

Women Participation in Oyster Production in Pangasinan

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Abstract – Climate and potential culture grounds are the major reasons of Filipinos to engage in oyster production. Labor, usually manual labor, is an important factor in oyster production. The participation of women in any livelihood activity signifies their importance as an economic human being and that their contribution is being recognized and valued. However, her role in any productive and economic activity such as in the case of oyster production was studied in order to determine her importance and value as perceived by them.

This study described the participation of women in oyster production in Pangasinan particularly in Naguilayan, Binmaley, and Lucao, Dagupan City. The indicators that help the researchers describe the subjects of this study were profile, participation in oyster production, reasons for participating in oyster production and their view on gender stereotyped statements. Frequency counts, ranking, percentages and mean were used. The study revealed that the respondents are adult, achieved an average level of education, without other sources of income, have an adequate size of oyster farm, and earning monthly income enough for the family. They are confined in less challenging work in oyster production. Respondents are still stereotypical. It is recommended that respondents should assess their knowledge and skills and use them for other livelihood activities. The local government units, government organization, peoples organizations, and non-government organization should intervene if financial constraints impede women from acquiring education and later to develop more of their capabilities as economic women and social individual. Gender sensitivity training and establishment of people's organization or cooperative are needed.

Keywords – women, oyster, participation, production, gender

INTRODUCTION

Oysters were cultured since the 1930s. Intertidal areas such as those in Hinigaran River in Negros Occidental and Bacoor Bay in Cavite were found to be as cultivation grounds for *Crassostrea iredalei* or slipper-shaped oyster, formerly known as *Ostrea iredalei*. Bamboo stake, bamboo lattice, and hanging method were used.

According to Mr. Reivin Vinarao of Lingayen Agriculture Office, from 5,174MT of shells and by-products produced for export in 1979 with a value of P106,269, the total produced in 2004 was 5,478MT and equivalent to P1,120,127. The top 4 producing regions were Regions 1, 3, 4 and 6. In region 1, Pangasinan, La Union and Ilocos Sur were identified as oyster producing provinces.

The Philippines produced oyster because of the climate and vast area of potential culture grounds. Technology as to culture and post-harvest handling and processing is also available. Moreover, the demand both to the local and international market is increasing. Problems on oyster production include low supply for the international market, the reliance of oyster farmers

on traditional methods, lack of technical know-how on modern methods, products were sold at a low price, people's perception on the safety of oyster, and about perishability of the product. The gender concept on oyster production is silent.

Male or female has the right to the same opportunities to achieve a full and satisfying life. This is a gender concept embedded in so many materials and literature. The government is very vocal in addressing the inequalities between women and men through gender and development [1]. Gender and development are trying the women's and men's role and contribution in development more visible.

The government is looking for ways to curb the negative consequences of gender discrimination in the country. Reports such as organized labor sector remains heavily male-dominated, technical vocational education and training programs for women are still an uphill climb due to low appreciation of decision makers on mainstreaming gender and development in technical vocational, and women mostly confined to unpaid domestic work and unpaid food production serve as backgrounder of the government [2]. Moreover, according to Construction and Manpower Development

Foundation and by the Cottage Industry Technology Center, women were concentrated in handicraft-types of training and also produced export goods in factories and subcontracted home-based production.

These are the very reasons this study was made. A gender-fair society is far from reality as far as culture and economic perspectives are the concern. Freedoms from an inaccurate view of own work, discrimination, and poverty are a must. The government is responsible for promoting the attainment of a better life for all means, helping people to develop their abilities and individual strengths, and protecting people’s rights and creating opportunities for the development of people’s abilities and individual strengths. Policies such as Sec. 14 of Article II; and Sec. 11 and 14 of Article XIII of

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a descriptive type of research. Lists of respondents were taken from LGU Lucao, Dagupan and Naguilayan, Binmaley. There were five oyster operators with a permit granted by LGU Lucao. This data was gathered from Barangay Secretary Dexter Evangelista Daoana of local government unit of Lucao in Dagupan City. On the other hand, local government unit of Naguilayan in Binmaley is not giving permit due to an ordinance prohibiting oyster operation. For this, the researcher made all fifteen women involved in the oyster production as respondents. The total respondents are 20. They maintain stall and are into actual selling of oyster along

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of women participating in oyster production

Age	f	%
50 and below	12	60
51 and above	8	40
Total	20	100
Highest Educational Attainment		
Elementary graduate	8	40
High school graduate	11	55
College graduate	1	5
Total	20	100
Other sources of income		
With	4	20
Without	16	80
Total	20	100
Number of children		
3 and below	10	50
4- 6	6	30
7 – 10	4	20
Total	20	100

the 1987 Philippine Constitution, RA 7192 otherwise known as Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992, and Sec. 1 to 9, Article IX of the Philippine Declaration of Human and People’s Rights of 1993 are one in promoting gender fairness and social equality.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in order to describe the women in oyster production. In particular, it gathered data like profile, the participation or activities in oyster production, reasons for participation and view on gender stereotyping from women respondents.

