

Introduction

RATIONALIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN THE FISHERY SECTOR

In recent years, gender and empowerment have been recognized as key concepts in social interventions among development institutions across the country. Program experiences of different communities affirm that empowerment program intertwined with gender advocacy can lead to substantial changes not only on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the program beneficiaries but also among the implementers themselves.

Gender responsive approach to development makes program interventions more effective by allowing it to identify the particular needs of the communities and to address them accordingly. Gender responsive approach to development makes program interventions more efficient in that it promotes the mobilization and involvement of women in decision-making processes and program implementations. Gender responsive approach to development makes program interventions equitable, in that it provides women and men equal opportunities to benefit from the development initiatives.

NFR believes equity and equality should be accorded to both men and women alike. At present, however, women's contributions to nation building are far to be recognized. The women fishers for example, play the vital roles in fishing activities. Women fishers are active in the preparation of fishing nets, fish harvest and post harvest activities. Sometimes, women also act as ambulant vendors, selling their fish catch to local consumers. Essentially, fishing is a family activity. Even the small children have assumed roles in the preparation of nets and boats. After school, children usually assist their parents in cleaning scallops and selling their fish catch. However, even Republic Act 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 does not guarantee to women fishers the equal access to opportunities to better themselves. RA 8550 is also silent in securing equitable distribution of gains from the coastal and marine resources.

Upon the recommendations of partner fishers of NFR through the National Consultation on the Mandatory Review of RA 8550, gender issues and concerns have been incorporated in some proposed

salient points in the Fisheries Code of 1998. This is in preparation to the mandatory review of RA 8550 as stipulated in the said Act.

At present, however, women advocates are pushing for the Magna Carta for Women. The NGOs for Fisheries Reform (NFR) through its Gender Thematic Group also saw the need for a law that would address the needs of rural and urban women. However, this does not undermine the fact that women have needs that vary according to social, economic and political contexts. The advocacy for Magna Carta for Women complements the advocacy for mainstreaming of the issues and concerns of women fishers in RA 8550.

However, NFR considers that socially accepted and scientific research studies shall help in understanding the situation of women fishers in coastal communities. A need to rationalize the passing of Magna Carta for Women into a law that would benefit the fishery sector necessitates for an in-depth analysis of the situation of women fishers. This also supports the claim on the importance of incorporating the issues and concerns of women fishers in RA 8550.

In formulating policy and programs concerning the fisheries sectors, NFR believes that women issues and concerns be discussed extensively and correspondingly so that policy interventions can be explicitly stated. However, data gathering and analysis must be improved so that both women and men's needs and interests are accounted for. Policy makers and advocates have to be well informed of gender differences in the fisheries sector and understand the basic principles in mainstreaming gender concerns at the level of policy formulation, program and plan design and implementation. So comes this Policy Journal on Women in Fisheries.

Dennis F. Calvan
NFR Chairperson

ARTICLE 1:

Looking for Women in Fisheries Policies & Programs
A Review of Literature on Women and the Fisheries Sector in the Philippines

Amiella Marie Dasig-Salazar

Researcher for Center for Empowerment and Resource Development, Inc.

Sheila Marie M. Dasig

Researcher for Center for Empowerment and Resource Development, Inc.

“Laws need to be sensitive to the patriarchal forces at play and the nuances of women’s life situations and stories in order to effectively facilitate social transformation.”

Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes and Ermelita Valdeavilla, NCRFW

Introduction

The numerous roles of fisherwomen in coastal communities are unquestionable proofs of their existence as fishers. It would only be logical, even common-sensical, that they are recognized as such and consequently benefit from whatever interventions there are for the fisheries. But this is where irony hits the hardest. A fisherwoman toils and sweats as much as, if not more than, her male counterpart but at the end of the day, her efforts are relegated and are considered only as supporting efforts for the more valued male outputs.

In a country that prides itself for its democracy, the legislative arena is another crucial channel for recognition and negotiation. Unfortunately, this arena too, remains oblivious to the fisherwomen’s

existence. Republic Act 8550, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998¹, is the national legal instrument that provides for the development, management and conservation of the fisheries and aquatic resources. It is said to be a landmark legislation for the fisherfolk but it has not provided enough space for women to raise their particular issues and assert their claims to the benefits that this law has to offer.

