



ISSN 0118-4768

CSWCD Development Journal

CSWCD PUBLICATIONS

Special Issue 2001

Pebbles in the Shoe:
*A Profile of Child Workers
in the Footwear Industry*
JOSEFINA M. ROLLE

**Panimulang Paglalarawan ng mga
Buhay ng mga Kababaihang Ayta
ng Botolan, Zambales**
MA. TERESA C. DOMINGUEZ

Bridging the Gap:
*A Development Framework for
Assisting Older Persons*
LETICIA SALVADOR-TOJOS, PH.D, RSW

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY

Copyright 2001 by the Research and Extension for Development Office, College of Social Work and Community Development (**REDO-CSWCD**), University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

This special issue of the CSWCD Development Journal is initiated by the Research and Extension for Development Office.

Subscribers are kindly requested to inform the REDO-Publications Desk of any changes of address or subscription cancellation.

REDO-CSWCD

University of the Philippines

Diliman, Quezon City

Tel: (632) 920-53-01 local 5871

Fax: (632) 929-8438

Email: cswcd@cswcd.upd.edu.ph

Website: www.upd.edu.ph

• • • • •
•
•
• **Dr. Angelito G. Manalili**

• *Dean*
•
•

• **Prof. Rosario S. del Rosario**

• **Dr. Sylvia H. Guerrero**

• **Dr. Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo**

• **Dr. Romeo C. Quieta**

• **Prof. Judy M. Taguiwalo**

• **Dr. Amaryllis T. Torres**

• *Readers*
•
•

• **Prof. Aleli B. Bawagan**

• **Prof. Lenore P. De La Cruz**

• **Prof. Lilly V. Mangubat**

• *Editorial Board*
•
•

• **Leah B. Angeles**

• *Production and Layout Editor*
•
•

• **Ma. Gichelle A. Cruz**

• *Production and Layout Assistant*
•

CSWCD Development Journal

Special Issue 2001

Contents

Foreword 2-3

Pebbles in the Shoe: *A Profile of Child Workers in the Footwear Industry* 4-16

JOSEFINA M. ROLLE

Introduction; The ILO-IPEC in the Footwear Industry;
The Research; Research Methodology; Survey Results
Guided Interviews and In-depth Discussions - In-School
Working Children & Out-of-school Working Children
Interpretation of Data; A Call to Action

Panimulang Paglalarawan ng mga Buhay ng mga Kababaihang Ayta ng Botolan, Zambales 17-32

MA. TERESA C. DOMINGUEZ

Mga Ayta: Paano Ba Sila Noon? Ang mga Kababaihang
Ayta Noon; Ang mga Kababaihang Ayta Ngayon;
Ang Pagpapalaki ng Lalaki at Babaeng Ayta; Buhay
Mag-asawa; Paglahok sa Gawaing Pangkaunlaran;
Pagninilay-nilay

Bridging the Gap: *A Development Framework for Assisting Older Persons* 33-49

LETICIA SALVADOR-TOJOS, PH.D, RSW

Introduction; Present Construction About Older Persons;
Filipinos' Regard for the Elderly as Reflected in Language
and Behavior; Who are the older Persons; The Older Persons'
Construction About their Situation; Framework for
Assisting Older Persons

Foreword

Aleli B. Bawagan

Muted and marginalized - words to describe grassroots sectors in Philippine society, but more so for these three groups - the working children, Aeta women in resettlement communities and the elderly. Even within the development community, the efforts towards understanding and alleviating their sorry situation still remain wanting. Prompting us to tell their stories in this particular issue of the CSWCD Development Journal.

Most of us encounter them daily - children working in the streets, vending sampaguita, hair accessories, cigarettes, or watch-your-car boys. At night, another group of working children ply the streets - the pimps, the prostituted children. But there's another group who is not as visible as those in the streets. These are the children who work in home-based micro-enterprises, engaging informal labor in the assembly process for various consumer items such as shell crafts, gift boxes, and footwear. The article by Ms. Josefina Rolle tells us the stories of children working in the shoe industry in Binan, Laguna. What types of tasks are given to them, for how much, and at what costs to their physical, emotional and psychological development? What dreams do they hold? What does the future have for them?

Another daily sight are the elderly in our midst, they could be our parents, grandparents, people who're still working beyond retirement age, whether this be at home or outside. The younger generation often take them for granted, perhaps because they are not contributing anymore to the family income, or they have become too slow for life's fast pace nowadays, eventually becoming a burden. Ms. Leticia Tojos relates to us the points of view of the elderly - how they see their present condition, their feelings about how they are treated by family and the public, and their plans to still contribute in whatever way to society. Of particular focus is a proposed framework for formulating development programs with the elderly.

Ms. Ma. Teresa Dominguez gives us a glimpse of the life of the Aeta woman in a resettlement area in Zambales, a sector rarely seen by most urbanites. In previous years, we encounter them begging in the streets of Metro Manila during the Christmas holidays. In the spirit of giving and sharing, some of us

drop coins into their waiting palms, at times offering also some of our old clothes, shoes, etc. At the end of the season, they go back to their villages, and we eventually forget them, until the next holidays. But the article reveals to us their lives, beyond this December ritual, focusing on the Aeta woman, who has experienced tremendous changes after being resettled in villages too distant from their previous abodes, not just physically but culturally and spiritually. How have they coped? How have they changed? How would the gender lens help us in seeing their world from their own eyes?

These three articles invite us to view the lives of the working children, the elderly and the Aeta women from a different light, a new angle. Perchance, more of us will listen to their voices.

ALELI B. BAWAGAN is an Assistant Professor of the College of Social Work and Community Development and currently the Director of the Research and Extension for Development Office.

Pebbles in the shoe: a profile of child workers in the footwear industry

Josefina M. Rolle

"Let us do what we can now, eliminate child labor, ... so that children today and in the future, can start to take back their childhood ." (Del Rosario and Bonga, 2000)

Introduction

Children should have entitlements to rights and privileges similar to those of adults. Their years spent as children are crucial years to their development towards adulthood. Unfortunately, children exposed to intensive labor early in life have been forced to be adults prematurely thus, depriving them from enjoying their childhood. Moreover, they have less chances of growing up to be healthy and trained adults because many drop out of school and are exposed to hazardous situations/conditions at work, among others.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989 specifically outlines how children should be treated. Many UN member states, including the Philippines, have ratified this Convention. Article 32 of the said Convention explicitly states the "right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to interfere with the child's education, or to be hazardous or harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development." Moreover, the Convention also asks for the States Parties to:

- a) "provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
- b) provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
- c) provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article." (Convention on the Rights of the Child, reprinted by UNICEF Manila October 1990)

Earlier, the International Labour Organisation Convention 138, also referred to as the Minimum Age Convention, was adopted by its member countries in 1973. It states that “the minimum age... shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.” (http://www.die.gov.tr/CIN/ILO_convention_138.htm.) Recently, they also adopted ILO Convention 182 in 1999 on the immediate prohibition and abolition of the worst forms of child labour. More specifically, the Convention issued the following commitments:

- ☞ Governments must act immediately to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.
- ☞ All children aged below 18 years must be protected against the worst form of child labour.
- ☞ To eliminate the worst forms of child labour means the elimination of:
 - slavery and forced labour
 - participation of children in armed conflicts, prostitution and sexual exploitation
 - the use of children in drug trafficking
 - all dangerous work likely to endanger the safety and moral and physical health of children
- ☞ Governments must define national activity programmes after consultations with trade union and employers’ organizations as well as other relevant groups such as children who have been victims of the worst form of labour and their family
- ☞ Governments must do all it can to enforce the Convention and failing to do so will mean sanctions will be imposed
- ☞ Governments must save children from the worst forms of child labour, help them and ensure their social integration when they decide to leave their job. (<http://www.wctcsme.org>)

The ILO-IPEC in the Footwear Industry

Subscribing to the idea that *All working children are basically at risk and the ultimate objective of society should therefore be the elimination of child labor* (ILO 1994 as cited in del Rosario and Boñga 2000), the International Labor Organization established the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC). The programme “aims to work towards the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities to address child labour problems, and by creating a worldwide movement to combat it.” (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standard/ipec/about/factsheet/facts19.htm>) In the Philippines, a Sub-

Regional Program to Combat Child Labor in the Footwear Sector in Southeast Asia, also covering Indonesia and Thailand is being implemented. It seeks to prevent and systematically remove children from work as well as provide appropriate alternatives such as community education, family-based interventions and access to viable income augmentation activities. (Culanag 2000)

Barangay dela Paz in Biñan, Laguna was selected as a pilot site of the programme. The community was chosen based on previous studies that have reported the extensive use of child labour in footwear manufacturing and trade activities in the area. The major implementers of the program formed a Programme Advisory Committee composed of major local government and non-government partners and programme stakeholders which met regularly to plan as well as undertake their respective activities to help the child workers and manufacturers in the community, e.g., identifying and recommending safe and healthy workplace, provision of credit/savings facility to footwear manufacturers, formation of homeworkers' organizations, among others. But before laying the groundwork for these individual programs there was the need to establish information on those to be directly affected – the working children, their families as well as their employers. Hence, the research conducted by the Research and Extension for Development Office of the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development.

The Research

The research conducted during the early part of 2001 aimed to identify, locate and establish baseline information on the working children and footwear workshops/enterprises in Barangay dela Paz and nearby Barangay Malaban, also a footwear manufacturing community. The data gathered formed a database of those involved in the footwear industry — the working children, their families as well as their employers. This was intended to provide baseline information to other partner agencies in determining appropriate intervention strategies to prevent, withdraw and rehabilitate working children in the community. In addition, the study also came up with a profile of the working children in the footwear industry.

Research Methodology

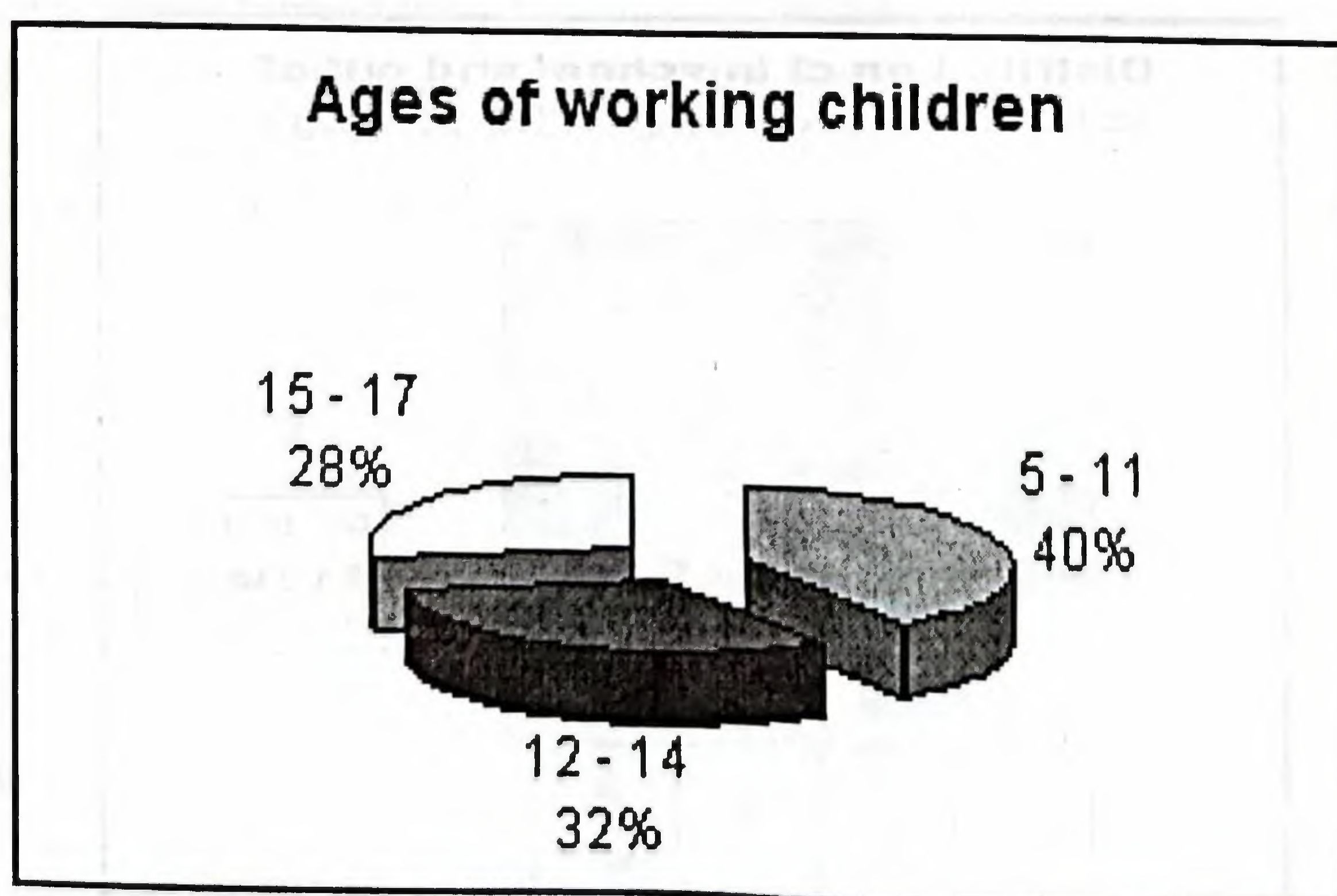
The study did a rapid appraisal of all the households in four (4) of the six (6) *puroks* of Barangay dela Paz. Additional households in Barangay Malaban were included bringing the total respondents to 2,244. A one-page interview was conducted among the household heads and/or their spouses focusing on the basic information about the family such as family composition, educational attainment, occupation, income and additional data about children 5-17 years of age. From the result of the rapid appraisal, working children were selected to participate in guided interviews and in-depth discussions conducted by the research team. Five discussion groups were formed

composed of three (3) groups of working children who were presently attending school and two (2) groups of working children who have stopped schooling. Since education is a vital need in a child's development, schooling and non-schooling children were chosen to note the effect of working on the education of the children. The discussions focused mainly on their involvement in footwear-making including hazards met, their attitude towards working, as well as their dreams and aspirations.

