



SITUATION OF WOMEN FISHERFOLKS AND WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK OF GBV AND TRAFFICKING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND NEW NORMAL

A RESEARCH COLLABORATION TO



Prepared by:

JONATHAN ARENDAIN, MATGC
Researcher

PEARL LETTEE D. MAUNES, MBA
Researcher





RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors that Relate the Situations of Women Fisher Folk and Women and girls at Risk of GBV and Trafficking during COVID-19 Pandemic and New Normal

A further discussion of Key Informants Interview (KII) involving 12 participants was conducted in order to elicit responses with regard to some unidentified factors that might be useful in establishing the Situations of Women Fisher Folk and Women and girls at Risk of GBV and Trafficking during COVID-19 Pandemic and New Normal.

Similarly, a representative sample of 12 respondents was taken at the Barangay Aplaya, Digos City in order to ensure representation among the women Fisher Folks in the area.

Also, the respondents were invited to the Barangay Hall of Barangay Aplaya, Digos City last October 23, 2020 for the conduct of the Key Informants Interview (KII) and discussion. Besides, out of the 20 participants contacted, 12 personally came to participate. And, the 12 participants expressed agreement in participating with the study by signing the informed consent, and affixed their signatures in the attendance sheet which was thoroughly explained by the researcher. And, the conduct of the Key Informants Interview (KII) warranted the determining other factors that might not be accounted in the interview.

Moreover, based on Figure 1 below, from the in-depth interview (KII) conducted about the life experiences Situations of Women Fisher Folk and Women and





girls at Risk of GBV and Trafficking during COVID-19 Pandemic and New Normal, we have explored the themes which were drawn out. And besides, Final Themes are presented according to each composite theme emerged.

Further, to discuss that this thematic analysis implies with Final Theme **Personal Satisfaction**, presented according to the composite themes are as follows:

Water is a source of Life as a Women Fisher folk, a source of Income in daily lives, Family members' income depend on, it serves to sustain our daily needs, No presence of violence and other discrimination during pandemic times.

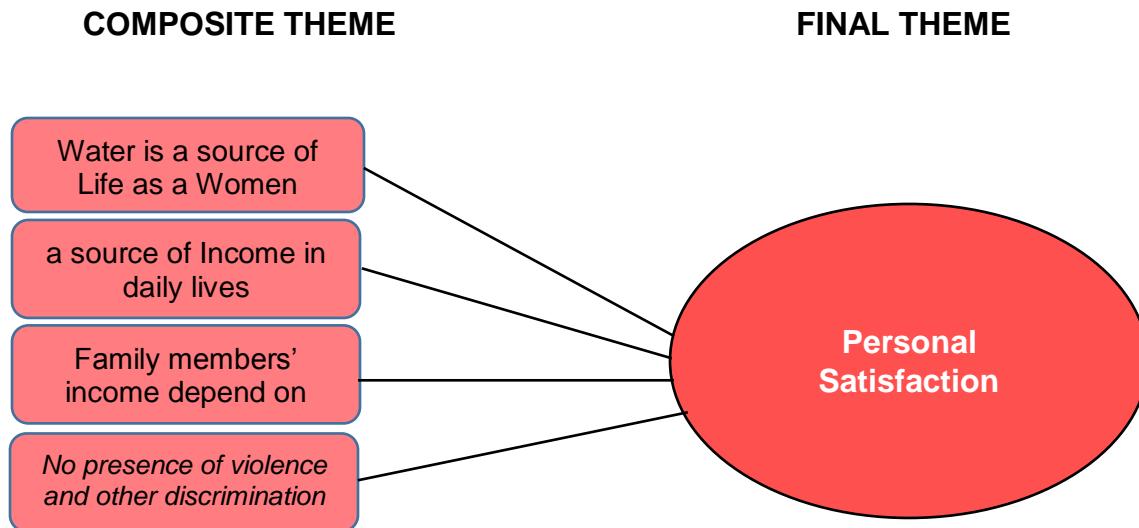


Figure 1. Thematic Diagram of Personal Satisfaction on Women Fisher Folks

Personal Satisfaction

Satisfaction happen when a person sees what he/she is looking for with a feeling of satisfaction, pleasure and expectation fulfillment. If a person not satisfied the services, the outcomes and in accordance to their own will, they will be discontented; and if they are satisfied somehow, they are more pleased and likely their lives lived smoothly and become contented at all (Zairi, 2000). And, according





to Lucas (2012) that satisfaction is a person's emotions of pleasure or disappointment ensuing from overall performance relation to women's expectations. Thus, others have found that individual satisfaction is generally found to be correlated with relative income (Boyce et al., 2010; Clark et al., 2008; Tella & MacCulloch, 2006), meaning the level of income relative to others or how that income has changed relative to others. Finally, women fisher folk they felt happy when they expect more income relatively happened.

