



COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

**DOCUMENTATION REPORT ON THE SITUATION
MONITORING OF WOMEN FISHERFOLKS AND WOMEN
AND GIRLS AT RISK OF TRAFFICKING DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Women Fisherfolks of Punta Fisherfolk Seaside and
Dwellers Association, Inc.**
Punta Nasipit, Agusan del Norte

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Reported by:

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I. Introduction

The Commission on Human Rights, as Gender and Development Ombud under the Magna Carta of Women undertakes regular monitor of women’s human rights, especially women in the marginalized sectors. One of the key sectors identified by the Magna Carta of Women are women fisherfolks. They are amongst the most vulnerable, the commission has not had the occasion of focusing on their specific issues and situation. With the COVID-19 pandemic with its vast economic impact, fisherfolks are among those affected, and yet as always often invisible in the public discourse. With this, the Commission on Human Rights, with its 16 regional offices, which serve as Gender Ombud in their areas of Jurisdiction, will be undertaking sectoral monitoring focused on women fisherfolks, including women and girls at risks of trafficking in areas considered as fishing communities.

Objectives:

- To render visible and document the roles and tasks undertaken by women fisherfolks in the household and in the community;
- To monitor the implementation of Magna Carta Women provisions on women fisherfolks by looking at women’s roles, economic participation and recognition, access to information, resources and food production; experiences of marginalization, discriminations; Gender Based Violence;
- To document the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women Fisherfolks;
- To documents awareness of and availment by women fisherfolks of government programs in response to COVI-19;
- To gather recommendations from the ground.

After the objectives has been laid down, the facilitator, Ms. Joyce Ann P. Adlawan seek the consent of women participants, explained the data privacy compliance notice of the commission and introduced the consent and profile forms that the participants are requested to fill up.



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II. Profiling of Participants

Location: Punta, Nasipit Agusan del Norte

Participants: Women Fisherfolks of Punta Fisherfolk Seaside and Dwellers Association, Inc.

Name	Age	Status	Occupation	Spouse Occupation	No. of children	Own a boat?
1	45	Live in	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk	1	No
2	43	Married	Fish vendor	carpenter/ Fisherfolk	4	Yes
3	40	Live in	Fish vendor/ Fisherfolk	Fisherfolk	1	No
4	30	live in	Fish vendor/ Fisherfolk	fish vendor	2	No
5	43	Married	Fish vendor	carpenter/ Fisherfolk	4	No
6	33	live in	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk	3	Yes
7	53	Married	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk	2	No
8	61	Widow	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk		No
9	63	Married	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk	3	Yes
10	67	Midow	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk	6	No
11	53	Married	Fish vendor/ Fisherfolk	Carpenter/ Fisherfolk	0	No
12	55	Married	Fish vendor/ Fisherfolk	Fisherfolk	4	Yes
13	57	Married	Fish vendor	Fisherfolk	1	Yes
14	59	Married	Fish vendor/ Fisherfolk	Fisherfolk /fish vendor	2	Yes
15	63	Widow	Fish vendor/ Fisherfolk		4	Yes



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III. Summary of Key Findings

A. Women Fisherfolks

a. Roles

- The participants live near the sea. Therefore, almost all of them are dependent on their livelihood as fisherfolks to meet their daily needs. Most of their source of income is from fishing, aquaculture, fishpond and tourism through planting mangroves
- As a woman in a fishing community, their usual day aside from being a fisherfolk is mostly spent doing the following:

Type of Work	Responses
Reproductive	“ <i>manghinlo</i> ” and “ <i>magtanom</i> ” (Cleaning and doing house chores and planting/gardening)
Pre-Production and Processing	“ <i>manguha ug kinhason ug magsuroy isda</i> ” (peddling of seashells and fish/bagging and potting of mangroves/sewing of fishnets)
Community	“ <i>pahina sa purok</i> ” (Community Do-day)

- All of the participants answered that their husbands are into fishing. While there are some, about three (3) of them, who included their sons as they accompany their father into fishing. Their income varies as it depends on how much they will catch. Usual catch is about 1kl-3kls of fish and can be sold at around Php200.00-300.00 per kilo.
- All the participants considered themselves as fisherfolks. Aside from the fact that their livelihood is dependent on fishing, most of them sometimes accompany their husbands in fishing while others, gather seashells and peddles them. Others are also into mangrove planting and aquaculture in fishponds. They are all members of a fisherfolk organization in their place.
- During the pandemic, there are major changes on their daily lives. Due to restrictions on mobilization, they can no longer go out to fish. Most of them had no source or income. If they can catch fish, it is difficult to