Despite the bleak situation for women in fisheries policies, women advocates and practitioners in the fisheries and coastal resources management remain positive and continuously work for their recognition. These groups continue to lobby for wider opportunities for fisherwomen within the policy environment particularly in the Fisheries Code and the Magna Carta for Rural Women.

This review of literature, which was conducted in 2002, hopes to contribute to the ongoing efforts of preparing for the mandatory review of RA 8550. In particular, it aims to assist in the local research being conducted by the Community Empowerment and Resource Development (CERD), Inc., entitled “A Research to Determine Advocacy Points for the Fisheries Code” in the island municipality of Almagro and Tinambacan District in Western Samar.

The review is divided into three parts: 1) review of policies and literature pertaining to women in general; 2) review of policies and plans related to fisheries and how gender is incorporated in these documents; and, 3) review of local development plans and gender plans in the service municipalities of CERD.

A Look at International and National Policies on Women

For decades now, attempts to address gender inequalities and discrimination against women in the policy arena have been made in both national and international scenes. From the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)² in 1979 to the most recent

¹ An Act Providing for the Development, Management and Conservation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Integrating All Laws Pertinent Thereto and for Other Purposes. Manila, Philippines, 23 March 1998.

² The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

Beijing Declaration,³ principles and strategies to ensure women's participation, access and benefits in the development of a country's political, economic and social dimensions have been put in writing. Their policy documents can be used as basis for crafting laws that address gender-specific concerns.⁴

Rural women were given particular recognition in CEDAW. The said convention declares that "*State Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in the rural areas*".⁵ It further provides for the responsibilities of state parties to ensure that rural women participate in and benefit from rural development and ensure the rights of the rural women to participate in development planning and community activities and to have access to education, social security services, agricultural credit and market facilities, health care facilities and adequate living conditions among others.⁶

As early as 1975, the Philippines responded to international calls to uphold women's rights through the establishment of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). Today, NCRFW is mandated to advise the President and assist the Cabinet on policies and programs affecting women. It is tasked to oversee the implementation of national laws on women including international treaties and commitments such as the UN CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), and Women 2000 Outcome Document.⁷

In 1986, the Philippines had its first woman president, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino. It was during her term that the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which integrated the principle of gender equality, was enacted. The Constitution categorically states that "*The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and*

³ The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Fourth World Conference on Women. Beijing, China. 15 September 1995.

⁴ National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 'Towards a Gender-Responsive Legislation' (1999).

⁵ Article 14 of CEDAW. 1979.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 'Making Government Work for Gender Equality'. Manila, Philippines (2000).

shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men".⁸ This provision reinforces the Filipino women's claim to equality before the law because the Constitution, together with the Local Government Code, is the defining parameters of the legislative process.

Before the Aquino regime was over, Republic Act 7192⁹, otherwise known as Women in Development and Nation-Building Act, was enacted on 12 February 1992. The law was a landmark legislation for the Filipino women for it strengthened women's position as full and equal partners of men in development and nation-building. It opened more doors for women, specifically, the right to be admitted to the Philippine Military Academy, an institution long hailed as a bastion exclusively for men. Such law recognizes the need for financial support in order to attain its objectives, thus, it provides for a substantial portion of the official development assistance from foreign governments and multilateral agencies concerned to support programs and activities for women. The Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 7192 gives more teeth to the provision on financial resources involving women as it categorically states that line or implementing agencies shall ensure that in the first year of implementation 5% of the funds received from foreign governments and multi-lateral agencies/organizations (*ODA/ Official Development Assistance*) are in support of projects that include gender concerns in development.¹⁰ Furthermore, RA 7192 gives the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), with the assistance of NCRFW, the mandate to ensure that the different government departments and agencies formulate and implement development programs for women and ensure their participation in the entire program development process.