And, one of the participants in KII revealed and described her personal experience:

"Importante jud siya sir kay kung walay dagat dili man pud kabalo mangkuan ang akong bana ug laing trabaho. Dagat ra man gyud iyang nahibal-an.. kuan mukoyog man gud siya anang labor-labor. Dili man gud na siya ganahan anang naay amo. Gusto niya siyay nagat, siyay kuan.. ana ba..walay makaboot sa iyahang oras. Unya mas kuan pud ang income weather-weather pud ang iyang income sa panagat ba.. kay usahay alas syete pa sa buntag naa na kay four hundred,lipay na kaayu ko og five hundred samantalang nagkonstruksyon pildi jud siya.

(It is very important because if there is no sea, my husband don't know other work. He only knows the sea... he tag along with labor works but he don't like having a boss. He wants to go fishing... like that... no one will control his hours. Also, his income is inconsistent with doing fishing. Sometimes at seven am in the morning, he has four hundred, I am happy with five hundred while as construction worker he is at loss)".

Other participants said that:

"Dili man gud nang panagat na naay kuha sir. Usahay zero. Pareha karon, wala nanagat akong bana. Wala gyud. Zero. Mao nang naga sideline ra jud ko sir sa amo. Diskarte ba".

(Fishing don't constantly have catch. Sometime zero. Like now, my husband didn't go fishing. None. Zero. That's why I do sidelines to boss. Strategy".

One of the participants said that the importance of water as a source of income:

Yes sir ...dako kayo jud og pakinabang ang tubig sa mangngisda sir. Dako gyud kaayo sir. Kay ngano? Kailangan man gud nato ang tubig matag adlaw sir. Tas kung mangisdaay for example akong





bana kailangan jud ang tubig Sir. Kinahanglan jud sir para maka sustain sa among panginabuhi pud sir.

(Yes sir... water has huge help with fishermen sir. Really big. Why? We need water everyday sir. And if you're a fisherfolk for example like my husband, water is really needed. Really need to sustain our livelihood".)

Therefore, particularly among women fisherfolks, they felt happy when they got more fishes to catch for, they can sustain their daily lives.

Water is a source of Life as a Women Fisher folk

In a classic book on the Spanish Galician fisheries, dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Joaquín Díaz de Rábago (1885) called attention to the importance of the work of women in the fisheries within the region, specifically in post-harvest-related work. Thus, today, evidence shows that women do indeed participate in fisheries all around the globe. And, even if the participation of women in fisheries may be as old as the very act of fishing, its recognition has taken centuries of work to accomplish, and has been far from linear (Britton, 2012). Thus, women fisher folks like where they belong now they participate in some fishery works, who worked to raise the voice of fisherwomen and empower women from fishing communities at the beginning of the 1990s and until now (Neis, 2000).

Thus, aquamarine, crystal clear water as far as the eye can see. White sand beaches littered with nothing more than perfectly formed cowrie shells and the occasional palm tree casting just enough shadow to provide a retreat from the sun. It is time, Hadiwinata underscored in his written comments, while joining his voice to the chorus of millions of fishermen and fisherwomen around the world, to enact a global sanction against corporations that damage the environment and pollute the ocean, while recognizing and supporting the knowledge and practices of fisher folk





who for generations have fed their families, created jobs in their communities all while protecting the ocean as the source of life.

And, one of the participants in KII revealed and described his experience:

Akong bana. Kapangisda pud ko sa una. Kuyog pud.

(My husband. I am a fisherman too before. I also accompany)

Other said that:

Nakakuyog ko ug mamarilis.

(I accompanied to catch tuna)

Ang uban mukuyog sir. Ang uban, musakay jud. Naa uban sa part jud sa panagat karon sa akong bana. Pang-gabie man gud ang panagat sa akong bana. Wala na kaayo mi nagkuhan anang pang-adlaw. Mao nang gusto gani sa among bana nga pakuyogon mi. Pero kung makabalo mi nga daghan ba gyud isda o wala. Mahadlok man mi kay gabie man basi makulob unya ang bangka.

(Some really accompany sir. Some, really rides. Some really has taken part in fishing nowadays with my husband. My husband go every night. We don't go to daytime. That's why my husband wants us to accompany him. But if we only know that there are many fishes or not. We are afraid in night, the boat might overturn.)

Finally, women fisher folks like where they belong and they do participate in some fishery works do or catching fish together with their husband to alleviate their income.

A source of Income in daily lives and Family members' income depend on

With the help of the government, it has been active in extension work among coastal areas of Barangay Aplaya, Digos City for a year. A project for fisher folk that





initially benefited some fisher folk households, if this project were successful for creating a “Bantay Dagat” an organization to all fishermen just to avoid or mitigate illegal fishing in the coastal area, thus, the local government unit gave technical know-how among Aplaya fisher folks in mitigating or controlling some illegal fishing in their coastal area. Further, that this project helped strengthen the physical assets of among fisher folk.