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sell. Most of them are constrained to stay at home with not enough money to supply their daily needs.

b. Economic Participation and Recognition

- When it comes to recognition as to who are considered as fisherfolks in the community, the participants responded that both the husband and the wife and some of their children are into fishing thus considered as fisherfolks.
- Women fisherfolks participates in “pamukot” or the use of fishnet and even goes to the ocean together with her husband to catch fish. Others sew fishnets, collect sea shells using “luwag or kutsara” or spoon and peddles or sells fish and shells.
- Their income varies as it depends on how much they will catch. Usual catch is about 1kl-3kls of fish and can be sold at around Php200.00-300.00 per kilo. Sometimes, they do not even have a catch. Their income is barely enough for their daily needs like food and payment of bills and other necessities.
- The income of the family is dependent on fishing. Therefore, whatever catch they got, that serves as their source for their daily needs. The women fisherfolks do not have any other alternative livelihood to be able to supplement in their source of income.
- All the participants responded that they are listed with BFAR/DA and there four (4) who listed as beneficiaries of the 4Ps program of DSWD while majority are not 4Ps beneficiaries.
- Their community has a Fisherfolk organization wherein they are all members, the *Punta Fisherfolk Seaside and Dwellers Association, Inc.* As to “bantay-dagat” o fish warden, they also have but they are men.
- Women in the organization are included in the decision-making when it comes to whatever projects and programs that it will undertake. Women are even represented in the set of officers in the organization.
- When asked if there is enough attention given by the government to the fisherfolk sector specially women fisherfolks, most of them answered no. They felt that women fisherfolks are not recognized because most of the beneficiaries of government programs, if there are any are the



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men or head of the family. Access of women to these services are very limited.

c. Access to information, resources, and food production

- The participants' awareness on their rights and benefits under the laws on fishery are very limited. They even seemed confuse on the idea of rights and law. Most of their answers are in relation to illegal fishing. It means that the only law that they are familiar with is about illegal fishing. Other laws with their rights and benefits included, they do not have any knowledge about it because as for them, they have not attended any lectures or seminars that often. There is limited access to information when it comes to laws relating to fishery.
- When asked about Magna Carta of Women, only 4 out of 15 participants acknowledged the existence of Magna Carta for Women. However, even those who have known or heard MCW did not have enough knowledge on what the law is all about. They only got to read from the brochures distributed by BFAR and the maritime police.
- Most of the participants have not attended any lectures or programs discussion laws on women. They did not have any opportunity to attend to any programs initiated by the government. There is limited access to promotional or advocacy programs on women due to geographical location.
- Women Fisherfolks did not receive any benefits which are directly given to them. According to the respondents, it is their husband who has direct access to such benefits if there are any because they are the one listed.
- During the pandemic, some of them received amount of PHP5000 from the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of DSWD and relief goods distributed from the LGU. Aside from that, there is no more benefits received from any other programs of the government. Almost all of them have no idea what is the SURE COVID AID program therefore, they have not availed any benefits from it.
- Majority of the participants responded that the assistance they received from the government is not enough for the family. It cannot sustain their needs specially in this time of the pandemic that their source of



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livelihood is greatly affected. Yes, they can eat but with a very tight budget. They practically use whatever they have to be able to survive.

d. Experience of Marginalization, Stigma Discriminations

- When asked if they are being treated fairly by the government in relation to their questions on available benefits accessible to them, most of them responded yes. Others expressed that they did not have any guts to question the government on any benefits available and they just wait if there is anything given to them.

e. Trafficking and Gender-Based Violence

- During the pandemic and the implementation of enhanced community quarantine, they responded that there are no reported Gender-Based Violence against women fisherfolks in Punta, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte.
- Almost all of them answered that the cause of crime are the use of illegal *drugs and liquor*. Others also shared that easy access to sex videos contributes to rising cases of gender-based violence. Some even shared that land disputes also caused crimes in their place.
- For the participants, it is the prompt action from the police in cases of reports on violations they see as the government's response to eliminate or lessen the commission of crimes. Others suggested or shared that barangay assemblies also helps in fostering a peaceful community.

f. General impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Low to no income.** During the pandemic, almost all of the respondents struggled in meeting their daily ends. Women fisherfolks plays on the role of vending/selling the fish through “suroy ug isda/naglalako ng isda”. Since social distancing and other health protocols are being proposed and there are places that are under ECQ, this resulted a great impact to the women fisherfolks specially those who sell fish. Also, the price of the fish dropped due to the situation that most of the people in the community do not have enough money to buy fish.