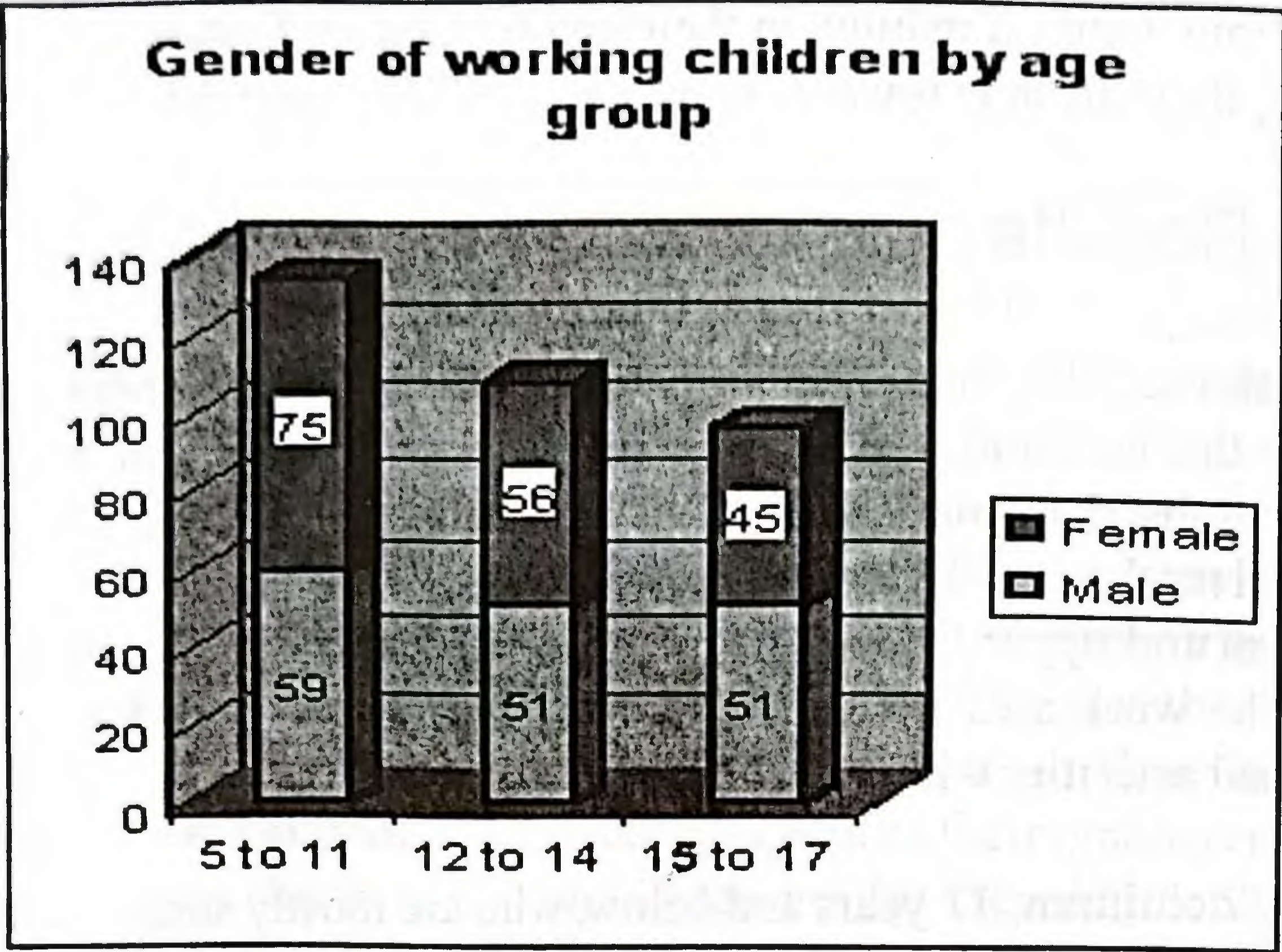
Survey Results

The survey showed that the majority (1396 or 62%) of the households have members, particularly the husband and/or the wife, who are engaged in footwear making undertaking jobs that combine management, supervision and training, footwear assembly and marketing. In most of the households, the men mostly do the process of *lapat* (bottom and upper lasting) while the women take charge of the *rebete* (upper making). The work area is typically located in the individual family's households mixing normal activities with footwear making.

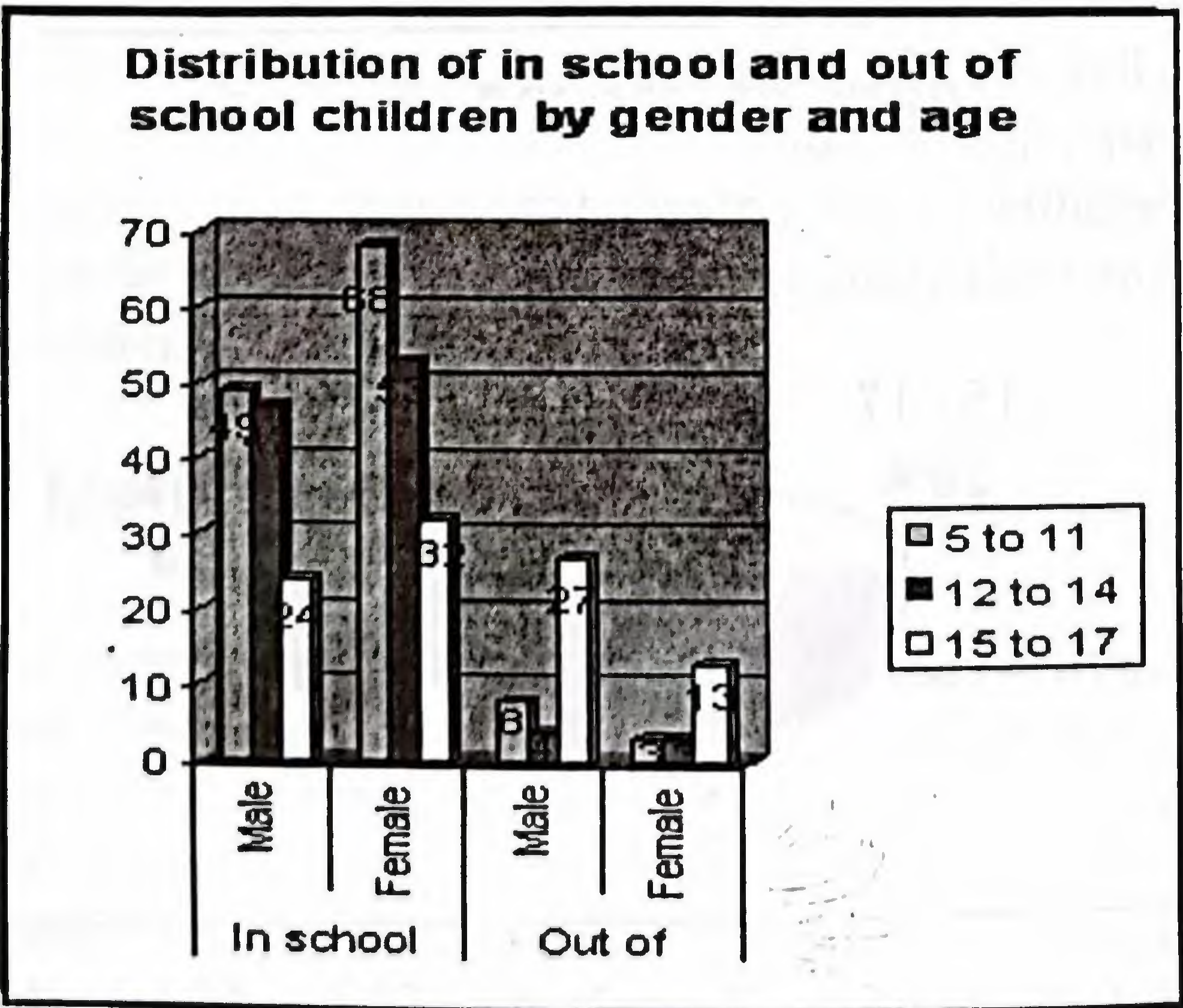
A total of 337 children, 17 years and below, who are mostly sons or daughters of the respondents, were recorded to be working in the footwear industry. The youngest were two (2) 5-year old children engaged in attaching ribbons or buckles and placing finished products in boxes. It is interesting to note that most (40%) of the working children belonged to the youngest age bracket (5–11 years old) while the fewest number belonged to the oldest age group (15–17 years old). The following graph illustrates the age distribution of the working children.



A slightly higher number of female child workers (52%) was noted. The gender distribution by age group revealed that the younger age groups were mostly girls while the older groups included more boys. The picture below shows this finding



While majority (81%) were in school, more male children were reported to be presently out-of school and belonged to the 15-17 age group. The comparison of schooling and non schooling working children is shown in the graph below.



Guided Interviews and In-depth Discussions

In- school Working Children

The working children who are in school were composed of three (3) age groups: 5-11 (16 participants), 12-14 (20 participants), and 15 – 17 (9 participants).

All the working children in school were living with their parents, in families of 3 – 11 members. The 5-11 year-olds were in Grades 2 – 6 while the 12-14 year-olds were in the primary level and second year high school. The 15-17 year olds were in Grade 6 or the first three years of high school. It was disclosed that four (4) of the 5-11 year old participants might have to stop schooling in the academic year 2001-2002 due to lack of funds and poor health.

Length of time as a child worker in the footwear industry

The duration of their involvement in the footwear industry ranged from at least a week to 9 years with some already working since they were 4 years old. Majority were involved in the footwear business since they were 8 years old.

Reasons for working

The most frequent reason given for working was to help the family. Others said they were motivated to work to support their schooling, to help to hasten the work without having to hire other people and to learn new skills. While majority worked voluntarily, there were some who claimed they were forced by their parents to work for the following reasons: to have their own income, to earn for the family in exchange for their educational expenses, to learn about life and to be able to help the family. Footwear making was the most practical work for them because their parents were in the same line of work, and hence they were most familiar with the business.

Specific kind of work

In majority of the footwear shops these children worked in the manufacture of leather or synthetic sandals, leather shoes or “step-ins.” They were generally involved in cutting patterns, attaching buckles (*hibilya*), making boxes, applying glue, polishing or cleaning and placing finished products in boxes. A few others were doing *rebete* or *lapat*. Three (3) 15-17 year old children were engaged in selling. Tools and materials commonly used were scissors, stapler, mallet, grinding machine, bonding chemicals or solvents, textile, thread, polishing and cleaning agents.

Volume of production

Depending on the stage of work involved, the working children could finish from one to ten dozen pairs in a week. The youngest batch (5-11 year olds) claimed to finish at least a dozen while the older groups could produce three to 10 dozen pairs. For the 12 – 14 year old children, cutting of design patterns usually took the longest hence, only three dozens could be finished in a week, whereas the application of bonding chemicals seemed to be the easiest as they could dispose of 10 dozen pairs weekly. Outputs of the 15-17 year old children per week reached 2-10 dozens at each stage of work. For example, those doing *rebete* could finish 2-8 dozens and those pasting brand names could finish 1-5 dozens per week. Some of the children admitted that they could not meet their quotas at times due to lack of time, too high a quota, fatigue due to overwork (doing job at the footwear workshop and household chores at the same time), and bodily aches as a result of work.

Seasonality of work

The holiday months from September to December brought in the most work for the working children. Consequently, they also earned more during these peak months, for example, about P 150.00 per dozen footwear or P700 each month or P 50 for every pair sold. On the other hand, during the summer months, very few orders came so they earned only about P 10.00 per week from footwear assembly, or P 10.00 – 20.00 for every piece sold, or on the average, about P 300.00 per month. Sales were also high on Sundays but low on Fridays or Wednesdays.

Accidents and hazards at work

These children admitted to having met minor accidents in the workplace or having suffered from the effects of long term exposure to pollutants and chemicals although they considered these as acceptable risks which were simply remedied by first aid. Among the common complaints of the 5-11 year old working children were colds, headaches and backaches. One girl suffered burns in her hands. Others said they got dizzy or had headaches due to toxic fumes. They also suffered from persistent coughs, sore eyes and fever. Among the 15-17 year old child workers, maladies associated with their work included fatigue due to overwork at home and in the workshop; backache due to the cramped work spaces and headache due to exposure to bonding chemicals and solvents. Long working hours also diminished their time for rest or sleep. Those in footwear selling were affected by weather problems.

Moreover, these children revealed that when they committed errors, their parents either scolded or pinched them. Others were spanked in the butt or slapped in the arm or were hit with a broom. One girl disclosed that her hair was pulled and her head was hit against the wall by her parents. Such abuses however were isolated cases committed when the

children forgot to mind a younger sibling although the abuses were sometimes committed even for mistakes made in footwear making. While they did not react to these acts of violence, the children indicated having very bad feelings which persisted even after some time.

Attitude to work

Notwithstanding the above grievances, these children accepted their having to work at a young age. They believed it was alright for them to work because it provided them with the means to study, enabled them to earn additional income for the family, taught them skills they could use when they grow up and gave them the opportunity to help speed up their parents' work. They also said that working made them more responsible and self-sufficient and prevented them from associating with bad company.

Aspirations

On the other hand, all the children expressed their desire to go into different ventures in the future. As such, they said they would like to finish their schooling and to become professionals. They believed there are better opportunities if they were educated and could better fulfill their dreams of a good life. Through education they believed their parents would be proud of them and happy. They aspired to become doctors, engineers, teachers, law enforcers, veterinarian, nurse, dentist, pediatrician, scientist, criminologist, computer programmer, judge or pilot. Those who wanted to pursue a vocational course dreamt of becoming a secretary, automotive mechanic or electrician. Another wanted to be a soldier. Some mentioned other places of work such as working in Manila or Japan. One simply wanted to be a housewife.

The 12-14 year old children specifically wanted to get out of the footwear business when they would grow up as they felt there was no stability in it since there were no orders sometimes and therefore, no income. The 15-17 year old child workers who planned to remain in the footwear business aspired to become managers or proprietors.

Out- of- School Working Children

The out-of school child workers who participated in the discussion were composed of nine (9) 8-14 and eleven (11) 15-17 year old children.

These children came from families of 4-11 members. All of them were living with their families. Before quitting school, they had reached either the primary or the secondary level with two of them having finished only grade 1. Although more than half of them claimed to be honor students, they had to stop studying due to the following reasons: lack of resources, too many siblings, and for some, lack of interest in studying.

Length of time as a child worker in the footwear industry

These out-of-school working children had been working from two months or less to about four (4) years. Some of them had began working when they were eight (8) years old.

Reason for working

For all of them, working was a voluntary decision on their part. They felt they had to work in order to earn a living to enable them to help their parents/family, go back to school and to be able to buy their necessities. They said that they had also found fulfillment in their work and that the footwear business was something they had come to like. Before joining the footwear work force, some of them had already been working as trash collectors, doormat cutters, delivery boys, vendors, factory workers, household helpers or waitresses. Their shifting to the footwear industry had been a result of the factory closing, their decision to come back and help the family, peer pressure or dismissal from previous work.

Specific kind of work

Majority of the children had been involved in footwear production rather than in selling. Some worked in their households for their parents while others worked for relatives in separate footwear workshops. The most common assembled footwear were synthetic shoes and sandals, slippers and “step-ins.” Most of them did pattern cutting, out-sole and in-sole assembly, bonding, and packaging and made boxes. Materials commonly used by children in performing their job consisted of bonding chemicals, scissors, polishing chemicals, mallet, sewing machines and grinding machines.

Volume of production

The children could finish an average of 3-4 dozen pairs a week at various stages of work. Some had quotas such as 10 dozen pieces in two weeks. Peak season is during the opening of the school year and the holiday months of June to December yearly while the summer months were the lean months which brought in few orders. During the peak season, the 8-14 year old participants said they earned as much as P200.00 per week while the 15-17 year old workers said they received as much as P300.00-500.00 per week. During the low season they earned only P 100.00 per week. One of the child workers claimed that she did not receive any payment since she was just helping her parents.