Another policy enacted during Aquino's Administration was Executive Order 348¹¹ or the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW) for 1989-1992. However, at the time RA 7192 was passed, PDPW had expired, thus, Executive Order 273¹² was promulgated which approved and adopted the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) for 1995-2025. It directed all government agencies, departments, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities including government owned corporations to take appropriate steps for the full implementation of the plan. It was linked to the Medium Term

⁸ Section 14, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

⁹ An Act Promoting the Integration of Women as Full and Equal Partners of Men in Development and Nation Building and for Other Purposes. Manila, Philippines. 12 February 1992.

¹⁰ Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 7192. 18 November 1992.

¹¹ An Act Approving and Adopting the Philippine Development Plan for Women for 1989-1992. Manila, Philippines. 17 February 1989.

¹² The Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995-2025. Manila, Philippines. 8 September 1995.

Philippine Development Plan¹³ (MTPDP) for 1993-1998 under the Ramos Administration. The PPGD is the Philippine government's 30-year perspective framework for pursuing full equality and development for women and men. It is the primary reference for integrating gender dimensions in the long term development plan.

NCRFW, in coordination with NEDA, shall monitor the implementation of RA 7192 and shall conduct periodic assessment of the plan including updating it as often as necessary. For its implementation, EO 273 provides that the initial amount shall be charged against the appropriations of government agencies authorized to be set aside for this purpose under RA 7845 including bilateral or multilateral agencies or ODA. Budgetary requirements for the succeeding years shall be incorporated in General Appropriation Bills to be submitted to the Congress.¹⁴

The PPGD was divided into several sectors with agriculture and fisheries placed under the Economic and Industrial Sector. Unlike the preceding PDPW, the PPGD explicitly included fisheries as a separate sector from the general sector of agriculture. According to PPGD, the agriculture and fisheries sector contributes ¼ of the gross national product of the country and employs half of the labor force, thus, it provides for the foundation and springboard to full economic development.

Several institutional accomplishments within the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources were reported in the PPGD, which included mainstreaming gender in planning and policies, gender sensitivity training and collection of sex-disaggregated data at the level of the departments.

The sectors of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as the Environment and Natural Resources, are the major sectors where the fisherfolks belong. However, although fisherfolks are mentioned in sections pertaining to issues, unlike the farmers, upland dwellers and mining communities, they are not found in the policy, strategy, program and project section. Hence, fisherfolk issues are identified but corresponding responses in terms of policies and projects are not provided.

¹³ The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, 1993.

¹⁴ National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 'The Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025'. Manila, Philippines (1998).

The GAD Budget Policy

The GAD Budget Policy requires agencies or Local Government Units (LGUs) to set aside a minimum of 5% of their annual appropriations to be used for priority programs, projects and activities designed to address gender issues and women concerns in accordance with RA 7192. The GAD Budget is the cost of implementing the GAD Plan of the agency.¹⁵

The GAD budget is mandated by several Acts, Executive Orders, Memorandums and Circulars, among them are the following:

- RA 7192 and EO 273;
- Local Budget Memorandum 28 (1998) which mandated an allocation of a GAD budget that is not lower than 5% of the national budget;
- Local Budget Memorandum No. 32 (1999) Section 9.6 and Memorandum Circular 99-146 (1999) issued by DILG , which serve as the government mandate for local government units regarding GAD budget for local governments;
- Local Budget Memorandum No. 28 (1997), which instructed the governors, mayors, barangay chairs, Sanggunian Bayan and Sanggunian Panlalawigan members and other concerned local officials to set aside a minimum amount of 5%, out of the 1998 appropriation, for projects designed to address gender issues;
- Joint Circular DILG-NCRFW-DBM 2000 which required all government agencies to formulate their GAD plan (2002-2005) with corresponding fund;
- Joint Memorandum Circular, DILG-DBM-NCRFW (2001-01) which served as guidelines on the formulation of the GAD plan and budget for the local government units from barangay to regional agencies;
- General Appropriations Act 2000, which incorporated the formulation of a set of guidelines for the implementation of the GAD programs and activities by NEDA and DBM in consultation with the NCRFW. The formulation of a GAD plan with the NCRFW of all departments, offices, bureaus, agencies, state universities and government owned and controlled corporations, where the plan

