanicals such as chili and madre de cacao. Carbonized rice hull was used to control the population of golden snails. There was a noticeable increase in friendly insects like dragonflies, and spiders in the rice fields, as well as an increase in the population of edible snails, frogs, and fishes in the fishpond.

Enhanced traditional farm practices. Women farmers were encouraged to do their own selection of seeds, usually using traditional improved varieties suited to the area. Another woman-farmer learned to select seeds and got rid of impurities. In fact, most of the women-farmers are now selecting their own seeds.

Through the LEIRP technology, traditional farming knowledge and practices to control bugs were harnessed such as the use of chili and laundry soap, neem, and bitter gourd. Chicken manure was used for composting. Some women-farmers continued to practice traditional rituals like planting during full moon and offering food.

Increased women's active participation. There had been an increase in women's participation in rice farming. The technology benefited female household-headed families by involving them in activities that entail direct farm management such as land preparation and seed selection. Women farmers decided what variety of seeds was applicable for the planting season. This decision-making capacity made women more confident.

Consultation and decision-making. Because of direct participation, decision making became a mutual process between husband and wife. Women

augmented the family income while participating in community activities. With the series of gender sensitive trainings, husbands gradually learned to share in housework. Incidence of domestic abuse declined. Graduates of this training-seminar became volunteer gender sentinels in their respective barangays.

Access and control. In general, the women-farmers were able to gain access and control of their farm resources and learned appropriate technologies advantageous to both health and the environment.

Improved food security, health, nutrition. Quality of life improved resulting from food security in the household, better food nutritional value sans chemical contamination, and better taste compared to chemically-treated rice. Despite lower yield from organic rice farming, income still increased because production outlay was reduced. Other sources of food nutrients came from vegetables planted by women-farmers in their farm and backyard gardens. The switch to organic fertilizer also provided a healthier work environment to those engaged in farming.

The Social Enterprise Aspect: Rural financing, trading, marketing and networking

Women members of KALIKASAN-NE reached 155 in 2005. This was a milestone for women-farmers engaged in organic farming. KALIKASAN Rural Women, an all-women's group engaged in micro-lending, trading and marketing, was organized. As part of its expansion, the group got an initial fund of P100,000.00 from People to People, a Japanese funding agency, which they used as seed capital.

The micro-lending network reached different barangays, broadening women's access to financing for small traders. KALIKASAN women branched out into Sapa ng Kaban (Samahang Pangkaunlaran ng Kababaihan ng Bantug), Samahang Magsasaka ng San Isidro, and Palestina Organic Farmers Association (POFA). They were all able to get grants from People to People for micro-lending purposes.

KALIKASAN-NE now has 116 female and 229 male members. KALIKASAN-NE decided to concentrate its efforts in six lowland municipalities of San Jose City, Lupao, Science City of Muñoz, Guimba, Talavera and Sto. Domingo. While doing organic farming, the six municipalities are into year-round planting of cash crops like onions, varieties of vegetables and animal raising (chicken, ducks, pigs and goat). Some members have established tilapia fishponds.

In the past two years, KALIKASAN-NE heightened its advocacy work, engaging the local government of Nueva Ecija to mainstream rural development efforts into the provincial agricultural program. Social Watch Philippines, a national non-government monitoring body, initiated monitoring work to make sure local government budgetary allocations are spent accordingly. PRRM, in coordination with Social Watch, conducted a series of meetings and orientation workshops to introduce 'Alternative Budgeting', part of which is maximizing the use of the 5% GAD budget.

In 2013, they were able to tap an allotment of P300,000.00 for microfinance projects for the Barangay Health Workers (BHW) Association at the municipal level. Other women's groups like Sapa ng Kaban, Samahang Magsasaka ng San Isidro, and POFA, are still intact as active members of the KOOL-NE. These groups have become investors/stakeholders in the cooperative where some of their leaders sit as board of directors.

In Guimba, 300 BHWs have formed their own cooperative as well. They implemented a savings and loan project to augment their income. The BHW cooperative and other organizations were able to tap P3 million from the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) through the government's bottom-up budgeting whereby civil society organizations were encouraged to actively participate in planning and budgeting.