Accidents and hazards at work

The most common accident met by the 8-14 year old working children was having their

fingers hammered. Usually Mondays were bad days for most, as they suffered from stomach ailments, although no explanation was given for this. The 15-17 year-old children, on the other hand, complained of sensitivity to the bonding and cleaning materials used in footwear assembly. Hence, respiratory diseases were common. They got dizzy and were easily fatigued due to the ingestion of fumes and dust in an enclosed area. The work area was in bad shape. It occupied a small space and experienced frequent brownouts. Occasionally, the children were hurt by the tools used or were burned by the chemicals. Sometimes when they had to meet the demands and deadlines set by the manager, they had to extend work beyond normal hours resulting in lack of sleep, fatigue and a predisposition to sickness. For some who marketed their products as individual hawkers, they said they experienced harassment by the police who were out to confiscate their products unless they bribed them with money. To cope with the bad cops, they said they just ran away from them and looked for a new place where they could sell their products. To regain their strength, these children suggested getting enough sleep, putting on protective masks, more ventilation in the work area and having a larger work space.

The children also said that when they committed errors, they were told either to repeat the process; were sent home; were asked to stop working; or were cursed or scolded by the parents or employers. In cases of verbal abuse, some of the children either cried or reasoned out while others became confused or disoriented. Some children who were told to stop working searched for other places of work.

Attitude to work

Despite the abovementioned complaints, the children had no negative thoughts about working. To them, working made their parents happy and provided them with ready cash for their personal needs and some household expenses. Their expected wages also became a sort of collateral for them when they asked for cash advance from their parents.

Children therefore agreed that it was absolutely alright for children to work, as their incomes enabled them to help their parents particularly during difficult situations, and made them less dependent on their parents. They said they also learned skills that they might need later in life.

Aspirations

On the other hand, all of them expressed a desire to move on to other types of work in the future such as becoming a teacher, having their own footwear business or working in other factories. In case they found themselves in the same line of work in the future, they said they wanted to engage in other part time jobs or sidelines such as tricycle driving to supplement their income. They voiced out the importance of finishing their studies to have more opportunities for better jobs. All of them, except for

two, expressed the desire to go back to school and to finish their studies, be it through a vocational course or a college degree. They wished to pursue their studies because they wanted to learn in order to have better opportunities in the future. They believed that they would encounter more difficulties without education.

Interpretation of Data

The experiences shared by the child workers of the footwear industry in Biñan, Laguna are not different from those related by child workers in other sectors. The long working hours, unjust compensation, and exposure to hazards, among others, are the common predicaments verbalized by these children thus supporting the ILO belief that *“all working children are basically at risk.”*

In-school and out of school children related similar work experiences. These children identified economic problem as a major push for them to enter into child labor. There were no marked differences in their responses. For the out of school children, although working was not explicitly pointed to as the reason for dropping out of school, economic difficulty such as lack of resources still pervades as the main reason for quitting school.

In view of the agreements adopted in ILO Convention 182, the information and experiences shared by the working children are clear indications of violations of the agreements in the said convention. First and foremost, these children belong to the age group, i.e., below 18 “who must be protected against the worst form of child labor.” Secondly, the footwear manufacturing activities these children are exposed to are considered “dangerous work which endanger their safety and physical health.” The data showed that the exposure to toxic fumes and chemicals led to persistent cough, colds, headaches, dizziness and burps. Quite a significant number suffered from accidents such as having their fingers hammered or cut by sharp tools. The cramped and enclosed work spaces caused these children to suffer from backaches. Working also diminished their time for rest and sleep especially when they had to work for long hours to meet the demands and deadlines set which resulted to fatigue and made them susceptible to illness. Those who peddle their products were more exposed to accidents in the street in addition to the harassment they get from bad cops who want to get a share of their earnings.

While we view all these as a clear violations of their rights as children, it is more frustrating to note that the footwear child workers or even their parents do not realize this. Instead, these children considered working as an opportunity and/or a responsibility to help earn for their families. These were the reasons given by their parents when these children were asked to assist in this productive endeavor. As a result, they were amenable to working to enable them to finance their educational needs, develop them towards being more responsible and self sufficient, learn new

skills as well as to keep away from bad company and vices. It is in this light that their parents inculcated in them the value of work, responsibility and solidarity by working together as a family. Such values have instilled in them the acceptance of work as a natural part of their growing years.

However, the data also showed that some of these children were involved in the industry primarily to earn. As some of them have quotas to meet, their involvement in footwear making could be considered to be that of a normal worker who were paid according to their output. Moreover, it was recorded that some of these children have already been working even before they joined the footwear manufacturing business which showed that their main preoccupation was to work and to earn.

The parents, on the other hand, due to economic difficulty considered it reasonable to allow their children to work in order to earn for their personal needs, particularly for their schooling.

Although the children have rationalized their early involvement in productive endeavors, they also have a feeling that they do not enjoy fully the rights they are entitled to. They expressed that they felt deprived of their rights to education, sufficient food, recreation, decent shelter and health care, and yet, none of them mentioned that working was a violation of their rights. They blamed the lack of resources, the unavailability of government services and the empty promises of politicians and government officials as the reasons why they did not enjoy these rights.

A Call to Action

Supporting the belief that every child is entitled to a normal development, the call for the elimination of child labor should be advocated. The vital and initial step is consciousness raising among the persons directly concerned. Foremost are the children and their parents/family. It is imperative that the children are made aware of their rights and the parents/family of their responsibilities. They should also know the implications of working on the development of the child, e.g., effect on their health, education, among others. Likewise, the community should also be conscious of the plight of the child workers. It is only when the persons concerned are made aware of the issue can the other services be implemented and appreciated.

Programs and services to promote the welfare of children particularly regarding health, safety and education should be encouraged from both government and non-government agencies. Additional legislations which will serve the interest of child workers should be passed and existing ones be strictly implemented. It is also important that basic social services be prioritized and genuine poverty alleviation measures be undertaken by the government as its main social responsibility. It would be ideal if government, non-government institutions, the family and the community will work together to give the children the rights and benefits they are entitled to.

References:

Convention on the Rights of the Child, reprinted by UNICEF Manila October 1990.

Culanag, Daphne (2000). "Southeast Asian Program Launched to Combat Child Labor in Footwear, Fishing." Bata Man. vol. II, number 3.

Del Rosario, Rosario and Melinda Bonga (2000). Child Labor in the Philippines. Manila: University of the Philippines Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Development, Australian Agency for International Development, United Nations Children's Fund.

http://www.die.gov.tr/CIN/ILO_convention_138.htm.

<http://www.wctcsme.org>

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standard/ipec/about/factsheet/facts19.htm>

Workshop Syllabus, IPEC Partners' Indicative Planning Workshop 2000.

Panimulang paglalarawan ng mga buhay ng mga kababaihang Ayta ng Botolan, Zambales

Ma. Teresa C. Dominguez

Isang araw, may isang pamilyang Ayta na naglalakad sa tabing-ilog. Ang babae ay may hawak na bata at baboy sa isang kamay. Sa kanyang dibdib ay may nakasabit na isang sanggol na nakaduyan sa isang tela na pahalang na nakakwintas sa kanyang leeg. Sa kanyang ulo ay may nakabigkis na basket na lubon na may lamang maliit na bata, mga damit ng pamilya at kasangkapan sa pagluluto. Maingat niyang hawak sa kabilang kamay ang aypo o kahoy na may dingas ng apoy na magdudulot ng init sa gabi at ginhawa sa kalamnan. Ang lalaki ay nauuna, tangan ang gamit pampana at sibat at nagmamasid sa kapaligiran. Sa likod nila ay may isang mas malaking bata na sumusunod.

Introduksyon

Ang mga Ayta ng Botolan sa lalawigan ng Zambales ay nabibilang sa mas kilalang pambansang minorya (*national minorities*) o katutubong mamamayan (*indigenous peoples*) sa Pilipinas na tinataguriang grupong Negrito ayon sa klasipikasyong etno-linguistika. Ang grupong Negrito ay may iba't-ibang pangalan batay sa tawag nila sa sarili¹ at lugar na tinitirhan, tulad ng *Ayta* at *Ita* sa Zambales, Bataan,

Pampanga, Tarlac at Bulakan, *Dumagat* sa Quezon at Rizal, *Remontado* sa Rizal, *Agta* sa Kabikulan at Isabela, *Ata* sa Abra, *Mamanua* sa mga lalawigan ng Agusan at Surigao, *Ati* sa Isla ng Panay (kasama na ang Guimaras) at Negros, at *Batak* sa Palawan. Karamihan sa kanila ay nakatira sa mga kabundukan at liblib na bahagi ng mga lalawigan ito.

Madali silang makilala dahil na rin sa kanilang mga payak na pisikal na katangian – kulot ang buhok, di-kataasang katawan, at maitim na balat. Ngunit tila sila ay nananatiling walang kaugnayan sa mga buhay-buhay ng nakararaming Pilipino. Kadalasan, sila ay tampulan ng mga biro at di-magandang pagtingin ng dinakakaunawa na mga tagapatag at tinatawag pa na “Negro,” kulot”, “uncivilized”, “di tao” at iba pang bansag. May mga salita sila, tulad ng “Ita” at “Baluga” na kapag mga tagapatag ang gumamit ay nagtataglay ng negatibong laman, tulad ng pagsabi na “ang itim mo naman, para ka ng “Ita” o “Baluga”. Sila ay nagkakaroon lamang ng dagliang pagsikat sa ating diwa sa ilang piling okasyon tulad ng mga pangkulturang pagtatanghal, kapaskuhan, eleksyon, produksyon sa telebisyon at pelikula o di-inaasahang kalamidad o sakuna tulad ng bagyo, lindol at baha na nangangailangan ng dagliang kalinga lalo na mula sa pamahalaan at mga mamamayang “unat ang buhok”. Halimbawa, sila ay muli na namang nakilala sa pagsabog ng Bulkang Pinatubo noong 1991.

Ngunit kung ang mga kapatid nating Ayta ay di-kita sa paningin ng nakararaming Pilipino lalung-lalo na ang mga Aytang kababaihan na di na nga sila nakikita sa lipunang Pilipino, hindi pa rin sila nakikita sa lipunang Ayta. Ito ba ay dapat pa nating pagtakhan? Ika nga ni Elizabeth Eviota (1993:5), sa mga iba’t-ibang panglipunan at pang-ekonomiyang anyo ng lipunan – pyudal man, bago magkapitalismo, yugtong kapitalismo o sosyalismo – ang relasyon ng mga babae at lalaki ay hindi na naging pantay at ang mga lalaki bilang isang grupo ay may mas marami at mas direktang naaabot na mga panlipunang kagamitan. Mahalaga ang usaping ito sapagkat ang mga Ayta—lalaki man o babae – ay parehong dumaranas ng kahirapan bilang mga katutubo ngunit may partikular na karanasan ang mga babaeng Ayta dulot ng pagiging babae. Dapat na mapaunlad ang kapakanan ng mga lalaki at babaeng Ayta upang kapwa nilang maisulong ang makauri at makasariang interes ng mga katutubo sa kabuuan.

Ang mga sumusunod na akda ay mga kuwentong buhay ng ilang kababaihang Ayta sa Barangay Villa, isa sa 11 barangay na sakop ng Loob Bunga Resettlement sa Botolan, Zambales. Ang Barangay ay isa sa anim na mga barangay na may pinakamalaking bilang ng mga Ayta (halos 60-70%) at may 890 residente na kung saan ang mga kababaihan ay kumakatawan sa 52% at ang mga kalalakihan ay 48%. Ang mga kuwento ay magpapakita ng kanilang kalagayan at katayuan bilang katutubong Ayta at bilang babaeng Ayta bago pa man sumabog ang Bulkang Pinatubo at patuloy na nangyayari sa kasalukuyang buhay nila sa resettlement

area na itinayo ng pamahalaan sa tulong ng mga pribadong ahensyang pangkaunlaran at simbahan. Sa pagsasalaysay, ipapakita na sa lipunan ng mga Ayta, ang mga paniniwala ukol sa papel ng lalaki at babae, at sistema ng hatian sa gawain sa larangan ng produksyon, reproduksyon, at pamamahala at pamumuno sa pamayanan ay nagdudulot ng di-pantay na relasyon ng kalalakihan at kababaihan, at ito ay pinalubha pa sa pagsabog ng Bulkang Pinatubo². Ipapakita rin dito ang komon na karanasan ng mga Aytang lalaki at babae bilang bahagi ng lipunang Pilipino.

Ang Mga Ayta: Paano Ba Sila Noon?

Ang mga Ayta ng Botolan ay nakatira sa silangang bahagi ng Zambales Range at ang ilan sa kanilang mga pamayanan ay kasama sa mga pinakamalalapit sa Bulkang Pinatubo. Ayon sa isang manunulat (Villanueva 1996:71), ang Bulkang Pinatubo ay halos nagsisilbing kuna ng mga Ayta. Para sa mga Ayta ng Botolan, ang kanilang lugar ay tinatawag na “Baytan” o silangan.

Ang mga Ayta noon ay naggugrupo sa tatlo hanggang sampung pamilya na umaabot ng sampu hanggang singkuwentang magkakamag-anak. Ang pinakamatandang lalaki ang tumatayong lider at sinusupportahan siya ng iba pang kalalakihan – kapatid, tiyuhin o iba pang kamag-anak. Ang dami ng bilang ng lider sa isang grupo ay batay sa laki ng grupong ito kung kaya’t ang lider ay maaaring isa o mas marami pa. Bukod sa pagiging pinakamatanda, ang pagpili ng lider ay batay rin sa pagiging pinakapinagkakatiwalaan at pinakamamahal ng grupo. Siya ay magiging isang lider habang siya ay nabubuhay.

Ang bawat grupo ay may sariling kasarinlan at kanya-kanyang lugar na iniikutan. Ang mga babae ay sumasama sa grupo ng napangasawa niya at bagamat ang mga kamag-anak ng mag-asawa ay parehong kinikilala, ang pagsunod sa angkan ng lalaki ang mas binibigyang-diin. Sa isang takdang panahon at lugar, ang lahat ng mga grupo ng mga Ayta ay magkikita upang magpalitan ng produkto at mag-usap-usap sa mga usaping makakabuti sa kanilang lahi, tulad ng usaping pangseguridad, pangkabuhayan at iba pa.

Ayon sa ilang mananaliksik ng agham-tao o antropolohiya (Reed 1904, Schebesta 1952 at Garvan 1963), malamang noon pa man, sila ay nagkaroon na ng pakikiniig sa mga Kristiyanong tagapatag, lalo na ng mga Sambal ayon na rin sa mga nakita nilang mga halaman na mas nabubuhay sa mabababang lugar at naimbentaryong kultura kasama na ang lenguahe. Noon pa man – bago dumating ang mga Kastila hanggang sa pagputok ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pangdaigdig, ang kasaysayan ng mga Ayta, ayon kay Shimizu (1989) ay kasaysayan ng pag-urong sa kabundukan sa bawat pagdating ng mga mananakop³. Ngunit mayroon ding mga Ayta na piniling manirahan malapit sa kapatagan at tanggapin ang pamamahala ng lokal na gobyerno.