¹⁵ National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 'Making Government Work for Gender Equality' (2000).

shall be at least 5% of the agency's total 2000 budget appropriation. It also included the requirement of the submission of GAD plans for review.¹⁶

Moving Towards the Coast: Looking for Women in Fisheries Policies and Programs

The international declarations and national legal instruments on women discussed in the previous section provided the rationale for pushing the different sectors of society to recognize and address gender inequality and discrimination against women. Given such legal basis, the next logical step is to find out if the issues and concerns of women were indeed incorporated in the different policies and programs of a particular sector. This section will look at the fisheries sector and the corresponding policies and administrative orders and determine whether women concerns have been properly addressed through policy formulation.

AFMA and the Fisheries Code

Two of the most important national laws for fisheries are RA 8435¹⁷, otherwise known as Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) and the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1988 (RA 8550), which became effective on 9 February 1998 and March 23, 1998, respectively. Though related in that both deal with the fisheries sector, these legislative initiatives proceeded largely independent of each other. The AFMA was more concerned with providing the appropriate budgetary and logistical requirements for the modernization of the country's entire agricultural base and encouraging a more rapid shift towards industrialization. On the other hand, the Fisheries Code was the product of a long-drawn lobby effort by concerned fisheries groups. Both laws were enacted at the end of term of the Ramos Administration, which committed itself to several major legislative initiatives as part of its socio-economic and political programs, and are now only beginning to see implementation.¹⁸

¹⁶ Budlender, Debbie, et.al. (eds.), *Gender Budget Trail. The Philippine Experience*. The Asia Foundation (2001)

¹⁷ An Act Prescribing Urgent Related Measures to Modernize the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector of the Country in Order to Enhance their Profitability, and Prepare said Sectors for the Challenges of Globalization through an Adequate, Focused and Rational Delivery of Necessary Support Services, Appropriating Funds therefor and for Other Purposes. 9 February 1998.

¹⁸ Batongbacal, Jay, 'Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act and the Fisheries Code of 1988. Key Areas of Conflict and Recommended Courses of Action' 5 *Overseas* 4 (2002).

Department Administrative Orders (DAO) and Fisheries Administrative Orders (FAO)

To further clarify the operationalization of national laws like AFMA and the Fisheries Code, DAOs and FAOs are also issued by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), respectively. Among those that were issued and reviewed for this research, it was found out that only a few included provisions on women in their formulation and these are the following: DAO 6 or The Implementing Rules and Regulations of AFMA¹⁹, DAO 3 or The Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 8550²⁰, and FAO 196 or Guidelines on the Creation and Implementation of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs).²¹

Most of the FAOs that were reviewed were purely technical and dealt with fish species and processes. There were no provisions for the human or social aspect in implementing these FAOs. In fact, there was no mention of women in FAO 200,²² a directive concerning “poaching”, which is important to note because it shows that in the rare opportunities where human or social aspect may possibly be addressed, gender and women concerns still remain insignificant, or even disregarded.

Comments on DAO 6: Implementing Rules and Regulations of AFMA

The AFMA is said to be the cornerstone of the government for poverty alleviation in the agriculture and fisheries sector. It gives more emphasis to industrialization and transformation of this sector from a resource-based to technology-based industry. Section 13 of the said Act states that the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the farmers and fisherfolks, the private sector, non-government organizations, people's organizations and the appropriate government agencies and offices, shall formulate and implement a medium and long-term Comprehensive Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan.

Unfortunately, the law is highly focused on the economic aspect of the sector and its main objective is to produce more agriculture and fisheries products. With this objective, it sees the rural population as a rich source of labor force upon the modernization of the rural areas. Different structures (NMAP, NMU, NIN, etc.) were proposed to help farmers and fishers benefit from the planned modernization. However,

¹⁹ 10 July 1998.

²⁰ 8 May 1998.

²¹ Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Quezon City, Philippines. 6 March 2000.