Naguilayan road. The profile of respondents, their activities and reasons for participation were tallied and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages or ranking. To present the view of respondents on gender stereotyping, mean with 3-point Likert scale was used. Data gathering were conducted from January 2014 to May 2014. The mean scale and descriptive rating are shown below.

Mean	Scale	Descriptive Rating
3	2.35 – 3.00	Highly agree
2	1.67 – 2.34	Moderately agree
1	1.00 – 1.66	Less agree

Oyster farm area		
10,000 m2 and below	16	80
10,001 m2 and above	4	20
Total	20	100
Average monthly income		
P5,000 and below	15	75
P5,001 and above	5	25
Total	20	100

Results of the study revealed that 12 or 60% of women participating in oyster production is 50 years old and below while 8 or 40% is 51 years old and above. On the highest educational attainment, 11 or 55% of respondents are high school graduate, 8 or 40% are an elementary graduate, and 1 or 5% is college graduate. For the source of income, there were 16 or 80% respondents without other sources of income and there were four or 20% women with other sources of income. With regards to the number of children, 10 or 50% of respondents have 3 children and below, 6 or 30% have 4 – 6 number of children, and 4 or 20% have

7 – 10 children. Regarding oyster farm area, 16 or 80% of respondents are using 10,000 m² and below oyster farm area while 4 or 20% are using 10,001 m² and above. On average monthly income, 15 or 75% of women in oyster production have an average monthly income of P5,000 and below while five or 25% have P5,001 and above.

Table 2. Women participation in oyster production

Activities in oyster production	With participation	Without participation
Removing of shells	19 (95%)	1 (.05%)
Cleaning of oysters	6 (30%)	14 (70%)
Pulling of oyster from bamboo	2 (10%)	18 (90%)
Tying of bamboo poles	1 (.05%)	19 (95%)

Table 2 shows that 19 respondents participated in removing of shells, six are into the cleaning of oysters, two in pulling of oysters from bamboo poles and one in typing of bamboo poles. This suggests that respondents are doing light and simple works. They are also contributing more on post-production activities. This is similar to the study of the Department of Agriculture in 2002. Men are involved in catching fish but women are engaged in pre-and post-fishing activities and undertake 50 to 70 percent of fish processing and marketing activities [3].

In oyster production in Binmaley and Dagupan City, there are activities wherein women are not involved. These are gathering of bamboo poles to make a stake, placing of stakes in the water, adding more horizontal bamboo sections to the stakes, thinning-out to prevent over-crowding, checking the bamboo framework if above water, protecting the oysters from predators and replacing of pegs.

Male dominance was stronger in agrarian societies. Men became more involved in food production which requires more physical strength [4].

Sociologists have tried to explain the inequality between men and women in society. Some of these theoretical views appear to be a justification of the situations while others are hypothetical in content. Functionalists explained that men and women have distinct roles which are necessary for the survival of the family in particular and society in general. This reinforces the traditional roles of men and women in

society. On the other hand, conflict perspective claimed that gender differences do not depend on physical aspects alone but may exist in terms of political, economic or interpersonal power. Male dominance and control over women stem from the gendered division of labor within the families and in the workplace [4].

Inequality is not accidental. Customs, often venerated throughout history, both justify and maintain this arrangement.

The answer to the major theory of the origin of patriarchy lies buried in history. In early human history, women had to give birth to many children because life was short. This brought severe consequences for women. To survive, an infant needed a nursing mother. With a child at her breast or in her uterus, or one carried on her hip or on her back, women were physically encumbered. Consequently, around the world women assumed tasks that were associated with home and child care, while men took over the hunting of animals and other tasks that required greater strength, speed and long absences from base camps. As a result, men became dominant. In contrast, little prestige was given to the routine, taken-for-granted activities of women [5].

Table 3. Reasons for participating of women in oyster production

Reasons for oyster production participation	Frequency	Rank
1. It supports the educational needs of the children	7	1
2. The activities are simple and do not demand too much effort	6	2
3. It develops skill	5	3
4. The activities do not affect responsibilities as a mother	4	4
5. There is no choice	1	5

Table 3 presents the reasons of women in participating in oyster production. The reasons for women in participating in oyster production are supporting their children needs, followed by simple activity and develop their skill. It shows that women respondents think of their children and they are involved in oyster production because they wanted to send them to school. Women are better prepared biologically for childcare than men. They are more

sensitive to the infant’s soft skin and to their nonverbal communication [5]. As to functionalist perspective, women are considered nurturers and caregivers who are called expressive leaders since they are social and emotional specialists who are well adept at overcoming interpersonal difficulties. In contrast, men who are considered providers and decision makers are called instrumental leaders who are tasks-specialists [4].