Ang mga Ayta na hindi nagpasakop sa mga impluwensya ng tagapatag ay tumira na sa mga liblib na bahagi ng kabundukan at nagpatuloy ng kanilang pagsalungat sa bagong kalakaran.

May nagsasabing ang mga Ayta noon ay nagkakaingin o naglilinis at nagsusunog ng isang gulod upang tamnan (Fox 1953). Ngunit mayroon ding nag-aakala na sila ay naunang maging mangangaso at mangangalap ng pagkain bago naging kainginero (Brosius 1981). Di rin maikakaila na ang mga Ayta ay may mayamang kaalaman sa mga halaman at hayop, at kakayanan sa paggamit ng kalikasan para sa kanilang iba't-ibang pangangailangan tulad ng materyal sa pabahay, panggagamot, pagkain, kasuotan, at ritwal. Mayroon ding silang pagtitiyak ng mga lugar para sa pangangaso, pangingisda at pagkukunan ng mga produkto (Fox 1953). Bukod sa mga pagtatanim, ang mga Ayta ay nagpapain ng isda, nangangaso ng usa at baboy-damo at nanghuhuli ng salagubang. May mga gawaing pampruduksyon ang nilalahukan ng iba pang Ayta sa pamamagitan ng "patungaw" o bayanihan.

Sa umpisa, ang kanilang mga samut-saring gawaing pang-ekonomiya ay nagtiyak ng seguridad sa pagkain ng lahi. Sa paglipas ng panahon, ang mga gawaing pagkabuhayan ay dahan-dahang ding nagbigay-puwang sa dikta ng palengke o kalakalan ng kapatagan. Halimbawa, ang kanilang palay para sa pagkain na tinanim sa "gasak" (o kinaingin na burol) ay hinaluan ng mais at kamote para paninda sa palengke. Sa kalaunan, noong gitnang bahagi ng dekada-50, ang mga mangangalakal pa mismo ang pumupunta sa lugar para bumili ng mga produkto tulad ng saging na saba, kamote at ube. Noong kalagitnaan ng dekada-60, sa sobrang kompetisyon sa mga produkto ng mga Ayta, may mga mangangalakal ang tumira na sa iba't-ibang lugar na malapit o tirahan mismo ng mga Ayta. Ang mga Ayta ay natuto na ring pumunta sa bayan para mangalakal.

Ang Mga Kababaihang Ayta Noon

Sa pananaliksik ni Fox (1953), ang mga babae ay karaniwang may responsibilidad sa gawaing pang-agrikultura, pangongolekta para sa pagkain, at maliitang pangingisda habang ang mga lalaki, lalo na ang mga mas batang kalalakihan, ay nangangaso at nangingisda na may suot na salaming pantubig (*goggles*) at hawak na pana. Ang mga kalalakihan ay kadalasang wala sa bahay at bumibisita sa mga kamag-anak sa ibang lugar at nakikipangalakal.

Sa Talaan 1, makikita ang mga gawain ng mga lalaki at babae sa larangan ng agrikultura ayon sa mga nakapanayam na nakatatandang lalaki at babae. Dito naipakita na may nangyayaring sistema ng hatian sa gawain sa pagitan ng lalaki at babaeng Ayta. Sa ano mang klase ng produkto, ang mga kalalakihan ay eksklusibong

tagahanda ng lugar na tatamnan habang ang mga babae ay pangunahing tagabenta ng mga produkto sa palengke. Ang mga babae rin ang karaniwang pangunahing inaasahan sa pagtatanim ng ano mang produkto at pagbubunot ng damo sa lugar taniman maliban sa saging (pangunahing pinagkukunan ng salapi), na ang buong proseso ng pagtatanim ay monopolyo ng lalaki. Ang pag-aani ng mga produkto ay pangunahing sakop din ng mga gawaing pambabae maliban sa pag-aani ng murang mais na pangunahing ginagawa ng lalaki kapag ang mga ito ay para sa palengke at ginagawa ng mga babae kapag ang mga ito ay para sa pagkain ng pamilya. Ang mga batang lalaki at babae ay tumutulong din sa ilang gawain tulad ng pagbubunot ng damo, pag-aani ng mais, at pagtatanim ng gulay.

Sa mga gawaing nangangailangan ng sistemang *patungaw* tulad ng paghahanda ng *gasak* at pagtatanim ng palay, ang mga asawang babae ang inaasahang maghanda ng pagkain para sa lahat o bawat pamilya depende sa pinag-usapan. Samakatuwid, ang mga gawain na may kaugnayan sa pangkonsumo ng pamilya ay nakatalaga sa mga kababaihan samantalang ang mga gawain na pagkukunan ng salapi ay mas ginagampanan ng mga kalalakihan. Dagdag dito, ang mga gawain ng mga kababaihan ay pawang nangangailangan ng mas matagal na panahong gugugulin.

Sa Talaan 2, makikita ang mga paglalarawan ng mga gawain sa pangingisda at pangangaso ng babae't lalaki ayon na rin sa pagkaalala ng mga kinapanayam. Sa mga nakasaad, napatunayan na taliwas sa nakagawiang pag-aakala na ang pangangaso ay gawain ng lalaki, ang mga babae ay kalahok din sa gawaing ito. Ngunit ayon na rin sa salaysay ng isang lalaking Ayta, ang mga kalalakihan ang nagpaplano ng buong gawain. Halimbawa, sa kaso ng pagbibitag ng mga isda sa ilog, ang mga lalaki ay magkakaroon ng isang pagpupulong bago dumating ang takdang araw. Sila ay magkakaisa kung saang parte ng ilog nila haharangan ng bato para hindi na dumaloy ang tubig, anu-anong mga gamit ang dadalhin, at paano hahatiin ang mga gawain. Ang mga asawang babae naman ay aatasang maghanda ng pagkain ng kani-kanilang pamilya.

Bagamat may ilan ding kapasidad at gamit ang mga babae sa pangangaso tulad ng panang *huri*, ang teknolohiya ng pangangaso at pangingisda ay monopolyo ng kalalakihan at ang partisipasyon ng mga kababaihan ay tinuturing na suporta lamang. Lalaki pa rin ang tinuturing na gumagampan ng mga inaakalang maseselan at importanteng bahagi ng gawaing pampruduksyon.

Ang mga nakapanayam ay wala pang natatandaan na nagkaroon ng isang babaeng lider ang mga Ayta noon. Ito ay sa kabila ng kondisyon na kapag ang isang lalaking lider ay namatay, ang kanyang asawa ay maaaring pumalit sa kanyang posisyon kung siya ay napatunayang may kakayahang mamuno.

Talaan 1: Hatian sa Gawain ng Lalaki at Babaeng Ayta sa Agrikultura

Mga Produkto	Gawain	Hatian sa Gawain*	Panahon ng Paggawa
"palay" sa kaingin	1. paghahanda ng lugar na tatamnan	L(M)	Marso – Abril
	2. pagtatanim	B(M), l(m)	Huling bahagi ng Mayo – Hunyo
	3. pagbubunot ng damo	B(M), l(m), l/b (bt)	Hunyo – gitna ng Agosto
	4. pag-aani	B(M), l(m)	
Mais (isinasama sa pagtatanim ng palay sa kaingin)	1. pagtatanim ng mais	B(M), l(m)	Huling bahagi ng Marso – unang bahagi ng Mayo
	2. pag-aani ng murang mais	L(M), b(m), l/b(bt)	Hunyo – Hulyo
	a) pagtatali ng mga mais	L(M)	
	b) pagtatalop ng balat ng mais	B(M)	
	k) pagpaparuyo ng mais	L/B(M)	
	3. pag-aani ng mga matanda o natuyong mais para sa bigas ng pamilya	B(M)	Agosto
	4. pagtatanim ng mais	B(M), l(m)	Huling bahagi ng Setyembre – gitnang bahagi ng Agosto
	5. Pag-aani ng mais	L(M), b(m), l/b(bt)	Enero
	6. pagtitinda ng mais	B(M), l(m)	Enero
Gabi, ube, gulay	1. pagtatanim ng ube	B(M)	Enero – Pebrero
	2. pagtatanim ng gabi	B(M)	Marso – Abril
	3. pagtatanim ng mga gulay (tulad ng sitaw, patani, sigarilyas, at iba pa)	B(M), l/b(bt)	Gitnang bahagi ng Mayo – Hunyo
	4. pagbubunot ng damo	B(M), l(m)	Hulyo
	5. pag-aani ng gabi	B(M)	Agosto – Setyembre (kalakasan); Oktubre – Disyembre
	6. pag-aani ng sitaw	B(M)	Agosto – Nobyembre
	7. pag-aani ng sigarilyas	B(M)	Setyembre – Nobyembre
	8. pag-aani ng patani	B(M)	Disyembre
Saging (saba, larundan, lakatan)	1. pagtatanim ng saging bago umulan	L(M)	Marso – Mayo
	2. pangangalaga ng taniman ng saging	L(M)	Agosto – Oktubre
	3. pag-aani tuwing 15 araw (para sa lakatan o tuwing ikaanim na buwan para sa saba)	L(M)	Enero – Hunyo
	4. pagbebenta sa palengke	B(M), l(m)	Enero
Kamote (sa patag na lugar)	1. paghahanda ng lugar na tatamnan	L(M)	Setyembre – Oktubre
	2. pagtatanim	B(M), l(m)	Nobyembre – Disyembre
	3. pag-aani	B(M), l(m)	Enero – Pebrero
	4. pagbebenta	B(M), l(m)	Enero – Pebrero

* paliwanag sa mga simbolo – L (lalaki), B (babae), (M) matanda, (BT) bata, malalaking letra ay ibig sabihin ay pangunahing gumagampan at ang maliliit na letra ay nangangahulugan na tumutulong lamang. Batay sa Ingles na ginawang simbolo ni Illo na nakasaad sa 1991-92 IPC-CIDA Workshops, 1994, pahina 18.

Talaan 2: Hatian sa Gawain ng Lalaki at Babae sa Pangangisda at Pangangaso

Mga Hayop	Gawain	Hatian sa Gawain	Panahon ng Paggawa
Isda	1. pagbitag ng hipon at isdang biya	L/B(M)	Setyembre – Oktubre
	2. pagbitag ng iba pang isda (sa pamamagitan ng sistema ng patungaw) a) paghanda ng mga bitag b) paghakot ng malalaking bato k) pagluto ng pagkain ng grupo c) paghuli ng mga isda sa pamamagitan ng mga kamay at huri, isang panang pambabae	L/B(M) L(M) B(M) B(M) B(M)	Marso – Hunyo
	3. paghuli ng isda sa ilog sa pamamagitan ng osero, panang panlalaki at amtuko, salaming pantubig	L(M)	
Mga mabangis na hayop	1. pangangaso ng usa sa gabi a) pagpana sa usa b) paggawa ng ingay para takutin ang usa	L/B(M) L(M) B(M)	Disyembre – Mayo
	2. pangngangaso ng baboy-damo	L/B(M)	Agosto – Setyembre
Salagubang	1. paghukay ng malaking butas sa lupa sa umaga 2. pangangaso sa gabi a) pag-akyat sa mga puno para pukawin ang mga pugad ng salagubang b) pagtapik sa mga puno, paghawak ng lampara at pag-akit sa mga salagubang para pumunta sa inihandang butas sa lupa; pagsilid ng mga salagubang sa sako	B(M) L/B(M) L(M) B(M)	Pebrero – Mayo

Mailap man ang karapatang mamuno ng babae sa lipunang Ayta, hindi maitatatwa na sila ay may prominenteng papel sa larangan ng pagbibigay-ginhawa sa pang-araw-araw na buhay ng mga Ayta. Bagama't may mga lalaking manggagamot at tagapamagitan sa tao, kalikasan at kay Apo Namalyari, ang Maykapal ng mga Ayta, mas maraming kababaihan ang siyang may-angking galing at pananagutan sa mga larangang ito. Ito ay napatunayan sa pag-aaral ni Abaya (2000) ukol sa sistemang terapeutika at konsepto ng ginhawa ng mga Ayta sa Botolan, na nagpakita na mas marami pa ring mga babae ang nagiging "manganito" o manggagamot sa tulong ng *camana* o mabuting espirito at may kaalaman sa iba't-ibang klase ng panggagamot tulad ng *manapal*, *manutbot* at *nagpupugo* na pawang ginagamitan ng halamang-gamot, at *mangapto*, pagmamasahé sa parte ng katawan na may sakit upang alisin ang masamang espirito. Subali't, ang tinitingalang pangunahing *manganito*, ang *Balyan*, ay galing pa rin sa kalalakihan.

Ang Mga Kababaihang Ayta Ngayon

Ang pinakamalakas na pagsabog ng Bulkang Pinatubo ay nangyari noong ika-15 ng Hunyo, 1991 matapos ng mahigit na 600 taong na pagkakahimlay nito. Ito ay sinundan pa ng mga mahinang pagsabog at patuloy na pagdaloy ng mga *lahar*. Ang kalamidad na ito ay nagdulot ng di-mailarawang paghihirap at pagbabago sa mga buhay ng Ayta. Ang kanilang "Baytan" ay natabunan ng tone-toneladang *lahar* kasabay na rin ng mga lugar na pinangyayarihan ng kanilang samu't-saring pang-ekonomiya, pampulitika, pangrelihiyon at panlipunang paniniwala at gawi.

Bilang tugon, ang pamahalaan ay naglaan ng pondo at programa para maibalik ang mga buhay nila sa mga tinalagang *resettlement areas* sa Botolan at iba pang lugar. Ang buong Loob Bunga Resettlement na may 6,571 na tao, ay may mga pasilidad pang-eskwela, pangkalusugan, pang-aliwan (tulad ng *basketball court* at *play ground*), at gusali para sa mga sumusuportang ahensya ng gobyerno. Ang bawat pamilyang biktima ng Bulkang Pinatubo ay may naitalagang puwesto o tirahan sa bagong lugar.

Ngunit sa Resettlement, nawala na ang pinagkukunan ng materyal na pangkabuhayan na natatagpuan sa dati nilang lugar sa "Baytan" at kaalinsabay nito, ayon kay Abaya (1999) ay nagkaroon na ng bagong kalakaran sa buhay nila na itinakda na rin ng pamahalaan ayon sa konsepto nito ng "*resettlement*" at kaunlaran para sa mga biktima ng pagsabog ng bulkan. Ang mga Ayta – lalaki man o babae, ay kinailangan ng pera at sahod para mabuhay. Ika nga ng isang lider Ayta: "nakatali na kami sa pera".