But, in general, households in Barangay Aplaya who engage in both fishing and non-fishing activities have a higher tendency to save than beach-based fishermen without any other source of income. Furthermore, it was found out that the money for consumption expenditure of among fisherfolks depends from borrowed money from moneylenders, relatives and friends for daily survival. And, if among fisherfolks members know how to manage their daily income from beach-based fishing and with the support from the local government for some financial assistance or credit facilities and new income-generating activities boost incomes and motivate higher savings among fisher folk members.

One of the participants said that:

Gikan jud pag COVID sir, taga-adlaw Sir, wala jud na ulian. Lisod sir oi. Gawas na minus ang kuha. Maglisod pa mi ug suroy-suroy sa among isda kay paita. Daghan ug bawal sir.

(At the start of COVID sir, everyday Sir, not back from normal. Very difficult sir. Aside from lesser catch. It is difficult to roam and sell fish. Many restrictions sir.)

Kanang manguan, manguan ug manok, karne. Pautang ko ug kanang kuan lang. Ginangmay lang gud kay wala man pud koy kapital. Ah kanang magsuroy-suroy. Pautang. One-week ana lang. Pero manghulam lang.

(That selling of chicken, meat. I give credits to those. Just small amount because I don't have capital. I roam and give credits for one week. I just borrow.)



Finally, since COVID-19, the livelihood among small scale fisher folks had suffered. Thus, unable to go out fishing, ‘no catch fish, no income’.

No presence of violence and other discrimination during pandemic times

The principle of “leave no one behind,” which underpins the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, is built on global recognition that ending extreme poverty and reducing inequalities require the prioritization of actions benefiting the poorest and most marginalized people (Stuart & Samman, 2017). Further, if there is no presence of violence and other discrimination specially this pandemic period, therefore, this Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) principle of “leaving no one behind” focuses on comprehensive attention on the poorest and most vulnerable people especially among fisherfolks. As different sectors struggle to engage meaningfully with this principle, we hypothesize that greater consideration of social problems in fishing-dependent communities, such as alcoholism and domestic violence, presents an opportunity for fishery front liners to contribute to the SDGs mandate.

Thus, in using personal well-being information from women living in two small-scale fishing communities in Barangay Aplaya, we demonstrated that there were no prevalence and impact of alcoholism and domestic violence in fishing households. Then, it was through this process that the importance of having a “good husband,” often described as “one who avoids alcohol and violence,” emerged as an important part of living well (Jha & White, 2016). Thus, this is the most important coping strategies, in particular, the ability of women to act as *independent income earners as a women fisher folks*.

Furthermore, this challenge is particularly critical in fisheries, which must create



synergy between the often competing agendas of improving human well-being alongside sustainable use and protection of the marine environment (E. M. Bennett et al., 2015; Costanza et al., 2016). The contributions of the fisheries and marine conservation sector could, and should, reach beyond Goal 14 “Life Below Water” to engage with the Sustainable Development Goals more broadly.

One of the participants said to become independent income earners:

“Naa jud sir. Sa una pwede ra man mi maningkamot ug pinalahi sir karon dili naman jud. Wala na miy sideline sa una kay kun magpait pwede man mi manaydline ug kuan sa palengke. Mangontak sa palengke. Karon dili na man Sir kay dili na mahalin among isda”

(There is sir. At first, we can work hard other than fishing. Now, we can't. We don't have sideline. Before we can do sideline at the market. We contact the market. Now, we cannot because our fish can't be sold.)

And, one of the participants viewed upon the pandemic crises in terms of gender-based violence:

Wala. Mag-away lang man nang mag-asawa. Grabe pud nag kulatahon noh. Ako. Ako-a jud ipapriso. Naay VAWC.

(None. Couples argue. It is extreme to strike (to wife). Me. I will put (him) in jail. There's VAWC.)

Therefore, mostly of the women fisherfolks experienced struggle during the pandemic times.

And also, with the final theme ***Struggles of Women Fisher folks during Pandemic Period*** presented according to the Composite themes are as follows: ***Negative Feeling and Emotions of No Catching Fish, no income; Lesser income during pandemic period, Difficulty in selling during pandemic period, Involvement of women fisher folks in handling fishing, Changing attitude to different activity***



for survival, Lack of Family bonding due to pandemic.