There are 11 municipalities identified to be part of the bottom-up budgeting in Nueva Ecija. PRRM operates in four of these areas namely Guimba, Aliaga, Muñoz, and Lupao. Five organizations are likewise included namely

KALIKASAN-NE, Tampak Likas Kayang Magsasaka (TALIMA), Samahang Pangkaunalaran ng Kababaihan ng Bantug (SAPA NG KABAN), Bukluran ng Magsasaka para sa Likas Kayang Pag-unlad (BUMALIKAT), and Samahan ng Likas kayang Magsasaka ng Maturanoc (SALIKAMI).

Part of advocacy efforts in Nueva Ecija is mainstreaming sustainable agriculture in the Municipal Development Plan of Guimba. The people's organizations plan to push for its institutionalization through a municipal ordinance. This advocacy effort became easier with the Organikong Palayan program of the PRRM funded by the Department of Agriculture. A total of 1,400 farmers from different organizations are part of this program.

The women farmers of Nueva Ecija are likewise involved in advocacy for programs on reproductive health (RH) and violence against women and children (VAWC). Provincial level engagements are led by the Nueva Ecija Women Leaders Coalition (NEWLAC) composed of SARILAYA-NE, KABAPA-NE and KALIKASAN-NE Women. It is accredited with the Area-Based Standard Network (ABS-NET) of the Provincial Social Welfare Development Office (PSWD). Their focus now is gender responsive governance.

On the whole, Nueva Ecija women organizing had been successful, but not without difficulties in breaking cultural barriers within the households, organizations, community and even among and within themselves as rural women. Their participation as stakeholders of KOOL-NE is a remarkable accomplishment. KOOL-NE is now considered the third best producer of quality organic rice in Luzon. As part of PRRM's goal for a sustainable education, a pool of key farmer-leaders are now faculty members of PRRM's Conrado Benitez Institute for Sustainability (CBIS), teaching practical approaches in organic farming and other sustainable farming technologies. CBIS is a school established by PRRM, following 'education for sustainability' framework and practicing the learn-teach-learn approach, while developing its home-grown community leaders to become CBIS teachers as well.

Bataan: Enhancing Livelihood and Health Provisions for the People of Orion

Efforts to engender women's participation in Bataan began with family health concerns. PRRM launched the Community-Based Health Program (CBHP) as a special project. Parallel to CBHP, the Rural District Democratization Program (RDDP), which evolved into SRDDP (Sustainable Rural District Democratization Program), was implemented and had its pilot intervention in 1988. SRDDP paid particular attention to women in the municipalities of Orion, Samal, Orani, Dinalupihan, and Morong. Ten to fifteen women core group members were provided thorough orientation on the program.

The Road to Self-Identity

The SRDDP components included community organizing, leadership formation, and livelihood and health programs. Community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM) was also integrated. When the program started, small fishers put up local patrol units to prevent commercial fishing boats from entering their municipal waters. The local patrol is an off-shoot of the *Bantay Dagat*, a community-based coast guard, monitoring illegal fishing practices.

Noticeable was the endemic poverty in the area, poor health services, and limited sources of livelihood. The best intervention then was to organize the fisherfolk, train them on situation analysis, organizational management, leadership, savings and credit management, and livelihood programs.

Women were organized through the community-based health program. They were given skills training on primary health care (PHC) which helped them observe and assess their household and community health status. Eventually they were able to form their own village health group (Barangay Health Committee).

Why did the program decide to organize women for this project? Culturally, health care at home is second nature to women. In coastal communities of Bataan, men often have set their minds on their role as fishers. To create a

different entry for women participation that is culturally acceptable, the community-based health program was introduced.

Women's new role as community health workers (CHWs) gave them a sense of fulfillment. They earned the respect and recognition of their community. Barangay health workers, however, were not too pleased. They saw the CHWs as competitors for the recognition by the local government. However, the CHWs were able to prove themselves and some were even appointed to serve as BHWs in their respective communities.

Women as Change Agents

Ka Lori and Ka Marieta were two of the women leaders in Bataan. They organized other fishers' wives in Bataan and were at the forefront of community based health programs. Their participation was instrumental in enhancing the kind of services available to their respective communities. In the 1990s, social enterprise was introduced and integrated in the CBHP framework. CHWs popularized the use of herbal medicine either as substitute to non-prescription medicine or as a primary medicinal resource. Plots were devoted to medicinal plants with CHWs acting as community herbalists.