Women normally perform more than one task – one at work and another at home as a wife, mother, and homemaker, the latter task being unpaid. Women’s work at home does not count even if they spend the bulk of their time on domestic chores, which then enable the men to engage in paid economic work. Economic statistics do not count domestic work as contributing to national output, thereby undervaluing women’s work [3].

When it comes to economic aspect, it was previously presented, particularly in Table 1, that women respondents are earning less than Php5,000 per month from their work in oyster production. This money could be a good source for the educational needs of their children. According to the National Statistical Coordination Board, Filipino families consisting of five members should at least a monthly income of Php6,195 in order to meet their most basic food and non-food needs [5]. Since most of the respondents have one to three children and without other sources of income as revealed in Table 1, there is really a need for the respondents to earn.

Though the income of respondents from oyster production activities is barely enough for the basic needs, what important is that they are working. However, participation in the formal economy is a recommendation. Having a job is better for health than having no job. Unemployment is associated with poorer health. Unemployed persons shows a greater degree of psychological distress, short term disability, major activity limitation, health problems, hospitalization and health services utilization than employed persons [6].

Another reason why women in this particular study are involved in oyster production is due to the simplicity of activities. This explains the results revealed in Table 2 wherein respondents were involved in simple activities like removing of shells and cleaning of oysters. Compared to other activities, these are less dangerous and do not require too much physical strength.

In the case of oyster production in Naguilayan in Binmaley, putting up of other livelihood activities is

recommended since the local government prohibits its operation due to environmental issues.

Table 4. Views of women on common gender stereotyping

Gender stereotyped statements	Mean	Descriptive equivalent
1. Father should be the head of the family	2.55	Highly agree
2. Father should decide matters about the family	2.35	Highly agree
3. The wife should obey her husband	2.15	Moderately agree
4. Men should do hard work such as fetching water, cutting of wood, doing farm activities, and the like.	2.20	Moderately agree
5. Women should stay at home to take care of her child/ren	1.75	Moderately agree
6. Men are physically stronger than women	2.70	Highly agree
Average weighted mean	2.28	Moderately agree

Table 4 shows statements on common gender stereotypes. It shows that “men are physically stronger than women” got the highest mean of 2.70 with a descriptive equivalent of “highly agree.” Statements such as “father should be the head of the family” and “father should decide matters about the family” also got high mean scores of 2.55 and 2.35, respectively. By definition, a stereotype is the generalization of observations into patterns that define a whole category [7].

The results suggest that women respondents were stereotyped because they value the physical characteristics and gender-related role of men. Their view about male physical strength constrains their capacity to do and think better. This supports the results in Table 2 and 3 wherein women are confined with simple tasks in oyster production.

The average weighted mean of 2.28 with a descriptive rating of “moderate” shows that women are nearly trapped in gender stereotyping. There should be awareness and information drive to women sector in oyster production areas in Pangasinan on gender equality.

Different feminist movements advocate that men and women are equal and they should be treated without any bias and be accorded equal rights in

society. Feminists believe that women can gain control over the aspects of her individuality in spite of the perception of the society on her powerlessness. Liberal feminism clamors for equality of opportunities for women not only in the workplace but also in terms of political or educational opportunities. Socialist feminism, on the other hand, believes that gender inequality will be abolished if capitalism will be eliminated to ensure equal pay between men and

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most women participating in oyster production are adult, achieved average level of education, without other sources of income, have an adequate size of oyster farm, and earning monthly income enough for the family. The respondents are confined in less challenging and less valued work in oyster production. Also, they have multiple burdens. They are doing functions of being a mother, wife, and worker at the same time. Respondents have a high sense of responsibility as mothers. Lastly, respondents are generating income from their participation in oyster production yet they value their physical capability low as compared to their male counterpart, which constrains their capacity to do and think better and hinder their potential to attain a full and satisfying life.

In the case of oyster production in Naguilayan in Binmaley, women should look for other livelihood activities since the local government prohibits its operation. Assessment of their knowledge and skills should be the first step. Attendance to vocational or non-formal education to enrich this knowledge and skills should follow. This long-term plan could sustain more the lifelong needs of her family and improve self-worth.

It is recommended that the respondents should assess their knowledge and skills and use them for other livelihood activities. Enrolling in vocational or non-formal classes to improve their knowledge and skills is also recommended. Second, the local government units, government units, people organization, and non-government organization should intervene if financial constraints impede the respondents from acquiring education to develop more of their knowledge and skills and eventually improve her self-worth and earn a sustainable income. Also, gender advocate groups and individuals should provide sensitivity training and

women in the workplace and equal rights between them [4].

Also, the establishment of people's organization or a cooperative is needed. Through this, their voices will be heard. Through this, representation in community-based organization can help ensure that social protection schemes will be tailored such as collection through organized groups, attention to reproductive needs, child care, occupational safety and health, etc. [8].

capacity building for the respondents and their families. Finally, non-government organization, the gender advocate groups and other concerned groups to encourage the respondents to form either a people's organization or a cooperative.

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