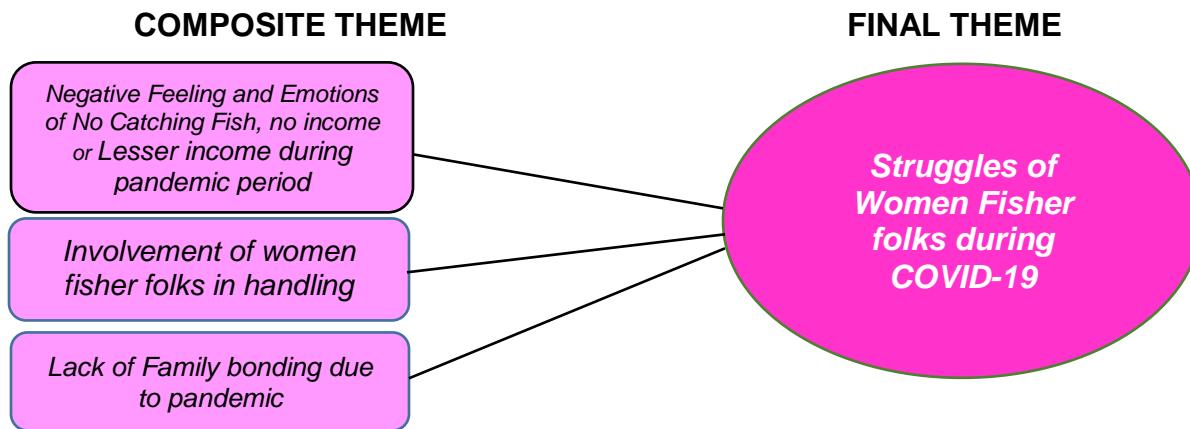


Figure 2. Thematic Diagram on Struggles of Women Fisher Folks during COVID-19

Struggles of Women Fisher folks during Pandemic Period

With the continuous spread of COVID-19 and constant strict measures employed across the globe, the small scale fishing has received negative consequences (N. J. Bennett et al., 2020) especially for the women fisherfolks. They faced challenges in selling their catch to the community.

As mandated by IATF some recreational activities are suspended (Zerrudo, 2020). Those with 21 years below and 60 years old above are not allowed to go outside their homes except for important purposes. Thus, stopping the fisherfolks family to bond outside their homes.

KII participants shared their own experiences during pandemic crisis:

“Dako-dako jud sir. Lisod kay dili man mi mahalinan kay wala man tao gusto mugawas kay pandemic man gud”.

(Huge sir. It is difficult because we can't sell. No person wants to go outside because of pandemic)



And, other participants said that:

“Oo, naapektuhan mi oi. Kay wala na kaayo mamalit ug isda labi na ug maglockdown inig ka dominggo. Dili kaayo makalibod. Makabaklay ug taman”.

(Yes, we are affected. Because there is limited people who buy fish especially during lockdown every Sunday. We can't roam around to sell hard).

**Negative Feeling and Emotions of No Catching Fishing,
no income; Lesser income during
pandemic period**

It was found out on a study conducted by Tee et al., 2020 that “home quarantine is associated with depression, anxiety and stress symptoms”. This makes people undergoing quarantine feel negative especially that they can't continue their income generating capability. What makes the people stress during quarantine are their being confine in a specific time, inadequacy of supplies, difficulty in getting medical supplies and the outcome of financial loss (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). These emotional distresses may fuel people to violate quarantine measures.

And, one of the participants in KII revealed and described his experience:

“Dili man gud nang panagat na naay kuha sir. Usahay zero. Pareha karon, wala nanagat akong bana. Wala gyud. Zero. Mao nang maguol mi nya naga sideline ra jud ko sir sa amo. Diskarte ba”

(It is not constant that fishing always catch fish. Sometimes zero. Like now, my husband don't go fishing. None. Zero. That is why we get sad and I do sideline with boss. Strategy.)

Added experience from of the participants:

“Magsalig ta sa bana sa kuha nga isda sa lawod wala man pud klaro. Pasmo pud ang imong pamilya. Unya naa pud koy tindahan gamay.





(We depend to our husband with his catch from the deep, it is unclear. Our family will starve. I also have small store.)

Other participants added:

Dili na jud sir usa sa isa ka semana kay kada-adlaw gyud. Example, akong onse. Onse gyud sir. For example muadto siya ug dagat muoli diri. Pagkaugma muoli sila diri. Isa kilo ug tunga. Mabuang ko ug hunahuna unsaon ni pagbudget. Lagi ang pangutana. Unsaon man ni pagbahin ang usa ka kilo. 170 ang kilo unya ang bugas pa ang gasolina pagbalik ang iyaha pang kuan mga pan pa o in any nga dal-on niya sa dagat. So kulang jud.

(No sir, once a week, it is every day. Example, my eleven years old, For example he goes to the sea and come home. Tomorrow he will come home. One kilo and half. I will be crazy to thing how to budget. How could I distribute the one kilo. 170 per kilo and then the rice, the gasoline, when returning home his bread to bring on the sea. Really not enough)

Difficulty in selling during pandemic period

On the early stage of pandemic, it has suspended various business and academic institutions to prevent massive outbreaks (Tee et al., 2020). Suspension of entrepreneurial capabilities decreases income of the community.

With the continuous spread of COVID-19 and constant strict measures employed across the globe, the small scale fishing has received negative consequences (N. J. Bennett et al., 2020) especially for women fisherfolks. They faced challenges in selling their catch to the community.