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- **Light Housekeeping.** 12 out of 15 answered that their housekeeping chores lightened during pandemic because of the presence of their children and husband in the house wherein everyone can help each other. Most of their heavy tasks are in relation to their livelihood, and it is put on hold because of mobile restrictions. In the house, there are extra hands which can assist them while on quarantine, thus it made them feel unburdened. Although, there are also some who answered that it felt more pressure and burden because they have to find alternative ways how to find income.
- **No gender-based violence recorded during the pandemic.** All the respondents answered that there are no cases of violence specifically on women and children occurred during the pandemic in their community. They explained that even though life seemed hard during the lock down, but the men of the community are responsible fathers and husbands. Although some may have vices like drinking, but they never commit violence towards their wives and children.
- **Government support not enough.** As earlier mentioned, majority of the participants responded that the assistance they received from the government is not enough. It cannot sustain their needs specially in this time of the pandemic that their source of livelihood is greatly affected.
- When asked on how did they able to face the challenge brought by the pandemic, most of them answered that helping and supporting each other in the community is the key on survival. They shared that while others are struggling to meet their ends, they asked for money from their neighbors through “utang” or debt. Others are looking for another job without quitting as a fisherfolk just to sustain and acquire extra money to pay for the bills and daily needs. Some still tried to go out and catch fish, hoping that they will not get caught.

IV. Recommendations

The survey indicated that the biggest barrier on elevating the status of the Women Fisherfolks are ‘lack of attention to the condition of the Women Fisherfolks from the government’. Most of the women fisherfolks plays the vital role on pre, during and post-production. A fisherfolk can be a man or a woman however in times of assessing the status of a fisherfolks, the presence of a women fisherfolks subsided. Few of them knows the rights but consequently, still many of them destitute the idea of what is right for them.



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The collective data gathered pointed out that women fisherfolks needs additional assistance and support to increase their awareness and improve their current status specially in this time of pandemic.

1. *Improve the status of the fisherfolks specially women fisherfolks.* Meeting the concerns of the fisherfolks gradually demands an effort from the government. Thus, most of the participants requested that the government should help them provide for a boat for fishing. They also added that an additional livelihood project related to fishing like bangus deboning and etc. and even a start-up small business be given to them so that they can sustain their daily needs during the pandemic.
2. *Access to Information or advocacy programs.* Another recommendation suggested by the participants as they go through the interview is to expose them to various advocacy and information drive programs specially when it involves their rights not just as fisherfolk but most importantly as a woman. Even though there are no cases on gender-based violence recorded, they do not want to feel comfortable with the idea that they lack the knowledge on their rights. They requested that they may be able to attend lectures and trainings to be able to enhance their knowledge on basic human rights and rights relating to women.
3. *Livelihood and Skills Training.* The on-set of the pandemic made them realize that it is not enough that they depend on fishing alone. When they experienced the difficulty to looking for another source of income aside from fishing, participants found the need to upgrade their skills. They recommended that fisherfolks should undergo various skills training and livelihood programs so that they can have another source of income and not depend solely on fishing. They requested to have trainings on “bangus deboning”, “mask-making”, “bag-weaving” among others.

B. Government Service Providers

The participants for service providers who responded to our KII are officers from the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and a representative from the Local Government Unit of Nasipit, Agusan del Norte on COVID response.

A. Situationer of women fisherfolks

According to LGU-Nasipit there are 793 registered fisherfolk (262 Female and 531 Male). The income of the Sector with fishing vessel less than 3 GT and small scale fisherfolks can only provide food for the family and some converted into



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monetary for their basic needs. The issue that were fisherfolks currently facing now is the insufficient funds for livelihood programs. There are different kinds of fishing:

1. Fish cage	
2. Gleaning	222
3. Fish Vending	40
4. Drift Grill (Palaran)	10
5. Encircling Gill Net (Tagata)	9
6. Cash Net (Laya)	35
7. Bottom Set Gill Net (Pukot)	23
8. Hook and line (Pasol)	195
9. Spear (Pamana)	26
10. Pamo	4
11. Fish Pot(bobo)	48
12. Squid Tigger (Subid)	14
13. Multiple Drift Gill (Palaran)	1
14. Push Net (Sudsud)	1
15. Bottom Drift Gill Net (Pante)	15
16. Multiple Hook and Line (Panghe)	6
17. Tuga	1
18. Active Gear (Pamawo)	6
19. Scoop Net (Pangbolinao)	5

B. Policies and programs

As policies and programs for the fisherfolk sector, DILG responded that their office issued several policies/directives and even Joint Memorandum Circulars with other agencies pertaining to marginal/vulnerable sectors with purpose of uplifting their plight. Moreover, supported by LGU report there are implemented municipal ordinances such as Marine Sanctuary 31.74 has. SB Ordinance No. 001, Series of 2002 and Fishery Reserve 40.09 has. SB Ordinance No. 005, Series of 2007.