Makikita sa Talaan 3 na ang mga Ayta ay nagiging ingkilino sa mga palayan (na gumagamit ng petro-kemikal na pataba at pestisidyo), nagpapaupa ng lakas-paggawa (sa halagang P100 isang araw), manggagawa sa konstruksyon, karpintero, labandera at katulong sa bahay. May ilan, lalo na ang mga babae, na namimili at nagtitinda ng mga produkto at inalagaang hayop. Sa umpisa, may mga kalalakihang Ayta na nagtrabaho rin sa pagtatayo

ng mga pampublikong pasilidad at kalye, at pagtatanim sa mga inilaang lote ng gobyerno at sila ay binayaran ng katumbas na pagkain (tinataguriang “*food-for-work*” ng pamahalaan).

Talaan 3: Kasalukuyang Hatian sa Gawain ng Lalaki at Babae sa Resettlement

Kung ikukumpara natin ang gawain ng mga lalaki at babaeng Ayta noon at ngayon (Talaan 1, 2 at 3), makikita natin na may kalabnawan na ang hatian ng gawain sa pagitan nila sa mga pang-agrikultural na gawain na tradisyunal na ipinapataw sa bawat kasarian. Halimbawa, sa mga sakahan, ang babae at lalaki ay pareho nang nagpapaupa ng lakas-paggawa sa pagtatanim, pagdadamo at pag-aani na noon ay gawain lamang ng babae. Pareho rin ang sahod ng babae at lalaki. Ngunit sa ibang gawaing pinagkakakitaan ng pera tulad ng pagtatanim at pagtitinda, ang mga trabaho ay sumusunod pa rin sa tradisyunal na hatian ng gawain. Mayroon ding nakikitang pagtahak ng mga kalalakihan at lalo na ng mga kababaihan sa impormal na sektor sa kanilang paggampan

Lalaking Ayta	Babaeng Ayta
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> upahan sa mga sakahan sa patag – pagtatanim, pagdadamo, pag-aani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> upahan sa mga sakahan sa patag – pagtatanim, pagdadamo, pag-aani
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagiging ingkilino (“abang”) sa mga diginagamit na lupang sakahan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagtitinda ng mga produkto (tulad ng gulay) sa mga paligid na pamayanan o sa iba
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagtatrabaho bilang mangagawang kontraktwal (arawang pasahod) sa mga konstruksyon sa Zambales, Maynila at iba pang lugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagiging labandera (arawan) ng mga tagapatag na pamilya
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagiging karpintero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagiging tindera sa mga pribadong tindahan sa Zambales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagiging “house boy” (mga binata) sa Zambales at iba pang lugar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagiging “house maid” (mga dalaga) sa Zambales, Maynila at iba pang lugar.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagtatrabaho sa mga trabaho na may buwanang pasahod (tulad ng mangagawa sa isang pang-agrikultural na korporasyon) sa Zambales o iba pang lugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pag-aalaga ng mga hayop (tulad ng baboy) sa sariling bakuran
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagtatanim ng mga gulay, panamin na lamang-lupa, at iba pa sa mga pampublikong lupain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pagtatanim ng mga gulay, panamin na lamang-lupa, at iba pa sa mga pampublikong lupain.

ng mga sahurang at di-regular na gawaing pambabae tulad ng paglalaba, pagbebenta at pag-aasikaso ng bahay. Ang mga klase ng gawain para sa “*food-for-work*” na pagkakakitaan sa Resettlement ay may kiling sa pagbibigay ng oportunidad para sa mga kalalakihan.

Makikita rin sa susunod na bahagi ukol sa buhay mag-asawa na ang mga gawaing pangreproduksyon at pambahay ay pangunahin pa ring inaasa sa mga kababaihan mula noon hanggang ngayon.

Ayon sa kanila, ang batayan ng hatian sa gawain ay ayon sa pangpisikal na pangangailangan nito – ang mga gawaing panlalaki ay mabigat o nangangailangan ng lakas ng katawan samantalang ang sa babae ay mga magaan lamang na gawaing tulad ng pagmimintina at paglilinis ng mga bagay-bagay. Kapag ginawa ng isang Ayta ang kabaligtaran ng dapat niyang gawin, siya ay pagtatawanan dahil ayon na rin sa isang lalaking lider: “Sa Ayta, pangit tignan ang gawain ng babae ay ginagawa ng lalaki”.

Ang Pagpapalaki ng Lalaki at Babaeng Ayta

Ang pagpapalaki ng lalaking anak ay hindi pareho sa babae. Ayon sa isang babaeng Ayta na naglahad ng kanyang talambuhay, bata pa lamang silang magkakapatid ay marunong na silang tumulong sa kanilang mga magulang sa gawain sa bahay at sa bukid. Sa murang edad na walong taon, ang mga lalaki ay tumutulong na sa pangangahoy sa bundok at pagtatrabaho sa “gasak” o kaingin. Ang mga batang babae naman ay sinasanay na maglaba at mag-alaga ng mga nakababatang kapatid. Sila rin ang obligadong mag-igib ng tubig bagaman ang mga kapatid na lalaki ay tumutulong din.

Ang mga bata ay malaya ring maglaro. Ngunit kapag tumatanda na ang batang babae, siya ay mas inaasahan na tumulong sa bukid o kaya’y mag-alaga ng mga kapatid. Samantala, ang mga kapatid na lalaki ay hindi obligadong mag-alaga ng mga kapatid at malayang gumala sa ilog o sa gubat para manghuli ng mga maliliit na ibon. Sa bukid, inaasahan ang mga babae na magbunot ng damo at magtanim ng gulay at gawaing inaatas ng lipunan para sa babae. Nakaranas na rin sila na magpaupa sa taniman na ang bayad ay mas mababa sa mga nakatatanda.

Ang mga babae at lalaki ay pinapag-aral din ng mga magulang sa paaralang pampubliko. Karaniwan, sila ay hindi nakakaabot sa mataas na antas ng pag-aaral, subalit, kung ikukumpara ang lalaki at babae, mas mataas ang naaabot ng mga kalalakihan. Halimbawa, ang mga babae ay aabot lamang ng grade 2 hanggang 4 ngunit ang mga lalaki ay puwedeng makatapos ng elementarya. Bukod sa kahirapan, ang pananaw ng mga magulang, lalo na ng ama, ay nakapagdudulot ng hangganan sa pag-aaral ng Aytang babae. Sinasabi na ang mga babae ay mauuwi lamang sa pag-aasawa at pamamalagi sa bahay, kung kaya’t hindi na kinakailangang magkaroon ng mataas na pinag-aralan. Isang salik din ay ang pag-oobliga sa mga anak na babae na magbantay sa mga kapatid kapag may trabaho sa bukid ang mga magulang. Dahil dito, ang bata ay napipilitang lumiban sa eskwela tulad ng nangyari sa isang nakapanayam na sinusundo pa ng nanay niya sa paaralan para mag-alaga ng mga kapatid.

Patuloy ang mga gawain ng mga babae sa bahay at sa bukid hanggang sa kanilang pagdadalaga. Sa bahay, bukod sa pag-aalaga at paglalaba, sila ay inaasahan na ring magluto ng pagkain para sa buong pamilya habang ang ina ay tumutulong sa *gasak*.

Ganoon din sa pagtitinda ng produkto sa palengke o sa paglako nito sa mga bahay-bahay.

Ngunit sa kanilang pagbibinata at pagdadalaga, ang mga Ayta ay makakaranas na rin ng ilang mga pagbabawal at pagrerenda ng mga gawi sa bawa't kasarian. Ayon sa nakuhang datos ni Abaya (2000), ang mga babae ay hindi dapat magpahalik at magpayakap sa lalaki. Dapat din niyang ingatan na hindi mahipo ang kanyang suso. Hindi na rin siya pinapayagang pumunta kung saan-saan. Kapag siya ay nahipuan o nahalikan ng lalaki, ito ay puwedeng maging dahilan para ipakasal ang dalawa. Hindi na rin maaaring hawakan ng mga lalaki ang ano mang parte ng katawan ng babae.

Buhay Mag-asawa

Ang mga Ayta ay karaniwang maagang nagsisipag-asawa kung kaya't *teen-ager* pa lamang sila ay patungo na sa pag-aasawa. Ang pagkakaroon ng relasyon ng dalawa ay dapat may pagsang-ayon ng mga magulang ng magkabilang panig upang manatili ang suporta nila sa mga panahon ng taghirap at di-pagkakaunawaan ng mag-asawa.

Kapag nagdesisyon na na magpakasal ang dalawa, magbibigay ang lalaki ng *bandi*³ bilang regalo sa pamilya ng babae – ang halaga ay itatakda ng partido ng babae. Ang partido rin ng lalaki ang gagastos sa pagpapakasal. Ayon sa isang nakapanayam na babae, ang *bandi* ay maaaring umabot ng P10,000 ngunit sa kanyang kaso, P500 lamang ang hiningi ng kanyang magulang. Sang-ayon sa kanya, natuwa naman siya sa maliit na halaga para hindi siya saktan ng kanyang mapapangasawa. Naniniwala siya na ang laki ng halaga ng *bandi* ay may kaugnayan sa karapatan ng lalaki na manakit ng asawa, bagaman ang pananakit ng asawa sa lipunang Ayta ay hindi pinahihintulutan. Sa kabilang banda, malaki rin ang tulong ng *bandi* sa partido ng babae dahil ito ay maaaring gamitin sa pagbili ng pagkain at iba pang pangangailangan ng pamilyang kanyang iiwanan. Kung minsan, dahil na rin sa kahirapan ng buhay, hindi na rin nakababayad ng *bandi* ang lalaki kung kaya't may pagkakataon na nagsasama na lamang ang magsing-irog.

Sa pagdaloy ng panahon, kapag hindi na magkasundo ang mag-asawa matapos silang pag-ayusin ng kanilang mga magulang, ang mag-asawa ay puwedeng maghiwalay at ang *bandi* at gastos sa pagpapakasal ay isosoli ng partido ng babae. Puwede ring mag-asawang muli ang alinman sa naghiwalay na mag-asawa kung hindi tututol ang kabilang panig. Ngunit sa ngayon, madalang na ring mauwi sa hiwalayan ang pagsasama ng mag-asawa dahil sa impluwensya ng Kristiyanismo at kahirapan ng buhay.

Ang pang-araw-araw na buhay-mag-asawa ay nakabatay na rin sa padron ng hatian sa gawain sa lipunan ng mga Ayta sa larangan ng produksyon at reproduksyon. Sa isang halimbawa ng isang araw sa buhay ng isang mag-asawa sa Talaan 4, makikita na ang babae ay nakatalaga sa pag-aasikaso ng bahay at pamilya habang ang lalaki ay pangunahing inaasahan na maghanap-buhay sa labas. Kapag may pagkakataon, ang

babae ay makakapaghanapbuhay din sa labas at ang anak na babae ang aasahan na mag-asikaso ng bahay, lalo na tuwing Sabado at Linggo kung kailan walang pasok sa paaralan ang mga anak. May sitwasyon din na tumutulong sa gawaing-bahay ang lalaki ngunit iyon ay kapag hindi puwede ang babae sa mga kadahilanang tulad ng pagkakasakit, pagiging matamlay, panganganak o pagkakaroon ng trabahong pagkakakitaan. Kapag nanganak at habang hindi pa nakakakain ng kanin ang bagong silang na anak, nananatili lamang sa bahay ang babae.

Sa pagdidisision sa bahay, ang kapasyahan ng lalaki ang masusunod sa mga sitwasyong tulad ng pagbebenta ng kalabaw, saan maninirahan ang pamilya, sino sa mga anak ang papag-aralin, mga produktong itatanim sa bukid, at pagpayag na hiramín ang kanyang kagamitan sa produksyon kagaya ng mga pana, gamit pangkarpintero at iba pa. Hindi rin obligado ang lalaki na sabihin sa asawa niya kung magkano ang kinita niya. Ang babae naman ay may sariling disision sa sitwasyong tulad ng pagbibigay ng pagkain sa kanyang mga kamag-*anak*.

Talaan 4: Isang Araw sa Buhay ng Mag-asawa sa Resettlement

BABAE		LALAKI	
Tantyang Oras ng Umpisa	Gawain	Tantyang Oras ng Umpisa	Gawain
4:00 n.u.	Gigising; maghahanda ng almusal; manggigising ang magpapakain ng mga anak; * isang beses sa iang linggo, pupunta sa Iba para magtinda ng produkto nila	4:00 n.u.	Gigising; * kung hindi babangon o may sakit ang asawa, paghahanda ng almusal
		5:00	Pupunta sa bukid/sakahan
6:00	Maglilinis ng bahay; mag-iigib ng tubig; Maglalaba		
10:00	Magluluto ng tanghalian		
11:00	Magpapakain ng mga anak na galing sa eskuwelahan		
12:00	Maghuhugas ng mga plato at pinaglutuan; *kung minsan, ang panganay na anak na babae ang maghuhugas ng pinggan at ang mga anak na lalaki ang mag-iigib ng tubig		
1:00	Mag-aalaga ng bata	5:00 n.h.	Uuwi mula sa sakahan
6:00	Magluluto ng hapunan		
7:00	Magpapakain ng mga anak; maglilinis ng pinagkainan		
9:00	Matutulog	9:00	Matutulog

Ang pagpapasya ng bilang ng magiging anak ay nasa kapasyahan pa rin ng lalaki. Halimbawa, may isang nakapanayam na babae ang nagbukas na naging walo ang kanilang anak dahil ang kanyang asawa ay nagpumilit na magkaroon ng lalaking anak. Nang apat na ang anak nila, ibig na niyang tumigil sa panganganak, ngunit dahilan sa iisa pa lamang ang lalaki, sinundan pa nila ang pag-aanak na umabot ng walo — limang babae at tatlong lalaki.

Ang mga pamana ng kamag-anak sa mag-asawa ay sumasalamin din sa papel nila sa lipunan – ang lalaki ay binibigyan ng pana, sibat, baril at iba pang magkatulad na gamit habang ang babae ay pinamamanahan ng antik na plato, damit, plantsa at iba pang gamit pangtahanan.

Paglahok sa Gawaing Pangkaunlaran

Sa buong Resettlement, mayroon nang 22 na samahang pangmasa at lima rito ay nasa Barangay Villa. Sa salaysay ng pagkakatatayo ng isang samahang pangmasa, lumalabas na may tendensya na mag-organisa ang mga lalaking Ayta at/o katuwang nitong mga NGOs (*non-governmental organizations*) at ahensya ng pamahalaan sa hanay ng kapwa kalalakihan. Mayroon ding mga kababaihan na nakakasali sa samahan ngunit ang bilang nila ay napakaliit. Sa katunayan, sa isang nadokumentong karanasan ng samahan ng mga Ayta, lumalabas na sa 48 na kasapi, walo lamang ang babae. Sa nangyaring dalawang beses na eleksyon ng mga opisyaes, iisa pa lamang ang nanalong babae. Mula nang itinatag ito noong 1994, wala pa ring babae ang naging kasapi ng anumang komite na itinayo. Kaya't masasabi na ang mga pagkakataon sa pamumuno ay abot-kamay lamang ng mga lalaking Ayta. May ilang posibleng salik sa pangyayaring ito – ang sistema ng pag-oorganisa na pinangunahan at pinagtuunan ng lalaki, ang tinatarget ng itinatayong samahan na programang pangkaunlaran na nagbibigay-diin sa kapakanan ng mga lalaki, ang sistema ng hatian ng gawain sa pagitan ng lalaki at babae, at ang mababang katayuan ng babae sa lipunan ng mga Ayta.