And, one of the participants said that some difficulty in selling during pandemic:

"Lisod jud. Muangay gyud sa panahon. Kung unsa ang mga panghitabo, muoyon pud ang dagat. Unsa man ni oi. Okay pa man tong wala pay COVID, makakuan pa man ta. Kanang mu-lockdown taga-Dominggo dili man mi kasuroy. Naapektuhan man mi ato. Dili na mi managat inig ka Sabado kay inig ka Dominggo dili naman mi mamaligya kay bawal man daw. Naa man gani mga pulis dira daan".

(Really difficult. It complements with the situation. Whatever the





scenario, the sea will coincide. Why. It is okay before COVID, we can do anything. When it lockdown every Sunday we can't roam around to sell. We are affected. We can't go fishing during Saturday because on Sunday we can't sell because its against the rules. There are police officers there.)

Lack of Family bonding due to pandemic.

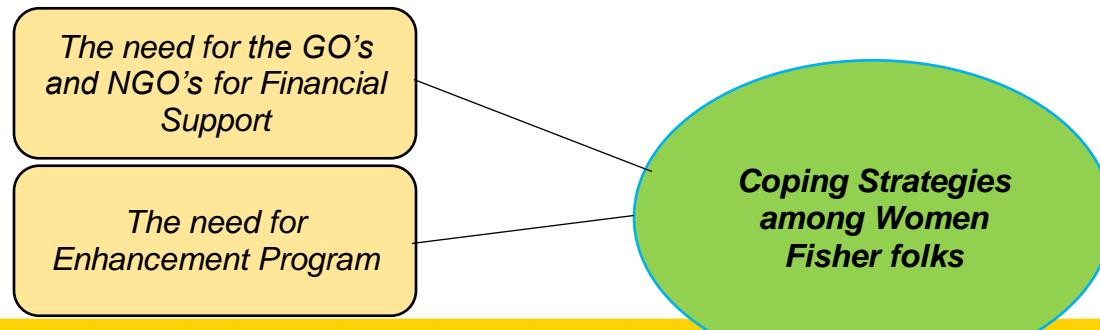
Finally, as mandated by IATF some recreational activities are suspended (Zerrudo, 2020). Those with 21 years below and 60 years old above are not allowed to go outside their homes except for important purposes. Thus, stopping the fisherfolks family to bond outside their homes and therefore accepts the new normal situations and follow the health protocol.

And, one of the participants in KII revealed and described his experience:

"Parehas anang dili na ka bonding sa gawas sir kay tungod sa pandemic. Kanang dili na kalakaw maskin asa kay tungod sa ing-ana na mga sitwasyon. Dili na pud ka kasimba sir kay dili man pwede ang bata. Di pareha sa una sir na pwede bitbiton ang baby maski baby pa siya"

(The same as we can't bond outside sir because of pandemic. We cannot go anywhere because of that situation. We can't go to church because kids are not allowed. Not like before that we can bring our baby even they are still a baby.)

And also, with the final theme **Coping Strategies among Women Fisher folks** presented according to the Composite themes are as follows: **The need for the GO's and NGO's for Financial Support, The need for Enhancement Program, Strong Law implementation.**



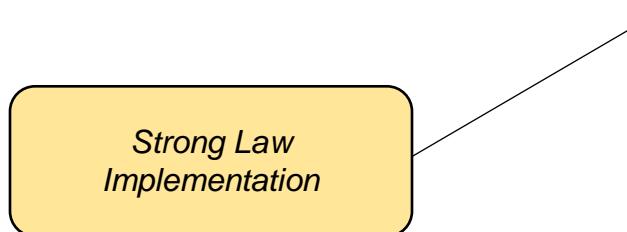


Figure 3. Thematic Diagram on Coping Strategies among Women Fisher folks during COVID-19

Coping Strategies among Women Fisher folks

Beyond COVID 19, what is next to our small fisherfolks. Further, presently, they are the most vulnerable age group in COVID-19 infection. Thus, a better normal is listening to small fisherfolks, they are not invisible. A better normal means providing them social protection. Thus, the government must have control over everything to launched their extension services to the small fisher folks and to achieved the better normal of having access to government service, to have a sustainable income. On the other hand, it is undeniable that LGUs, and NGOs have started to form partnerships to deliver basic services to their affected communities but in a limited possible due to the presence of contagious diseases.

Finally, local food producers like small scale fisher folks have been saving the country from hunger in terms of their own products. The family involved in fishing they doubled their time to find other source of income other than fishing just to sustain their daily needs as well as their eleven (11) members of the family that their hopes and dreams is to fulfill one basic dream to finish schooling just to alleviate poverty in-spite of calamities and diseases.



Other participants coping strategies to help her husband, she claimed:

Bae? Wala. Bali sa onse kabouk ako anak, mananagat gyud na ang duha. Bali abag-abag sa ilang papa ba. Mudoble sila. Katong isa mao to ang naggraduate sa Holy Cross pero wala man kapaso kay COVID man. Mao na siya nga nialalay pud siya manindira para mapakaon tong mga gagmay. Ako pud kung example wala sa dagat. Mukuan ko sa palengke, mubaligya-baligya ug isda ba. Kanang magpa-adlaw gani. Sigi, adlawi nalang ko dira be. Ana ba. At least naa jud tay wala sa dagat makarecover pud ta sa atong kinabuhi ba. Maka-abag ba kung baga sa ako-ang bana.