The general programs of DILG for fisherfolks before ECQ was the SALINTUBIG and Assistance to Municipalities, the Conditional Matching Grand Road Projects (CMGP) and the Performance Challenge Fund (PCF) that believe fisherfolks benefited. Likewise, provision of livelihood projects under LGU established Training on Bangus Deboning and Food Processing, Brgy1 Fisherfolks Fish Pot Project, establishment of Mariculture Park and Community Fish Processing, Cubi2x Fisherfolks Crab Fattening and Milkfish Production Project, Talisay Fisherfolks Bangus Fish Cage Project, Camagong Fisherfolks AquaCulture Project, SANROPFLA Crab Fattening Project, PFSDA and MMAA Milkfish Production.



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Pertaining to the specific program for women fisherfolks in accordance for MCW, DILG admitted that there are no specific programs for women fisherfolks however the office under CSO engagement program, included women representatives were invited as participants in the conduct of the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP)- barangay Development planning of the target barangays in the region. Nevertheless, LGU supported women fisherfolks through provision of livelihood program.

Also, women fisherfolks are beneficiaries from the various GAD projects of of the agency.

C. Covid-19 Impact and program

Department of Agriculture has several programs developed and implemented during ECQ. However, these programs do not only focus to the farmers and the fisherfolks but to all people in the community. For instance, “Kadiwa-on-wheels (mobile store or tabo)” it displays and sell agricultural (crops, fruits, and vegetables), fisheries, meat, dairy, groceries, and other products. Fishery products are from fisherfolks and sold through the assistance of BFAR. This program aims to help the community to food security and likewise to the producers to sell their products in safety and abides the required health protocols. Also, LGU provided “Cash for Work” program: Mangrove Reforestation and Deployment of Artificial Reefs that benefited to 50 fisherfolk.

For the less documented impact of the pandemic on the sector are the negative impact of the sector in regards to milkfish production, low buying price of milkfish and other fishery products and low income of fisherfolks.

C. Presentation of KII Results

On October 15, 2020 at around 2:00 o’clock in the afternoon a virtual meeting conducted by the Commission on Human Rights Caraga to present the KII results to the. Present during the online meeting is Department of Local Government (DILG), Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Women Fisherfolks of Punta Fisherfolk Seaside and Dwellers Association, Inc.

Summary of Discussion

During the KII, majority of the respondents shared the difficulties they faced during the lockdown including food scarcity and food insecurity; loss of income and productivity brought about by limited mobility, closure of markets, prohibition on fishing, less sales because catch is sold at lesser prices, lack of other livelihood. These issues were brought up



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during the online meeting together with the agency service providers present. With this, the agencies were able to answer the issues on point. The following are the ways forward given by the government agencies responsible for the services to women fisherfolks.

BFAR. On the issues of services available to women fisherfolks, they reached out to BFAR to request if they can avail various project or programs for them to be able to enhance their skills and be able to acquire another source of income.

Projects/Programs Requested	Remarks
<i>Fish Cages for women</i>	BFAR is willing to provide/assist the participants for such project but this is subject for verification specially that this program is strenuous, laborious and involves risk and they have to make sure that such beneficiaries are equipped and skilled to undergo such project.
<i>Food Processing</i>	BFAR provided trainings for this but with different beneficiaries
<i>Bangus Culture and Bangus Deboning</i>	Registered fisherfolk organization
<i>Fish Coral and Crab fattening</i>	Criteria to avail the projects rebidding of materials

PNP. One of the partner agencies to combat the issue of Gender Based Violence against Women Fisherfolks. So far there is no recorded case of GBV from our participants. However, PNP reminded our women fisherfolks to never hesitate in reporting if there is a violence occurred. Maj. Farol of PNP committed that they will increase their efforts in providing projects and programs to our fisherfolks sector, specially the women fisherfolks. Although there are no reported cases, they will conduct concentrated advocacy works in the community to campaign against violence in women and children. She assured the participants that they will conduct lectures and trainings for the fisherfolks.

DILG. Accordingly, the agency has no specific programs implemented for women fisherfolks. However, their office under CSO engagement program, included women representatives were invited as participants in the conduct of Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) – Barangay Development Planning of the target barangays in the region. Although there are no specific programs, but the agency provided technical services like technical assistance of our personnel to the review of the LGUs GAD Plan and Budget and provision of capacity development planning, women sectors are indirectly benefited.

Distribution of Food Packs