Kapansin-pansin din na ang mga inilunsad na panlipunang serbisyo, partikular na ang pangkalusugan, nutrisyon at *early childhood care and development*, ay karaniwang nilalahukan lamang ng mga nanay at iba pang kababaihan. Halimbawa, sa isang *feeding program* ng isang NGO, namobilisa ang mga nanay na magtulungan sa paglilinis ng kusina ng *health center* na pinagdausan, pagluluto at paghahain ng pagkain ng mga batang kulang sa pagkain, at pagtawag sa kapwa nanay na dalhin ang kanilang mga anak sa *health center*.

Pagninilay-nilay

Sa gawaing pangkaunlaran, ang usaping di-pantay na relasyon ng lalaki at babae sa isang lipunan ay hindi na dapat iwasang banggitin. Ang hindi pagtugon sa usaping ito

ay maaaring makapagpanatili at makapagpalala ng kalakaran kapag ito ay isasantabi ng mga manggagawang pangkaunlaran at lalo na ng pamahalaan na pangunahing may pananagutan na lumikha ng kondisyon upang makalahok ang mamamayan sa pagpapaunlad ng kanilang hanay at ng bansa. Mahalaga na mabigyan ng pantay na karapatan at oportunidad sa paglahok sa gawaing pangkaunlaran ang lalaki at babae sapagkat kapwa sila may sinusulong na makauring interes bilang mga katutubo at kapwa sila makikinabang sa isang pantay na kalakaran sa lipunan.

Ang pagkakaroon ng di-pantay na katayuan ng lalaki at babae sa lipunan at sa gawaing pangkaunlaran ng pamayanan ay nakikita sa kaso ng lipunan ng mga Ayta sa Zambales. Ang di-pantay na relasyon ng lalaki at babae sa kanilang lipunan ay nakita sa pangkasaysayang sistema ng hatian sa gawain at papel sa lipunan. Ito'y pinanatili at pinalubha pa ng pagpasok ng sistemang kapitalista at ng mga pangyayari sa pagsabog ng Bulkang Pinatubo.

Sa kasamaang-palad ang karamihan sa mga nakaraang pananaliksik (lalo na nang mga sinaunang buhay) ng mga buhay-buhay ng mga lalaki at babae sa lipunan ng mga Ayta at iba pang katutubo ay napokus lamang sa iilang paglalarawan ng iba't-ibang gawain at tungkulin at hindi ng pagsusuri ng umiiral na magkaibang katayuan at kalagayan. Ito'y dahil na rin sa hindi makasariang lente na ginamit sa pag-aaral. Gayun din ang gawaing pag-oorganisa sa hanay ng kababaihang Ayta na relatibo pang bago sa kasalukuyang yugto ng gawaing pangkaunlaran sa bansa.

Sinasadya man o hindi, may tendensya pa ring gamitin ng mga manggagawang pangkaunlaran ang mga nakagawiang estratehiya at pamamaraan sa gawaing pangkaunlaran at pagpapaunlad ng pamayanan na ginagamit sa mga pamayanan sa kapatagan at batayang sektor tulad ng magbubukid, manggagawa at mangingisda. Ito ay nakikita rin sa paggamit ng di-maka-babaeng proseso ng pag-oorganisa sa hanay ng kababaihang tagapatag. Sa kabuuan, sa iba't-ibang larangan ng gawaing pangkaunlaran, masasabing marami pa ring bulag sa usaping pangkalalakihan at pangkababaihan. Ang pamahalaan ay nagpupursigi pa ring ipilit sa mga katutubo ang makadayuhan at makapatag na modelo ng kaunlaran. Aminin man nila o hindi, marami pa ring mga manggagawa ng pamahalaan na punung-puno pa rin ng panglalait at pagkababa ng pagtingin (*ethnocentrism*) sa mga Ayta at iba pang pambansang minorya. Nagkukulang pa rin ang mga manggagawang pangkaunlaran sa pagpapalalim ng pagkakaunawa sa kultura at pang-araw-araw na kaganapan ng mga Ayta at iba pang pambansang minorya, kaalinsabay sa pag-unawa ng pambansa at pandaigdigang pangyayari.

Sa pananaliksik na ito, inaamin na ang paghusga na di-pantay ang kalakaran sa relasyon ng babae at lalaki sa lipunan ng mga Ayta ng Botolan ay sa paningin lamang ng nagsaliksik batay sa mga pag-aaral at teorya ukol sa usapang pangkababaihan at pangkalalakihan. Sa panig naman ng mga nakapanayam, hindi pa rin nila nakikita ang mga implikasyon ng umiiral na sistema ng hatian sa gawain at papel sa lipunan nila dahil naniniwala sila -

babae at lalaki – na ang lahat ng ito ay natural. Ngunit hindi rin maitatatwa na may maliit na kislap sa mata na naibunga ang mga kuwentuhan.

Sa kanilang pagbabahagi ng kanilang mga buhay-buhay, sana ay tuluyan nang umalingawngaw ang mga mumunting boses ng mga kabaro at kapatid nating Ayta sa kanilang pamayanan at tahanan. Sana ay umabot ito sa mga pandinig, pandama at pag-iisip ng mga mangagawang pangkaunlaran at ng pamahalaan upang tanggapin ang hamon ng pagbabago. Maging tagapatag man o maging katutubo, hindi na tayo dapat maging komportable sa mga nangyayaring iba't-ibang porma ng di-pantay na relasyon sa lipunan – sa uri, lahi at sa pagitan ng lalaki at babae. Ang lahat, lalaki man o babae, ay dapat nang lumaya sa sistemang pangkalalakihan na siyang bumabalot sa kasalukuyang kalakaran sa lipunan.

Pinagsanggunian:

Abaya, Eufrazio C. Places, Power, Sensibilities: The Politics of Placemaking in Loob Bunga. Resettlement, a final report submitted to the Center for Integrative and Development Studies. University of the Philippines, Quezon City, 62 pp 1999

_____. Therapeutic System Among the Ayta of Botolan, Zambales, preliminary draft. 2000 (on-going research).

Dominguez, Maria. Teresa C. Evolving Management Practices of People's Organizations: The Case of An Ayta Organization in a Resettlement Area in Botolan, Zambales. A masteral thesis submitted to the Department of Community Development, College of Social Work and Community Development. 206 pp. 2000

Eviota Elizabeth U. The Political Economy of Gender (Women and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Philippines). London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 212 pp 1999

Fox, Robert "The Pinatubo Negritos: Their Useful Plants and Material Culture", The Philippine Journal of Science. 81 (3-4): 173-414. 1952

Garvan, John M. The Negritos of the Philippines. Austria: Verlag Ferdinand Berger, Horn-Wien, 289 pp. 1964

Lebar, Frank M. (ed. and compiler) Negritos. In Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia. Vol. 2: Philippines and Formosa. New Haven, U.S.A.: Human Relations Area Files Press, pp.24-31. 1974

Reed, William Allan Negritos of Zambales, Department of the Interior-Ethnological Survey Publications (Vol. 11, Part 1). Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 90 pp. 1904

Shimizu, Hiromu Pinatubo Aytas: Continuity and Change. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, pp.6-19. 1989

Villanueva, Eric. "Birth Pains of a New Community" (pp.53-56) and "In the Cradle of the Volcano" (pp. 71-73), in From Victims to Victors: (The Mount Pinatubo Experience in Relief and Rehabilitation. DSWD Field Office III and the Mt. Pinatubo Commission. 1996

¹ Ayon din kay Lebar (1975), may mga panawag din sa sarili ang mga katutubo na galing o bansag din ng mga "tagalabas" tulad ng *Ita* na nangangahulugan na maitim.

² May paglalarawan at pagpapaliwanag ding ginawa si Victoria Narciso Apuan ukol sa kalagayan at katayuan ng mga Babaeng Ayta sa Pampanga bilang bahagi ng kanyang masteral thesis na may pamagat na "Ang Paraan ng Pag-angkop ng mga Kababihang Ayta ng Baryo Camachiles, Floridablanca, Pampanga sa Pagsabog ng Bulkang Pinatubo (Hunyo 1991- Mayo 1993): Isang Panimulang Pag-aaral" na isinumite noong Hunyo, 1993 sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas- Diliman.

³ Para sa isang pag-aaral ukol sa mga karanasan ng mga Ayta sa praktis na *bandi*, tunghayan ang *masteral thesis* (para sa antropolohiya sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas sa Diliman) ni Monica Santos na may pamagat na "*Transacting Bridewealth: Marriage Among the Ayta in Loob-Bunga Resettlement*" (Abril, 2001), at ni Victoria Narciso Apuan (Hunyo, 1993).

Bridging the gap: a development framework for assisting older persons

Leticia Salvador-Tojos, Ph.D, RSW

...the true keynote of life is growth, not aging. Life does not grow old. So-called age is the deterioration of enthusiasm, faith to live, and the will to progress. (Dr. Lillian R. Dangott & Dr. Richard A. Kalish, "The Time to Enjoy the Pleasures of Aging", p. 9)

Introduction

"Lola" (grandmother) and **"Lolo"** (grandfather) are terms of endearment to us, Filipinos. We love them even if they are **"makulit"** (irritatingly repetitive). We defer to them because of their wisdom. We respect and sometimes fear them because they are strict. Grandparents, too, have time for us. They listen to our problems and misadventures. They sometimes protect us from our angry parents, empathize and cry with us when we are suffering from pain and laugh with us when we are joyful. But they too have stories to tell about their life experiences. They are Lola Basyang, conveying lessons and insights about what the world taught them. Thus, they become central in the reproduction of our own culture.

In our history books, we clearly see the evidently high regard for senior citizens. For instance, the male older persons in the barangay composed the Council of Elders. They were the political leaders who decided on critical issues affecting their constituents. They arbitrated in cases of disputes and interpreted the law in their own locality. This practice is still true especially in the culture of the indigenous peoples. The well-off elderly are also considered the patriarchs and matriarchs in a clan. They retain their power and influence until they bequeath this to another member or until they die. As part of the support system in the family, their assistance is also requested in the care of

their grandchildren when their children go out to engage in productive endeavors.

Situations, however, are changing. Many families are subjected to many complications in their existence. With the pressing economic problems affecting the Filipino households nowadays, couples as well as other members of the family have to earn a living. Working women can no longer be that available to look after their old and ailing parents or relatives. This limitation has been a tension point both for the children and the parents because the value of caring, as part of the debt of gratitude has a premium to us, Filipinos. In fact, it is an expectation of parents, especially from their daughters.

Present Construction about Older Persons

Words and meanings are also changing and with it, the regard or value for one's contribution in society. The productivity of an individual is recognized but up to a certain stage – 65, the age of retirement. No matter how alert one's mind is or how functional s/he still is, s/he is expected to retire from productive endeavors.

Many organizations are now promoting the view about the **dynamism of the youth**. For them, young blood infuses life and creativity to the group's existence. This high regard for them is seen in advertisements for job openings. A common criterion specified is the age limit. Opportunities for the training of personnel also limit the age of would-be participants. It supports the popular saying, "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks" which indicates a belief that older people can no more change their set ways nor learn something new. Unaware, these messages promote **ageism**, the marginalization, discrimination, and abuse of the elderly.

Manifestations of ageism in our present culture are embedded in our beliefs and practices as well as in our language. Many stereotyped notions have guided us in the way we relate with them. Thus, there are senior citizens who have been neglected or cut off from the mainstream of their family life because of their health condition. Family members oftentimes become so protective of them that a number of activities that give them a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction have been curtailed. They have been confined in the home with very limited interaction with other people. Grandchildren are spending less and less time with their grandparents because of the other activities available to them like mall, net surfing, movies, and discos. As a result, they no longer bond together as before. Thus, the centrality of the older persons' role in culture reproduction is diminished.

People nearing their golden years do not seem to look forward to this stage of their life. They experience **gerontophobia** or the fear of aging. Retirees, who have not been prepared for retirement or who have not realized the implications of being separated from what they have been doing for years, become depressed, irritable, and sometimes withdrawn as a result of lessened self-esteem and a strong feeling of insecurity.

about their future. From observation, too, one will note the increase in the number of people dyeing their hair because white ones are starting to grow. Many advertised products, from milk to vitamins, to soaps and cosmetics claiming to slow the aging process are now selling like pancakes in the market. The demand for these items seems to be great because many people especially women would like to look younger than their ages. Some willingly undergo surgical procedures to maintain their youthful look.

Filipino's Regard for the Elderly as Reflected in Language and Behavior

Our language and some of our customs manifest a strong respect for our elders. The use of "po" and "opo" as well as the kissing of their hand as a greeting are still practiced in our culture. There are however some terms that manifest ageism and have gender undertones. "*Gurang*", "*tanda*", and "*laos*" are some Filipino words meaning old. These terms are often used in the context of "making fun of" and connote a loss of something – ability – ("*makakalimutin*" or forgetfulness), speed ("*mabagal kumilos*" or slow foot), and attractiveness ("*laos*" or past one's prime, "*amoy lupa, mapanghi*" or having an unpleasant odor). Some typical notions about them are "*makulit*" or irritatingly repetitive, "*masungit*" or cranky, "*mahirap pakisamahan*" or difficult to get along with and "*nagmumurang kamatis*" or trying to appear young.

Gender issues also come into play in the lives of older persons. While the males can go out and be with their drinking buddies or other friends, the able women are still attached to reproductive responsibilities. They help in the chores at home as well as take care of their grandchildren. Men, who have lost their partners, can easily get another one because it is acceptable for them to court women of their desire. Moreover, their value as males does not diminish with age. On the other hand, widows are at the receiving end of affection. It is not acceptable for them to court the object of their interest. In addition, since women are regarded as commodities in our patriarchal society, they become less and less attractive (*luma*) as they grow older.

To a certain extent, families who are financially inadequate consider the care of their elderly a "pabigat" (burden) in terms of finances and time especially if they are "*sakitin*" (sickly) and "*alagain*" (someone needing care).

With these stereotypes, some people, especially the women, would not even admit that they are already grandmothers and grandfathers. They would like their grandchildren or the younger generation to call them "*Nanay*", "*Mama*", *Lola Mommy* or *Daddy*.

But is aging really a miserable stage in one's life? Do we have to battle with sickness and isolation and just wait for our time to come? Or do we have options?

Who are the Older Persons?

Older persons are those who belong to the age range sixty years old and above. They have undergone biological and physiological changes such as:

- ❖ Hormonal: lessened/no more supply of testosterone and estrogen
- ❖ Atrophy of the women's reproductive organs (ovaries and womb), vaginal dryness
- ❖ Lessened potency of men's reproductive organ

They are equipped with knowledge, attitude, skills and wisdom from life's experiences. Although quite a number of them may be physically or psychologically handicapped, they are productive people who can contribute to development and can lead satisfying lives.