(Girl. None. With my eleven children, two are fisherfolks. They help their father. The other one graduated at Holy Cross but that child did not attend the graduation ceremony because of COVID. That's why she helped in selling to feed the little ones. Me, if there's no catch. I go to the market and sell fish. That work with daily pay. Yes, pay me once a day at your store. Like that. At least we have something if we not went to the sea to recover our livelihood. To help my husband.)

The need for the GO's and NGO's for Financial Support

Based from a national service and extension program under BFAR, the extension aquaculture technology became a function of “generalists” agricultural technicians or ATs under DA whose academic background may not be in fisheries as a result of a WB-IBRD Structural Loan Agreement for those big organization and stable. With the passage of the Local Government Code, these ATs were devolved to the local government.

Also, the NFARMC serve as an advisory or recommendatory body to the Department of Agriculture in policy formulation and the preparation of the National Fisheries Industry Development Plan. Thus, the Undersecretary of Agriculture chaired to this policy formulation (presumably the Undersecretary for Fisheries) and its members the Undersecretary of Interior and Local Government, including the five members representing the fisherfolks and fishery workers, five members representing commercial fishing, aquaculture and processing, two from the academe and one representative of





NGOs involved in fisheries. Further, The M/CFARMC shall assist in the preparation of the Municipal Fishery Development Plan and recommend the enactment of municipal fishery ordinances to the municipal council. The membership of the Council shall consist of the municipal or city planning development officer, the Chair of the Agriculture/Fishery Committee of the municipal council, a representative of the municipal/city development council, a representative from the accredited NGO, a representative from the private sector; a representative from DA, seven municipal fisherfolk, three commercial fishers, and one fish worker.

Finally, in my own analysis, that there are lot of services given by the government but not all are exhausted to help among fisherfolks to sustain their livelihood. The government not only to look into one organization but by spreading their services also to those who are in needy in other places who are affected by the calamities and pandemic. Further, limitations due to pandemic times are caused and a source why are there free to live happily during this COVID-19 day.

One of the participants said about the need for materials in fishing and others:

"Kasagaran sir kanang mga fishing equipments. Ay, kanahanglan namo sa kaning mga fishing materials gud sir, Sama sa mga nylon. Mga ing-ana gud sir para mabuhi sa panagat"

(Usually sir that fishing equipments. We need these fishing materials, sir like nylon. Those things to live as fisherfolk.)

Other participants said that other participants' ideas:

Siguro sir, para sa ako-a sir kay bag-o pa man ko nisulod sir noh pero sa akong makita sir noh kay dili jud pantay-pantay ang tanan sir noh. Macompare man gud nato sir noh. Kay usahay kanang dili...tungod pud sa kadaghan sa ginakuan sa government..tungod pud sa kadaghan sa ilang gitutukan sir kay dili na gyud nila ma occupy ang tanan sir ba. Tanang butang. So kung si kinsa lang tong mureklamo mao lang pud ang masecuran nila ug kanang solusyon. Ingana. Pero kung maghilom-hilom lang ka, wala kay mga unsa ni wala lang jud.



(For me sir, I am newbie (in fishing). What I can see is that there is no equality to everyone sir. I can compare it. Sometimes because...of the many stuff the government... because of the many things they focus that they can't occupy everything sir. Everything. So those who complaints, those can secure solution. That's it. But if you keep silent, you will have nothing.)

Finally, NGOs involved in microfinance in the Philippines have formed a Coalition for Microfinance Standards. In addition, according to the said coalition, micro-finance is basically financial intermediation for the small borrower/saver segment. And, that this word, although newly coined, is used to describe what has been in existence since economies started monetizing. Therefore, the term also implies the application of market-based concepts such as charging market-based or cost recovery rates probably can help to the fisher folks who need finances to sustained their production and more productive especially this pandemic period. In this sense, pawnshops and lending investors can be considered or are also microfinance institutions or microfinance service providers" (CMS, 1997).

The need for Enhancement Program and Strong Law Implementation

According to Rabanal (1995) reviewed the aquaculture extension services of the Philippines and traced its evolution.

Further, realizing the specialized nature of aquaculture and fisheries, BFAR is including extension and training services as part of the activities of the eight BFAR Technology Centers. Of the eight technology centers only one is not equipped for aquaculture activities. All the rest are either exclusively for aquaculture or has capability





for aquaculture technology verification and demonstration as well as for tilapia and/or carp fingerling dispersal if you are preferred in fish pond and other aquatic sources.