²² Guidelines and Procedures in Implementing Section 87 of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. Quezon City, Philippines. 6 September 2000.

it is not clear how the fishers and farmers, especially the women, are institutionalized in these structures. The fishers and farmers are only seen as beneficiaries of the planned activities. The highest level of participation that they could possibly link up is their engagement in the consultations conducted at the local level.

The authors of the law were not able to properly consider the differences in gender among members of the community. Gender equity was not even discussed in the closest major concern, which is poverty alleviation and social equity, and this could explain why a lot of important and necessary provisions on women are not found in the law. Except those which are stereotypical of women such as credit and marketing, substantial provisions regarding gender equality were taken for granted, which if incorporated, would have equally benefited everyone in the community.

The law does not have an appropriate gender perspective. Women were mentioned only in passing, and no focus was given on the particular issues facing them. Despite occasionally mentioning “women” as among those who can have access to credit, marketing and business information, it is not clear how rural women could actually participate in the modernization of the agriculture and fisheries sector.

Provisions regarding women were made only in four sections of the law, namely: Special Concerns, Credit, Marketing and Information Support Services, and Training of Workers under Rural Non-Farm Employment. Again, the attempt to incorporate provisions on women in the law ends there. No concrete and specific initiatives or proposals were made in terms of their participation. In fact, the term “women” may be found only at the declaration of policy of each chapter.

A number of the special training projects given to the women’s sector, in accordance to the Act, were not quite successful because most of the trainings were either machine-dependent, for which they do not have access to, or they were simply just not suitable to their needs. Such variance seemed to be disregarded and not considered in the abovementioned law, as well as its implementing rules and regulations.

The implementing rules and regulations of RA 8435 totally overlooked the role of women in the fisheries sector, and as a matter of fact, there was no mention of women fishers in the said rules. The role women perform in the whole production process was not even recognized. They were not specified as among those sectors which can access and benefit from these programs, more so participate in the formulation of policies and consultations. The importance of making them participate in policy

formulation or even simply consulting them in matters that directly affect them, such as credit policies, marketing programs or even special trainings for women, were not recognized.

Comments on DAO 3: Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Fisheries Code

The Fisheries Code has a more appropriate gender perspective as compared to the AFMA. At least, there are significant efforts to provide for more participation of women in the fisheries sector, particularly, their roles in the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMC).²³ Despite that, however, there are still several provisions which need revisions in order for it to become completely gender fair.

Its implementing rules and regulations should have been more specific in providing for a framework for gender development. Women's involvement in the fisheries sector should have been recognized by specifically citing them as beneficiaries of the programs, as participants during consultations and as those who could gain access to opportunities enumerated in the law.

Comments on FAO 196: Guidelines on the Creation and Implementation of FARMC

The basis for the creation and implementation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMC) is found in Sections 68-79 of the Fisheries Code. Accordingly, the Municipal/City FARMCs shall be composed of several representatives from the government, NGOs, private sector, and at least eleven (11) fisherfolk representatives [seven (7) municipal fisherfolk, one (1) fishworker and three (3) commercial fishers] in each municipality/city which include representatives from youth and women sectors.²⁴

The use of the clause "*which include representatives from the youth and women sectors*" is very vague because it may mean that the representatives "may or may not" include youth and women, it being a dependent clause. Figures should have been specified in order to clearly account the number of women representatives in the council, otherwise, women's participation would be totally dispensable. Instead of the word "*which*" is a very weak word, the words "*shall*" or "*must*" should have been used to ensure women's representation in the FARMCs.

²³ Section 68-79 of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.

²⁴ Section 74 (g), Article II, Chapter III of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.

Women representation in higher bodies like the NFARMC and the IFARMC were not given importance. In the NFARMC, women representation was totally nil, and the term “women” was not even mentioned in the whole provision. On the other hand, women representation in the IFARMC was not secured because their representation is dependent on regular fisherfolk members, most of whom would likely be men.

Data on women involvement in FARMCs would show that men dominate the highest position in the council while women occupy the traditional seats like those of the secretaries and treasurers, which men also find themselves occupying the same.