Women members who ran and won in local elections passed resolutions and allotted funds to projects that advanced quality health. Husbands were encouraged to participate in community health programs. In Gugo, Samal, family counseling was done to encourage males to undergo non-scalpel vasectomy.

Livelihood as Support Mechanism

By 1991, as part of the long-term plan of rural district democratization, PRRM saw the need to extend its program scale for the following aims: to develop the local economy in response to income generation and poverty eradication; to institutionalize the system of basic social services provision by tapping local government resources and enhancing their participation; and, to highlight local

issues and policy changes through advocacy work and cooperation among State and non-State actors in the community.

In 1992, red tide plagued the fishing grounds of the community and adversely affected income of the fisherfolks. This compelled fisherfolks to incorporate coastal resource management into the program. Women leaders engaged in health care came together to help provide additional sources of income. Ka Lori led the formation of the Barangay Lati Unified Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BLUMPC). They started with a P500.00 capital raised from P2.00 initial contribution from members. They bought sacks of charcoal, repacked and sold them. The earnings were used to buy more merchandise like rice, canned goods, soap, biscuits, and soda. Some extended non-monetary support such as providing a space for a small warehouse, and donating roofing and other materials.

In the same year, a municipal fisherfolk federation called the Samahan at Ugnayan sa Pampangisdaan ng Orion (SUGPO) was formed from among village-level organizations. SUGPO was instrumental in the rapid consolidation of fishers towards CRM implementation and the protection of natural resources. BLUMPC is one of SUGPO's 12 affiliates.

As SUGPO grew to become an established federation of environmental advocates in coastal Bataan, BLUMPC also grew as a social enterprise. Most of its clients were women. The women's micro-finance project helped augment family income. Members pooled their financial resources to start a small business, e.g. producing mats and bags from rugs. The small cooperative store eventually grew into a micro-financing entity which lent a maximum of P5,000.00 for fish processing enterprises such as smoked fish, bagoong-making, raising mussels, and even doormat-making. These served as alternative sources of income during lean season.

To promote environmental awareness and protection, SUGPO embarked on ecological regeneration activities, extensive police work against illegal commercial fishing, and co-management of communal properties. Members installed and formed environment protection devices such as mangrove

rehabilitation areas, a marine sanctuary, and artificial reefs which served as breeding ground for fishes.

Participation in Local Governance

Part of empowering the marginal sector is awareness-raising and participation in community development activities. These efforts paved the way for gendered voices to be heard, influence policies, and eventually instigate change. Empirical evidences from PRRM programs for women have shown women's economic and political participation have come second nature once empowered in the areas of livelihoods, natural resource management, implementing development programs and affecting policies. For example, after a series of training on sustainable development, organic agriculture, cooperatives development, alternative trading, marketing and micro-financing, some women leaders became more confident to engage the local government and to run for office in local elections. They have learned the ways of local legislative procedures, i.e., proposing new ordinances or policies to facilitate changes in the community.

Women actively participated in local politics. They became part of the Bataan NGO-PO Network, a province-wide initiative to prompt the provincial government to pass and implement ordinances that protect and conserve the local ecosystem. They participated in Bataan's pawikan conservation project (with financial support from UNDP), mangrove planting, establishing fish nurseries, and lobbying for local ordinances.

Some women leaders ran for public office as barangay captain and kagawad. Those who won (23 seats in the barangay council and 2 seats as barangay captain) advocated sustainable development programs in the province. Ordinances were passed protecting municipal waters from illegal and destructive fishing methods, delineating municipal waters to protect fishing space for small fishers, and prohibit illegal use of dynamites, cyanide, and small meshed nets. After three years of rehabilitation, critically endangered fish species were recovered. The project was such a success it was cited among the top ten best sustainable development practices in 1997.

Women organizations continued the enhancement of their community health activities. In 2001, they formed the Samahang Pangkalusugan at Kaunlaran ng Orion (SPKO) whose membership grew from 234 to 1,200 in a span of 11 years. SPKO is now a member of the Municipal Development Council. Part of its recent accomplishments was the pre-election assessment of candidates for governor, mayor and representatives in Congress. All their candidates won the seats. A post-election assessment was also done to manage the action plan for the winners.