In addition, these technology centers conduct farm visits and provide technical assistance to fish farmers within their vicinity. Most also hold a weekly trainings and seminars for fish farmers to mitigate illegal fishing. Further, since these technology centers are spread far apart to those fisher folk's organization, the greater part of the Philippines is dependent on the municipal level extension service the capability building which truly needed among fisher folks to become more equipped in catching fish and live more sustainable. Furthermore, whether or not aquaculture extension service is available or how well this is delivered to the end users will greatly depend on the level of support to aquaculture and fisheries and the importance given to the industry by the municipal government. With perhaps a few exceptions, most municipalities, even those where aquaculture is a relatively important industry, actually do not have such capability.

Finally, with the final theme ***Extreme Experiences and Effects among Women Fisher folks in the Presence of Contagious Diseases*** presented according to the Composite themes are as follows: ***Extreme suffering the source of livelihood these pandemic days, Source of violence is insufficient.***

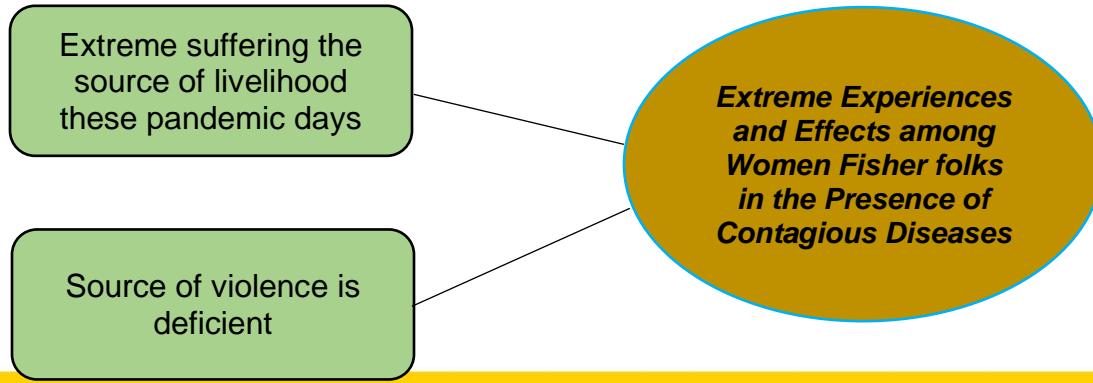




Figure 4. Thematic Diagram on Extreme Experiences and Effects among Women Fisher folks in the Presence of Contagious Diseases

Extreme Experiences and Effects among Women Fisher folks in the Presence of Contagious Diseases

However, all is not lost in the pandemic. The disruption brought about by COVID-19 can bring transformation to society for a better post-COVID-19 future. As such, identifying issues and bringing out possible solutions offered by the food producers are crucial in re-shaping society.

Further, during the pandemic, the farmers, fisherfolk, workers and informal settlers are forgotten. Their intention must be given attention. Hopefully the government is to create a roadmap, an action plan based on social justice and rights to reshape our society, thus, small scale food producers like farmers and fisherfolk are heavily affected by the pandemic. They are facing risks every day as they leave their homes either to catch fish to find markets for their products. Thus, in the Philippines, a month-long total lockdown was imposed on March 16, which has been extended and modified twice as of writing. The Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases has set several measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, thus, lockdown and its effects on small-scale food producers, even small women fisher folks hard to market their own products even in their area (Barangay Aplaya). It includes restrictions on travel, and movements within and outside of the communities. And, the quarantine measure is strictly implemented especially in Digos City and other places which travel passes are



given to certain individuals provided their movements are necessary. But, among women fisherfolks are afraid to go to beyond boundaries for they are afraid also to have with this contagious disease. Furthermore, all women fisher folks cannot bring their husbands' catch to the market due to limited transportation.

Along this line, the Philippine Government provided aid to fisherfolk, farmers and farm laborers who lost their incomes due to COVID19. Thus, government which provides loans for fisherfolk affected by calamities and disasters. However, fisherfolk complain that they do not receive any financial assistance from the government because they are either "unqualified". Some who were able to get a cash card could not encash due to limited time allotment in some communities due to COVID-19. Furthermore, this is to hurdle the life of among women fisherfolks in Barangay Aplaya.

One of the participants said and claimed that:

Gusto namo nga naa miy makuhaan og tabang kung maguba ang among kuan pangita, hatagan mi ug nylon, makina ug ayuda.

(We want that we could get help if our livelihood breakdown, someone will give us nylon, machine and financial support.)

Extreme suffering the source of livelihood these pandemic days

Between men and women, women are more vulnerable towards loss of livelihood (Harris et al., 2020). This means more women still handling in budgeting towards the actual expenses in buying their basic needs. And, there is a pressure in daily needs survival among members of the family due to not enough income for big family to suffice their personal needs especially for meals a day.

In connection with this, most of the women fisher folks find it hard to sell the fishes because of some limited areas to sell and most of the boundaries are closed for them to sell. Extreme sufferings felt by our women fisher folks





especially during these pandemic days. And, their source of livelihood becomes more lesser to be equal to all the members of the family.