For instance, gender data disaggregation of FARMC officers at M/CFARMC level in Batangas Province shows the following data: only 1 out of 24 Chairpersons is a woman, there is no woman vice-chairperson, there are 9 women secretaries, 10 women treasurers, 1 woman auditor, there is no woman PRO and there are 2 women sergeant at arms. At the IFARMC level, women hold the treasurer positions only.²⁵

Diving in: Review of National and Municipal Development Plans

This section aims to find out if the policies on women vis-à-vis fisheries policies are reflected in national and municipal development plans. Some of the documents that were reviewed were the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (2001-2004), Municipal Development Plans of Balayan, Batangas and Calbayog City, Annual Budgets of Hinatuan, Surigao Del Sur, Calbayog City, Western Samar, Mondragon, Northern Samar, and the Province of Samar.

Conscious efforts were given towards reviewing the Gender and Development Plans and GAD Budget of each municipality because these will also be used as basis to determine if women concerns are being addressed at the municipal levels.

²⁵ ‘Matrix of Status of FARMC Implementation in Region IV’ (2002).

Comments on the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (2001-2004)

The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 2001-2004²⁶ contains the blueprint that will guide the incumbent administration in seeking to achieve broad-based and sustainable development for the country. It serves as the basis for all sectoral development plans, including the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan (PAFMP). The present administration believes that the improvement of agricultural productivity is needed to raise rural household incomes and to do this, a meaningful implementation of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act is needed.

Unfortunately, Part II, Chapters 7 and 9, specifically the Agriculture and Fisheries part of the MTPDP, did not attach importance to the role of women, even in areas where they supposedly play major roles like credit and pre-harvest and post-harvest activities. The perspective on women as fishers is nowhere to be found in these sections.

Part III of the MTPDP which is about “Comprehensive Human Development and Protecting the Vulnerable,”²⁷ provisions concerning women were made but only in portions stereotypical of them such as social welfare, population and development, and access to credit, but none in areas relating to governance and institution building. In effect, women were treated more as beneficiaries or at the receiving end of the programs rather than as partners in development.

While sectors such as the farmers, fishers and indigenous peoples were specifically recognized in Chapter 9 of the MTPDP as among those who could contribute to its goal, the women’s sector was consciously not included despite the indispensable responsibility that they carry out. Hence, not being included as among the critical groups that the government could link and involve with in the implementation of its strategies, they were not among those groups identified that should be given capability-building activities.

In Chapter 10²⁸ of the MTPDP, the development plan attempts to address women’s issues particularly on access to entrepreneurial skills. For this purpose, the process and guidelines for women to avail themselves of these training and post-training assistance need further study.

²⁶ National Economic and Development Authority. The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2001-2004 with the State of the Nation Address by President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo. Manila, Philippines (2001).

²⁷ Chapter 10, Part III of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2001-2004.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

In Chapter 11²⁹ of the MTPDP, the development plan attempts to mainstream gender and development into Philippine Population Management Program (PPMP) components. This section may have clearly identified gender inequality but such is limited only to the population and development issues. Other issues and nuances of fisherwomen are still not considered.

In Chapter 13³⁰ of the MTPDP, women were specifically mentioned in strategies relating to social welfare and protection but were not specified in areas relating to governance and institution building. This section may be interpreted as a gain in terms of women's rights advocacy since it recognized the issues of trafficking, prostitution and violence, and the need for strengthening corresponding policy environment to address these issues. Again, however, women concerns in the fisheries such as non-recognition, access and control to resources, governance and institution-building are missing.

Thus, there is no appropriate gender perspective in formulating targets and strategies in parts that are relevant to the coastal communities, particularly the Agriculture and Fisheries section of the plan. Once more, women's role in the modernization of agriculture and fisheries were undervalued.

Microfinance as a strategy, found in the same chapter, mentions supporting credit facilities such as the People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC), an area which may be accessible to women. Such existing credit facility has to be studied further to determine how women in the fisheries can access and benefit from it.