The Older Persons' Construction About Their Situation

With the improvement of the health status of Filipinos, the lifespan of older persons has increased. Statistics from the Department of Health show that in the Year 2000 the elderly population comprised 4.5 of 75 million or 6.1% of the total population. By years 2020 and 2030, their projected number will increase to 10 million and 14.5 million respectively. Definitely, there will be implications in resource allocation and management including programs and services for them. In the review of related literature about maturing people, majority of the information available dealt with the senior citizens in hospice care. The local documents included some demographic data about this sector and a write-up about the different programs and services as well as legislations that would benefit them. There is however, a dearth of materials about how this group view their golden years and how they are coping with their situation.

With these information gaps, I was challenged to get more data about the situation of older persons and mainly from their points of view. I decided to conduct focus group discussions (FGD) with them in two areas - Binangonan, Rizal and Quezon City. The areas were selected based on their accessibility to the facilitator as well as their rural and urban characteristics. Binangonan is in the periphery of Metro Manila. It may be described as a semi-urban town because many of the amenities of the urban center can be found in the place. However, it has maintained quite a number of its traditional values and practices like the extended family system, high regard for older persons, the value of "utang na loob" or debt of gratitude, to name a few. Quezon City, on the other hand, is urbanized. With the fast pace of life in the city come changes in family values, beliefs, and practices. For instance, the household structure has become more and more nuclear and family members have succumbed to the influences of city life like individualism and consumerism, among others. The varying situations in these two areas would be con-

sidered when the older persons recount their experiences and share their opinions and insights in the course of the FGDs. I felt that this beginning endeavor is important because it can open other opportunities for more research undertakings on older persons.

The information that were gathered from the older people were:

- a. their concept of aging,
- b. their regard for themselves now that they are in this stage of their life,
- c. assistance they expect from their families, communities, and from the government,
- d. problems they have at present, and
- e. their hopes and dreams.

Some of the information shared by the elderly participants in a forum held in the College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines (CSWCD, UP) last December 2001 was also included.

Table 1. Profile of the Elderly Respondent (Demographic Data)

Variables	Binangonan Group (8)	Quezon City Group (3)
Age range	61 - 75	67 - 83
Religion	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic
Civil status	Married – 5; widows – 2; single - 1	Married – 1, widows - 2
Educational attainment	Elementary level – 4 High school level – 1 College level – 1 College graduate - 2	Elementary level - 3
Occupation	Self – employed - 4	Self – employed -3

The elderly participants in Binangonan were a mixed group – five males and three females. They all belong to the federated Senior Citizens Association of that town. Their ages ranged from sixty-one (61) to seventy-five (75) years old. They are all Roman Catholics and this strong spiritual bonding with their Creator has provided the needed strength and fulfillment in their lives. In terms of their civil status, five are married while two are widows and one is single. Except for one who lives by herself, all the others still stay with their families – husbands, wives, unmarried and/or married children with their families. They, too, have varying levels of educational attainment. One female and three males reached the elementary level; one male got to high school; one female earned units in first year

College; and one male and one female graduated from the tertiary level. The two who were able to finish a course became employed in offices and upon retirement, are now receiving pensions.

All participants have previous occupations. Four participants, a dressmaker, a businessman, school janitor, and a fisherman are still involved in their productive endeavors and are bringing in income to the family, although to a limited extent.

The maturing people are all active in community work. In addition to being officers of the Senior Citizens Association, one male and one female are choir members in their Church; two are actively involved in religious organizations; one male is a barangay official and two females belong to social groups, one as an adviser.

In Quezon City, the three maturing women who participated in the focus group discussion belong to the same neighborhood. Their ages ranged from sixty-seven (67) to eighty-three (83) years old. They are all Roman Catholics. Two of them are widows while one is married. Their highest educational attainment is elementary. According to them, the Japanese war deterred them from pursuing higher education. Although they are living with their families or relatives, they work full time as vendors because they want to provide for their own needs. Presently, they are not affiliated with any organization.

The three maturing people who represented their sector in the CSWCD forum at the CSWCD are community /group leaders, organizers, and advocates. Two of them are women and one is a male.

Concept of Aging and Regard for Self

When asked about their concept of aging and their regard for themselves, being at this stage of their lives, their answers were varied, though the males and females were in agreement in many aspects.

The women recognized the need to be health conscious in order to live longer. They are gratified when they can help other people and undertake activities beneficial to the community. It gives them a sense of satisfaction and makes them feel younger and better (*parang teenager*). One woman also expressed her regard for herself by asking the question "*Nasaan kayo ngayon kung wala kami noon?*" (Where would you be now if we were not here before?) This is her way of acknowledging her role as a producer of life here on earth. In Quezon City the elderly women pride themselves for being healthy, up and about as well as for their ability to still provide for themselves.

The men, on the other hand, are more philosophical when they look at the stage they are in. They recognize aging as brought about by time, time moving forward, and time

advancing. One also said that this concept is determined by the environment. Thus, the regard for them changes with time. One has to be flexible in order to enjoy this phase of one's life.

The forum participants appear to have a high self-esteem. Aling C. shared that since she became a community organizer, she never stopped her effort in developing herself. *"Patuloy ang aking pagbabasa, pag-aanalisa at paglalagom ng karanasan at pagbabahagi ng aking kaalaman sa iba"* (I continue to read, analyze and systematize my experiences and share them with others.) According to her, her mind is as sharp as ever. In fact, she looks younger than her age. She also said that at her age, the bullies and the alcoholics in their barangay listen to her because her leadership is very much accepted. She has become the *"tagapayo"*, *"tagapamayapa"* (counselor, arbiter) in their area. Aling A., on the other hand, has been very active in organizing work. A recognized leader in their own community, she has devoted her time helping an NGO implement their programs for maturing women. Mang R. stays in an institution for the elderly. Because he is still able, he assists the staff in working for their welfare. In the course of his work there, he fell in love with one of the elderly women in the institution, courted her and recently got married.

The participants' concept of aging is thus compatible with the growth theory which looks at maturation as a stage of further development and living life to the fullest. The older persons' high regard for themselves and their contribution to others and their community goes to show that the advancement in age is not a deterrent in pursuing higher goals in life. One factor that contributes to their high self-esteem is their productivity and economic independence. Their children still ask for financial support even though they already have their own families. Those who belong to organizations seem to be more confident and fulfilled because they can extend assistance to and make other older persons happy. They are a living proof that people can enjoy their existence at present as they did in their youth because they have a positive attitude towards their own personhood. Their noticeably strong faith in a higher Being has inspired and motivated them to go through life's challenges with confidence.

Family's and Community's Regard of Them

Although majority of the participants responded that they are regarded with respect especially because they are still helping their children financially or through their services, there were a few who verbalized their perception that their children and grandchildren sometimes make them feel that they are a burden to the family. They become very sensitive to this. *"Napakasakit kung minsan."* (It hurts sometimes.)

Quite a significant number of them noted the actuations of the younger generation, particularly their *"apo"* and sometimes their own children who answer them back with

disrespect. To them, this behavior is unthinkable because during their time, a look from their parents (*“nakukuha sa tingin”*) meant that they should stop arguing or they must obey.

Kissing the hand of older persons as a sign of respect (*“pagmamano”*) is not as widely practiced as before especially in urban areas. Family togetherness has not been sustained because it is not realistic anymore to expect household members to be at home by 6 o'clock for the *“orasyon”* or prayer. The FGD participants long for the revival of these practices that manifest the high respect accorded to them by the younger generation.

The answers of the older persons revealed that, to a large extent, their families still hold them in high esteem because of the support that they provide to their respective families. Some, though, have the perception that they are becoming a burden to their households. Others also mentioned that they are treated with disrespect by their children and grandchildren.

For the older persons who belong to a community and are doing community work, their responses indicated that their assistance to people have been very much appreciated. They have been accorded the respect that they deserved and the recognition of their able leadership in their community.

Problems and Fears of Older Persons

When asked about their problems and fears, two males in the Binangonan group and the females in the Quezon City group verbalized that their household members seemed unwilling to assist them, *“kinatatamarang pagsilbihan”, hindi ka maaasikaso ng anak mo”, “mapapabayaan ka nila”*. They recognize though, that the reason for this seeming neglect is their children's own families. Their children, especially their daughters, are also burdened with responsibilities in the home.

Another problem brought out by a female participant is the difficulty relating with daughters – in – law. They seem to expect the elderly to help in the house on a full time basis so as not to be considered a burden. Because of this pressure, she was therefore forced to leave their abode so that she will not be compelled to do something against her will or when she is not up to it. She expressed that she wants her time to be her own. Most of them also said that since they are aware that their health is slowly failing, they need money for medicines and other necessities. While many of them are still earning, their incomes are not adequate to meet their requirements.

One of their greatest fears is to be bedridden or incapacitated for a long time because they do not want to be a burden to their families. One female participant experienced caring for her husband for several years and she said that it was really very difficult to

be a caregiver. She is sure that her children will not be able to attend to her needs the way she did to her husband.

Aling C. encapsulated the situation of the elderly in an urban poor community:

- They are poor. They cannot find work even when they are still able and they have no access to social services.
- The grandmothers are usually the caregivers of their grandchildren. Because of their role, conflicts in disciplining arise between them at times. Moreover, they are oftentimes confined to their homes, narrowing their world as well as their perspectives.
- More often than not, their needs are not attended to because those of their grandchildren take precedence, such as their school fees, allowances, and supplies.

As reflected in their answers, the problems and fears of older persons revolve around the inadequacy of money to meet their needs and being bedridden. They repeatedly said that they do not want to encumber their families.

Expected Care from the Family, Community and the Government

Being organized, the Binangonan group and the elderly CO workers are knowledgeable about the legislated benefits for older persons. In fact, they verbalized the flaws in the implementation of the said laws. They also came up with a number of suggestions that the government and the community can undertake for their benefit.

- a. Provision of emergency financial assistance;
- b. Allotment of a budget for the allowances of the Senior Citizens Organizations;
- c. Free or 50% discount for the hospitalization of the elderly and a hospital which would serve only older persons;
- d. Increase in funeral / burial assistance; and
- e. Clarification about the use of the senior citizens' funds coming from the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) funds in their locality.

The participants from Quezon City are not members of any group at present. Thus, they are not aware of any benefit for the elderly. That being the case, they do not expect any assistance from the government or from the community.

From their families, both groups do not expect any assistance because they and their

families still help one another in whatever way they can. They prefer to be independent, taking care of themselves and their own needs. They are quite happy with their realization that they can still support themselves.

- ❖ The maturing people may have a basis for their desire to be independent and their avoidance to be bedridden because of the experiences of Golden Acres. This institution, in charge of the rehabilitation of the elderly and the provision of temporary shelter for the poor ones, finds it difficult to discharge those who have recovered. Families refuse to accept them despite of the social worker's effort to reunite them. The institution is thus constrained to take them in permanently and provide the necessary social services.
- ❖ Their experiences also show us that the concept of care for the older family members is changing with the concomitant slack in the economy of the Philippines. Thus there should be recognition of this factor as well as the introduction of interventions to address this concern.

The Hopes and Dreams of Older Persons

Most of the elderly want to have a longer life so that they can still help others, fulfill their mission, and accomplish God's plan for them. This, in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is the level of self-actualization where one devotes his/her life for others. This "other directedness" is more manifest in older persons who belong to a group. A female participant verbalized that her dream is to see her grandchild graduate from college, "*para makita ko ang aking pinaghirapan*" (to see the fruits of my labor). All of them also said that, if at all, they prefer a sudden death so that their families will be free from the burden of care.

Aling C. also enjoins the other maturing people to engage themselves in community activities, not just in the concerns of their grandchildren. They are mothers, too. They are nurturing. The community has a high regard for them. They are good in analyzing situations because of their wide experiences. Thus, communities which are suffering from poverty and injustice need their knowledge and skills.

Framework for Assisting Older Persons

A. Lens in Viewing Aging and Older Persons

As mentioned earlier, the construction of aging has changed through time. In the book entitled "*A Time to Enjoy the Pleasures of Aging*", Dr. Lillian R. Dangott and Dr. Richard A. Kalish noted some theories which were used in

looking at senior citizens and the process of aging. These theories of human development (1979:40-41) that they mentioned are:

1. Theory of Decline

What grows and ripens eventually decays and declines. The concept is borrowed from the natural sciences and is based on a biological analogy. This theory perpetuates the idea that disease is natural and expected in older persons because their organs are not efficiently functioning anymore. Moreover, their faculties are deteriorating.

2. Theory of Stability

Adults tend to stabilize after adolescence. Change occurs primarily through trauma or accident. This concept is primarily based on psychoanalytic thought. The subtle implication is that change is negative. Freud thought that identity is established by the end of childhood and produces fairly consistent behavior thereafter, modified largely by trauma or accident. This idea rationalizes the current belief that we cannot teach old dogs new tricks. A person thus reaches the brim of his/her development during adolescence. Thus, the capacities manifested will remain stable as one advances in age.

3. Theory of Environmental Determinism

Change is determined by the individual's ability to respond to his/her surroundings with few personality predispositions. Personality is shaped by, and is the sum of, the environment, including social experiences and roles. The concept also implies negativism in that the individual is molded by the environment, or by others, and is not in reality, one "individual". This perspective has been fostered, in part, by behavior modification. A corollary to the Theory of Stability, this concept looks at life and living as constantly adjusting to an objective reality, the pervading norms of society, "what should be or what is acceptable".

The first three theories seem to have rationalized the prevailing mainstream messages about the elderly. This is seen in the various myths perpetuated about old age. If we examine them, we will realize the role that these theories played in perpetuating prevailing stereotypes.

- ❖ Old people are helpless. They become intolerant. *Their sex organs are dried up. They can't understand youthful progress and are stuck in the past. Senility is judged an inevitable part of aging.*

- ❖ *Old age is looked upon as a period characterized by poor health, resistance to change, failing mental powers, physical decay, economic insecurity and dependency. (Dangott and Kalish:1979, 11-12)*

The theories of decline and stability have denied the maturing people the dynamism of life and have entrapped us into believing that senescence is a stage of physical and mental deterioration, where one just waits for his/her time to end. This view disempowers many senior citizens and incapacitates them to lead happy and fulfilled lives. They are forced to live as expected – withdrawn, hating the state that they are in and feeling empty, thus hastening their decline. Therefore, it is not surprising that many people are trying to deny or are having difficulty accepting that they are in their golden years.

A number of programs and projects developed by some government and non-government agencies and made available to this sector, are curative in nature and are geared towards health, hospice care, and case management including counseling for the neglected and abandoned. This is due to the fact that the condition of the elderly is linked to the advancement in their age rather than to their health condition and lifestyle when they were still young. Preventive and liberating interventions were not emphasized.