Source of violence is deficient

One out of three women in 80 countries have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partner once in their lifetime (John et al., 2020). They are vulnerable because they can't communicate with their peers and friends and the unavailability of social services. This may also due to their lack of knowledge with their rights as women. In this pandemic time, there are some changes towards their personal perspective and directives such as stay at home order. And, this stay at home order becomes a platform of increase risk of domestic violence (Bettinger-Lopez & Bro, 2020).

One of the participants said about due to pandemic some fisherman commits illegal fishing:

"Dili sila mag gamit ug mga iligal fishing sir para dili madaut ang atong kinaiyahan sir sa dagat kay para ra man gihapon na sa ilaha sir. Bahala ug gagmay ug kuha basta kuan lang sir kanunay sir ba. Unya naa pirmenente."

(They should not use illegal fishing sir so that the nature will not be damage because it is for them. Even we get small catch, it is all right as long as its constant. Always available.)

Finally, in my own analysis that though the violence is not co-existent in Barangay Aplaya, but some of the fisherman used illegal fishing thus, fears among women fisher folks that their husband indulging to use this illegal fishing just to have more fishes to catch and even more a source of violence in the family. That is why the government BFAR and with the help of the Local government created and conducted





trainings and created the group “Bantay Dagat” to mitigate illegal fishing in their vicinity, most of the members of the organization are men fishers but while their husbands are more inclined fishing, women become active member during in the conduct of meeting.

Other Factors that Narrate the Situations of Women Fisher Folk and Women and girls at Risk of GBV and Trafficking during COVID-19 Pandemic and New Normal

The Office of the Provincial Agriculturist (OPAG) and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) both have regular programs given to the various sectors including the fisherfolks. OPAG mainly assist associations to generate financial assistance from the government while the BFAR assist the Local Government Unit (LGU) in providing loan assistance and fishing gears to the fishing community.

In line with this, BFAR has demographic profile of the fishing community on their servers with 2,000 plus profiles of both women and men in which 10% of them were female composed of fish vendors and those who collect shellfish.

Mainly, BFAR provides technical skills to the fisherfolks like fish processing and orientations. BFAR's regular programs are distribution of fishing gears as per request by the LGUs. They also distributed in 2017, four solar dryers to the fishing community (Davao del Sur). They conduct training and provide fingerlings to the fishing community.

Further, during the pandemic, BFAR provide the fisherfolks food pass for them to easily transport their produce and bought materials for their livelihood. BFAR also submitted a list from the LGU to their central office requesting a monetary assistance for the poor fisherfolks who have not received other assistance from the government like SAP and 4Ps member.





Furthermore, BFAR identified the issues faced by fisherfolks like declining fish catch and limited places to sell fish and collect shellfish. None of the issues were related to violence. BFAR point out that some fisherfolks organizations have low sustainability due to their motivational attitude to continue their organizations even though they were helped by NGOs on their early years of the organization.

Likewise, on the part of OPAG, they assist registration of association and help in formulating project design so that association can request financial assistance from the government. Their regular program encompasses giving assistance to the association not only the fisherfolks. They also assist and giving food packs during the pandemic but it is spearheaded by the Provincial Government. They also train volunteers of the *Bantay-dagat* and provide the legal aspects of it. They do not give financial assistance to individual in *Bantay-dagat* but if there were association related to them can request one. OPAG noted that the fisherfolks lacks more trainings and motivation to build and flourish.

SUMMARY

With the use of thematic analysis on the in-depth interview, this study found out that for the women fisherfolk, personal satisfaction covers the importance of water wherein they get their income, livelihood and provides their daily needs. During pandemics, their struggles revolve around the negative feeling and emotions of lesser or no income brought by pandemic, their struggles in selling their produce and the lack of family bonding due to this crisis. With these struggles they pointed out, women fisherfolks suggest the government to help them financially and be given enhancement



program for them to cope up and alleviate their struggles.

Overall, they evaluated that the existence of contagious disease extremely affects their livelihood which makes them suffer considerably. But, it is important to note that even with sufferings, there were lack of evidence that suggest any form of violence towards the fishing community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Interactions and studies that deep dive on the experiences of women fisherfolk could help the government to identify policy gaps and possible interventions. Activities on policy or program implementation should be evaluated to address issues and align the activities to its intended outcome. Since some government agencies argue that they have plans and programs intended for the fishing community. It is suggested that these policy, plans and programs be communicated towards the stakeholders as well as to small scale business sectors and fisherfolks. A conduct of orientation towards the women fisherfolks their rights and capability building is also proposed to uplift their morale and motivate them to uplift their strategy in their fishing livelihood. Also, equal distributions of financial assistance from the government agencies and non-government agencies speeded given to the qualified beneficiaries and other constituents small scale fisherfolks needed to alleviate their lives.

Prepared by:

JONATHAN ARENDAIN, MATGC
Researcher





Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology (cand.)

PEARL LETTEE D. MAUNES, MBA

Researcher

Doctor of Bus. Admin (cand.)

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