The portion on poverty statistics generation and cross-sectoral issues reinforces the need for gender disaggregated data especially the availability of statistical data regarding poverty among women. But the data should be more sensitive to the particularities of women in different sectors and should not be treated homogeneously.³¹

Comments on the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan (2001-2004)

The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan (AFMP) 2001-2004 is a detailed presentation of the targets and strategies to be used by the Department of Agriculture and its Regional Offices in

²⁹ Chapter 11, Part III of the MTPDP: 'Enhancing Health Care'.

³⁰ Chapter 13, Part III of the MTPDP: 'Protecting the Vulnerable Groups'.

³¹ Tanyang, G.B., 'Women in Fisheries: A Review of Limited Literature' (unpublished).

implementing the MTPDP and the AFMA. The implementation of the Fisheries Code is identified as one of the major strategies, but the plans were more inclined towards the implementation of AFMA. With the plan geared towards production and markets, the strategies reflected the objectives of AFMA more than the Fisheries Code. Also, more emphasis was given to agriculture than fisheries as evidenced by the detailed plans that were identified for the former.

No proper gender perspective was used in the formulation of the AFMP of the Department of Agriculture. Such plan was based mainly on Chapter 7 of the MTPDP (Agriculture and Fisheries) wherein no provisions on women were specifically discussed.

For instance, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Plan for Region 8 discussed the agricultural aspect only while the fisheries aspect was not included in its objectives and strategies. On the other hand, the plan for CARAGA Region has a detailed list of strategies for fisheries including resource conservation and management, implementation of fishery laws, production, alternative livelihood, and the construction of post-harvest facilities, to name a few.

Comments on Gender and Development Plan for 2001 of the Department of Agriculture and its Regional Offices (Regions 4, 8 and 13)

Identifying gender issues in the Department of Agriculture, as one goes down from the national level to the regional level, become more superficial. This view is reflected on the plans formulated, which also identified matters such as lack of data on male-female participants in the activities they were involved, lack of administrative coordination, and lack of participation in celebratory events. The implication is that there is lack of understanding on the gender and development framework, and lack of capability-building and awareness-raising activities among the employees of the department to help them appreciate fully the GAD framework. The proposal to hold activities concerning GAD were identified in the plans but no concrete description of the kind of activity was provided in the plans.

Municipal Development Plans

Since the national development plans for agriculture and fisheries were already presented above, this research also aims to ascertain whether the national policies on women are similarly reflected on the local level. Two essential elements were considered in reviewing the Municipal Development Plans of the service areas of CERD, to wit, Gender and Development Plans and GAD Budget.

Gender and Development Plans

In Calbayog City, Western Samar, general issues on fisheries were identified in coming up with their City Action Plan but no mention was made on issues particular to fisherwomen. Instead, the sector on women was intentionally lumped together with the children and youth under the so-called “disadvantaged group”, a tag which demoralizes women’s advocacy groups, where issues such as fragmented or uncoordinated service delivery, lack of public health knowledge and practices, unemployment and underemployment, and limited livelihood opportunities were identified.³²

It can be inferred from these data that providing access to social services and livelihood opportunities are the only interventions deemed important to address disadvantaged groups, including women. It may be argued that other basic sectors already include women because it does not specifically mention men as the sole beneficiaries of the activities planned for these sectors, but then again, the non-recognition of women as beneficiaries implies their vulnerability, hence, may easily be disregarded when interventions come in.

In the same way, no plans for the fisherwomen were identified in the Municipal Development Plan of Balayan, Batangas, and further, provisions on women may only be found under the maternal and child care section of the said plan.³³ However, despite the absence of formal proposals in the municipal development plan for women in the fisheries sector, the town has a Balayan Municipal Center for Women which actively engage in projects related to gender equality. The center has an Action Plan for 2001-2002 which consists of paralegal seminars and training, organization-building, economic and livelihood assistance, and networking. Most of the matters taken up in the activities are in the context of violence against women and recognition of women as partners in nation-building.

Gender and Development Budget

There is generally a low level of awareness on the operationalization of the GAD in the local government level despite some LGU’s recognition that GAD is a mandatory budget requirement.