4. Theory of Growth

Adults have the ability to be self-actualizing throughout. Any age contains a potential for "maturity" (Vispo), "becoming" (Allport), development of the "creative self" and the striving for superiority (Adler), a "growing concept of self" (Jung), of "self-actualization" (Maslow, Rogers). Our natural development is toward growth; life is a process of expansion. This concept, more than any other, looks upon change as potentially positive.

With the facts given about older persons, the theory of growth provides a very positive outlook about this stage of a person's life cycle. This alternative paradigm espouses the belief that even as a person matures, s/he continues to develop and change for the better. Studies have shown that the significant works produced or created by quite a number of celebrities were in their advanced ages, thus, disputing the fact that being productive has a limit:

..... Giuseppe Verdi composed operas at 80, Bertrand Russell, an English philosopher, at 78 was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Albert Einstein....Robert Frost.... and George Burns, all had productive old age (1979:23).

On the local scene, Gregoria de Jesus or more popularly known as Tandang Sora, who helped make the Philippine Revolution an success, joined the Katipunan at 82. Celestina

Latonera, who is well in her seventies, is up to the present providing training and organizing communities in Quezon City. Former Senator Jovito Salonga, former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos are still very much active in the political scene. Mr. Chino Roces and former Senator Lorenzo Tanada, were then in their eighties but were very active street parliamentarians.

With the abovementioned examples, the empowering quality of this view becomes quite evident. It provides another option for the elderly to be proactive and contributing members of society rather than reactive, helpless individuals. It gives them the chance to work for their own happiness and that of others and to seek their own fulfillment. It also prepares them to accept death and dying as part of life. Moreover, this framework considers older people as a resource because their services can be utilized in assisting individuals and groups in need. It is strengthened by the results of researches conducted:

1. *Intelligence is relatively stable throughout life, unless the person is suffering from a health condition affecting her or his cognitive abilities ... Learning is possible at any age.*
2. *Physical activity can continue throughout a person's life ... Lifestyle and environmental/cultural factors, rather than age, are primarily related to the amount of activity in a person's life.*
3. *Creativity can occur at any age.*
4. *Individuals with more education have better health and appear able to adapt more successfully.*
5. *Personality does not change drastically with aging. People show a consistency throughout life. When personality does change, it is not directly the result of aging.*
6. *The sex drive and related behavior often continue well into the eighties.*
7. *Age is a poor index of the difference between people in their abilities to find pleasure in living and to experience happiness. (Dangott & Kalish, 1979: 18-19)*

B. Principles Guiding our Assistance to Older Persons

These are some principles that should guide development workers in assisting older persons:

1. A person who is born healthy will have a healthy old age if s/he leads a healthy lifestyle in a healthy environment.
2. Older persons can contribute significantly to the development process.
3. Older persons are creative and can still learn new skills.
4. Older persons can still undertake productive endeavors.
5. Older persons can work for their own happiness and seek their own fulfillment.

C. Problems and Issues Facing Older Persons

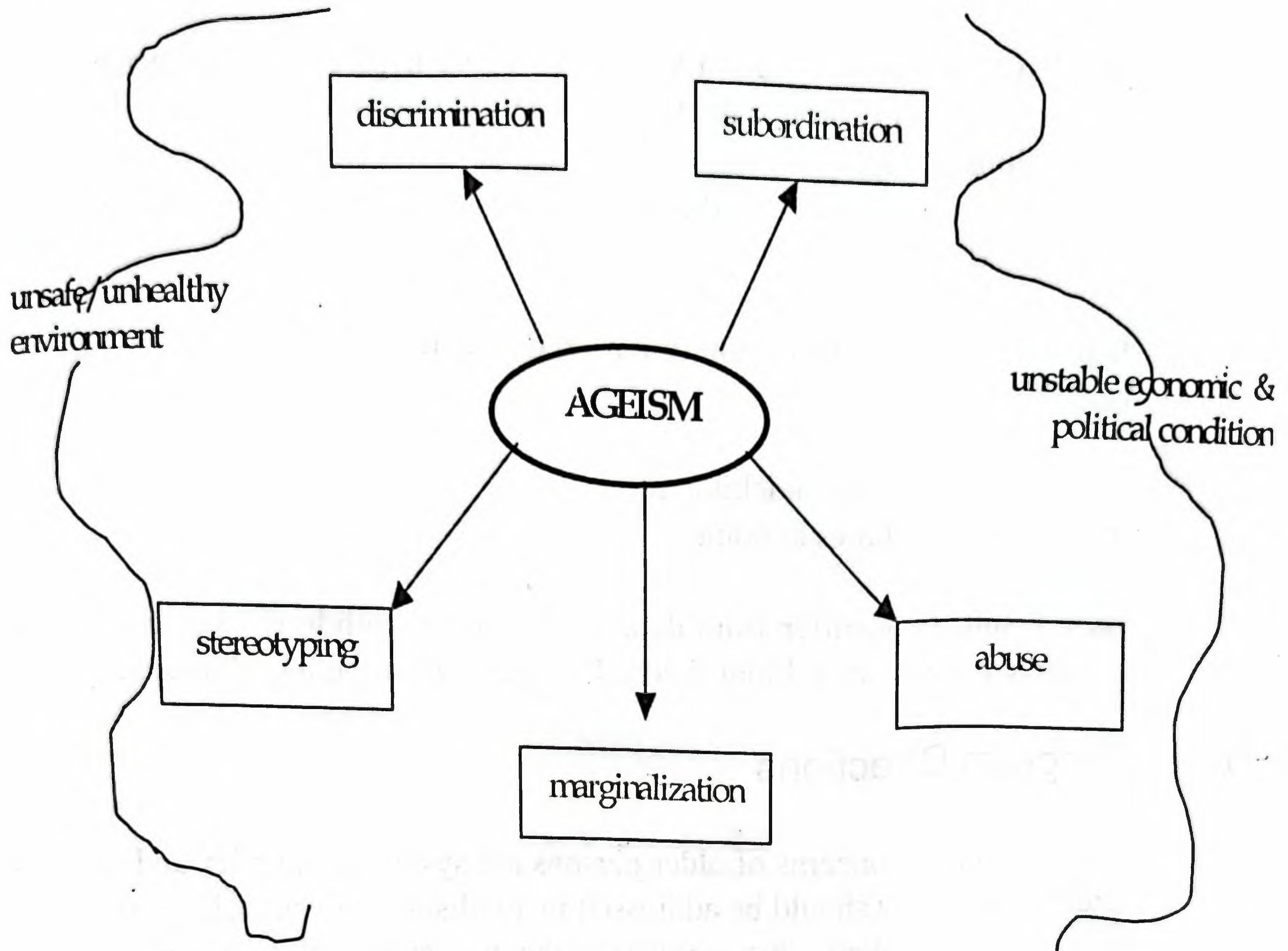
Researches have shown that older persons in general experience ageism which is the discrimination, subordination, marginalization and abuse of older persons because of stereotyped notions and myths about aging and older persons. These are culture-based and have been embedded in the minds of Filipinos.

The issues and problems of older persons, however, must be appreciated in the context of the prevailing economic and socio-political condition in the Philippines. For instance, retirement from economic activities can be seen in the light of competition over very limited resources. Thus, the younger ones are prioritized (given preferential treatment) over the more senior ones. Another example is care giving. This role is expected especially from the women in the family. But because they are now more involved in work outside the home, this becomes an additional source of tension in the family. Should this still be a household affair or should the state intervene? One cannot also discount the environment and its impact on the health status of older persons.

Discrimination refers to the prejudices experienced by older persons on account of their age.

- Putting age limit to educational opportunities
- Retiring people from work on the basis of age – 60 to 65 years old

Marginalization means that older persons have less control over benefits, privileges and services. Their capabilities or contributions are not recognized and appreciated.



- Because of the assumption that families take care of their older persons, programs and services addressing their specific needs are quite inadequate.
- This sector lacks the information needed to understand the physical changes that occur in their bodies.

Subordination refers to the lowering of people's regard for older persons.

- Considered weak due to physical/mental deterioration
- Overprotected, their mobility curtailed
- Excluded from decision-making processes in the family
- Social exclusion

Stereotyping refers to the pervading myths and notions about older persons which do not have bases.

- Physical deterioration
- Senility as natural among older persons
- Sexual inactivity
- Financial dependence

Abuse of older persons by caregivers can be manifested in several ways:

- Psychological/emotional abuse: isolation, neglect of older persons, absence of interaction with other members of the family, made fun of in terms of limited capacities
- Economic abuse: refusal to provide for needs of older persons
- Verbal abuse: threats, curses, shouting at them

Burden of reproductive function passed on to the elderly, especially to women

- Taking care of grandchildren
- Doing the chores at home

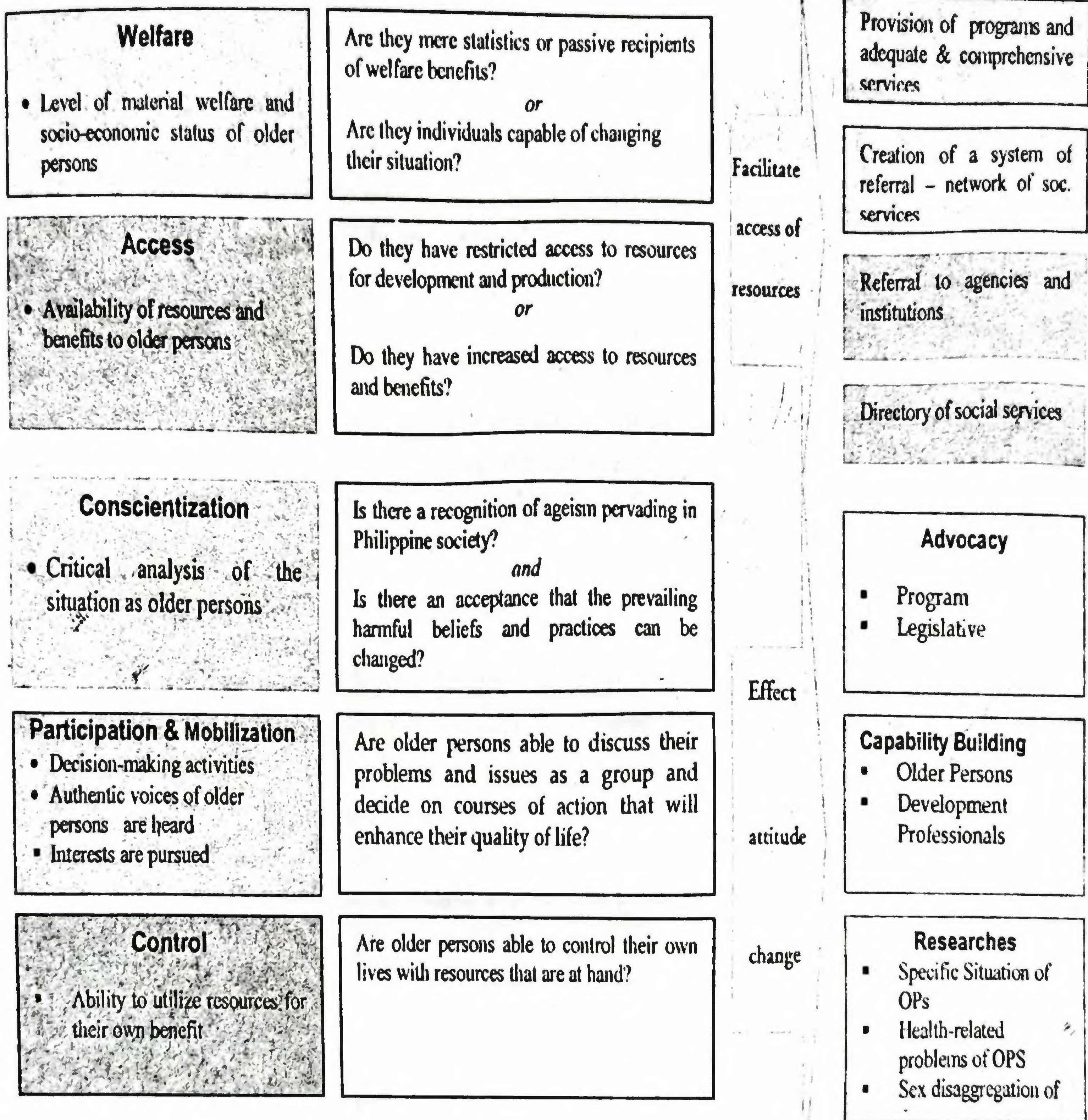
As a result, they suffer from depression. They withdraw, become overly sensitive because of a diminished self-esteem and a feeling of insecurity.

D. Program Directions

The issues and concerns of older persons are systemic, complex and interrelated. Thus, they should be addressed in a holistic manner, tackling the very root of their problem. This necessitates the provision of a continuum of interventions which must have a bias for older persons who belong to the lower strata of society. This implies varying levels of assistance/approaches that should be provided based on the needs of the sector. They range from curative/rehabilitative to preventive, developmental, and liberating. Concretely adopting Sara Hlupekile Longwe's "Equality and Empowerment Framework" will lead to a more comprehensive program direction. Thus, CSWCD is moving towards the empowerment of older persons. This means:

- Changing the regard of Philippine society towards older persons and looking at them as co-equal with other sectors and
- Assisting them to have access and control over resources and benefits.

Levels of Empowerment



References:

- Abaya, Adel G. The Elderly in the Philippine Population, *The Elderly in Asia*. Manila: UST Press, 1982, pp. 293 – 301.
- Dangott, Lillian R. and Kalish, Richard A. A Time to Enjoy the Pleasures of Aging. New Jersey: Prentice – Hall, Inc., 1979, 182 pp.
- Longwe, Sara Hlupekile, Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework, 1998

Notes on the Authors

JOSEFINA M. ROLLE is a University Researcher at the Research and Extension for Development Office of the College of Social Work and Community Development. She has been involved in a number of studies which include migration, overseas workers, children, sexual harassment, sexual violence, program/project evaluation and conflict management. Her most recent study was on the child workers in the footwear industry of Binan, Laguna where she gathered first hand information on the plight of working children. She is currently involved in an interagency activity aimed at coming up with a database on the older persons in our society which will be used in planning for better programs and services for them.



Si MARIA TERESA CHENG DOMINGUEZ ay kalahok sa samu't- saring larangan ng gawaing pangkaunlaran. Mahilig magturo at matuto sa eskuwelahan at komunidad; nagtapos ng antropolohiya (AB) at pangkaunlarang komunidad (MA) sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, Diliman; kasalukuyang senior lecturer sa Kolehiyo ng Gawaing Panlipunan at Pagpapaunlad ng Pamayanan, Departamento ng Gawaing Panlipunan; nanay ng tatlong lumalaking bata.



LETICIA SALVADOR-TOJOS is a University Extension Specialist at the Research and Extension for Development Office and a faculty of the Department of Community Development. She is involved in advocacy work for a wide range of issues including gender, welfare of peasants, workers, children and older persons, among others. She is also a trainer and a researcher. Her post-graduate studies were in the areas of Social Work and Communication which she pursued at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