SPKO is active in the Reproductive Health and anti-Violence Against Women and Children advocacy. They continue to conduct training-orientation, basic leadership training among community women leaders, municipal leaders and leaders from the Climate Change / Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. They coordinated with the local Department of Health where they recently participated in the nutrition month as a regular provincial health program.

SPKO recently campaigned for a local candidate where they helped set the strategic agenda to pass the Gender Code of Bataan. The candidate won; hence, they now have an ally sitting in the LGU post.

Currently, PRRM continues to expand its women organizing work not only in Nueva Ecija and Bataan, but also in Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Cavite, Quezon, Marinduque, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Negros Oriental, Camiguin, and North Cotabato provinces.

Highlighting Work Relations System in Agriculture: Analysis and Conclusion

Agricultural work relations system depends on the system of land/resource access and ownership, farm labor employment, available technologies, as well as marketing and trading practices. The production inputs such as land, farm labor, fertilizers (whether organic or non-organic), technologies, and environment can affect work relations.

Farming is seasonal. Typically, farmers look for off-farm work during the lull to augment income. They work as hired farm workers. This seasonality makes it difficult to monitor the actual number of farmers or farm workers and their income. This also makes work relations more complicated, in terms of whom they work for and how power relation is defined in each form of relationship.

Non-farm work has increased in recent years, leading farmers to shift from agriculture to services such as out-migration work for both men and women. This seems to suggest that the returns on non-farm work are higher than farm work. With men-farmers leaving to work abroad, women increasingly engage in farm work, and/or in micro-entrepreneurial activities. In other words, women in rural areas may actually exhibit a higher level of productivity than the national income accounts reflect.

Applying the conceptual framework to the cases, despite the lack in resources for production, women farmers learned a new technology (LEIRP) and gradually shifted to a more sustainable form of farm production. Organic farming allowed for the increased participation of more women. Despite the socio-economic and political gaps rural women find themselves in, they continue to find ways to be able to participate and contribute to family needs and community development

The major actors in the community, the state, civil society and private sector can serve to empower women to assert and advocate for concerns which can eventually change their social position in the community or society.

In conclusion, the cases show that women's work contributions can be as valuable as men's. Women have carved their own niches and have become effective partners in both productive and reproductive labor. The skills that women have developed through their dual roles as housewives and paid workers are the very skills that facilitate their community involvement.

In fishing communities, women engage in what is perceived to be mere peripheral tasks such as preparing fishing gears and fish processing. But by enhancing other health-related skills, not only were they able to redefine their roles in their respective communities, they were also able to participate directly in policymaking. Enhancing women's skills in sustainable farm technologies, health services, local governance, and household decision making are all part of what the community regards as essential to ensure food security, create a better environment, and enrich the quality of life.

These cases remain to be works in progress. However, they illustrate adequately that it is possible to transform a culture that relegates women to the margins to one that prizes their role as development partners towards a more sustainable and equitable society.

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Appendix I

PHILIPPINE RURAL RECONSTRUCTION MOVEMENT (PRRM)

The Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement was founded in 1952. It traces its roots to China where, in the early 1900s, the rural reconstruction movement was born, inspired and led by Dr. Y. C. James Yen “Yen Yangchu”. PRRM, began as a small group of prominent Filipinos led by Dean Conrado Benitez of the University of the Philippines.

Over the past six decades, PRRM has made a number of major contributions to Philippine rural development. It pioneered local democracy in the country. PRRM was the first NGO to send its workers to the villages to implement its integrated, fourfold program of education, livelihood, health, and self-governance. PRRM pioneered the establishment of an elected barrio government. Today’s Barangay Council can be claimed by PRRM as one of its contributions to grassroots democracy.

Vision

PRRM envisions a world of equity and sustainability. The future is one where society is free of ignorance, poverty, disease, and powerlessness; and development takes place within the environment’s carrying capacity.

Mission

To enhance the capacity of rural communities in the planning, advocacy and implementation of sustainable development, through an integrated program of education, livelihood, health, habitat, environment, and self-governance.

Values

Justice and equity, Unity and peace, Nationalism, Volunteerism and bayanihan, Caring for the environment, Family-focus, Celebrating our culture

Source: www.prrm.org

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