³² City of Calbayog. 2002. Action Plan on Poverty Reduction thru Good Governance of Calbayog City 2002-2007.

³³ Balayan, Batangas. Municipal Development Plan for 2002-2006.

To address this, the LGU incorporated gender related programs, projects and activities under the scope of traditionally women-biased departments or offices such as the Social Welfare and Development Office, Health Office or Population Office. This makes the task of operationalizing GAD more convenient for the LGU. However, the issues or concerns addressed by these offices are mainly matters related to social welfare and only a few, or none at all, on other gender issues like political and economic empowerment, access to information, technology and other resources.

Incorporating gender or women concerns in the different departments is not really defective, especially since one of the aims of GAD is to “genderize” other departments as well. However, in order for gender or women issues to be addressed effectively, a separate GAD program with its own budget allocation is indispensable and has to be reflected in the local government’s annual budget.

With regards to women in fisheries, unfortunately, not one provision among the reviewed LGU budgets addresses the concerns of women fishers. As a consequence, no budget allocations were made for women fishers. There is also a tendency for the Local Agriculture Office to focus on the sector on agriculture more than the sector of the fisheries as indicated by the concrete and specific farm-related programs. Thus, women fishers are doubly marginalized as a result of the government agencies giving less attention to the fisheries sector, and the total absence of recognition given to women involved in the fisheries sector.

The Annual Budgets of the following areas were included in this review: Municipalities of Hinatuan (FY 2002)³⁴, Mondragon (FY 2003)³⁵, City of Calbayog (FY 2003)³⁶, and Province of Samar (FY 2003)³⁷.

The areas that were looked into are the following: 1) Gender and Development Budget; 2) Functional Statements, General Objectives and Projects and Activities per Office; 3) Personnel Schedule; and 4) Program Appropriations and Obligations by Object.

³⁴ Municipality of Hinatuan. 2002 Annual Budget. Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur (unpublished).

³⁵ Municipality of Mondragon. 2003 Annual Budget. Mondragon, Samar (unpublished).

³⁶ City of Calbayog. 2003 Annual Budget. Calbayog City, Western Samar (unpublished).

³⁷ Province of Samar. 2003 Annual Budget. Samar Province (unpublished).

Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur

Among all the LGU budgets reviewed, the municipality of Hinatuan had the most gender-friendly budget. Aside from complying with the Local Budget Memoranda (LBM) mandating the LGUs to mainstream GAD in their respective program, activities and projects in accordance with RA 7192, the municipality also allocated budget for gender or women-related projects and activities under the traditionally “women-biased” offices such as the Municipal Health Office and the Municipal Social Welfare Office.

Despite this recognition, however, the municipality’s budget reflects its insufficient capabilities in operationalizing GAD. In comparing gender with the other items in the budget, it had no clear and specific functional statement, objectives or activities and programs. Neither was there a particular person identified as the focal person for gender concerns.

The Hinatuan budget also reflected how the changes in LBM affect local gender budget allocations. In 2000, the gender budget allocation was 4% of the total appropriations or 25% of the total development fund of the municipality. But in 2001, gender budget allocation was only .8% of the total appropriations or 4% of the 20% development fund. This may be due to changes in Local Budget Memorandum issued in year 2000 and 2001. It may also be due to the non-utilization of the budget appropriated for GAD in year 2000, hence, the decrease in the GAD Budget the following year. The 2000 budget was based on the Local Budget Memorandum No. 28 (1997) requiring LGUs to set aside a minimum of 5% of the total appropriations for projects designed to address gender issues. On the other hand, 2001 and 2002 budgets was based on Joint Circular 99-4 of NCRFW, DBM and NEDA (issued as an attachment to LBM No. 32 and MC 99-146) which directed the implementation of the GAD programs using the 5% of the development fund, which is supposed to be 20% of the local government budget.³⁸

Regarding women in fisheries, the functional statement and objectives of the Municipal Agriculture Office of Hinatuan show a balanced program between the farm sector and the fisheries sector, but it does not include specific programs addressing gender or women issues.

³⁸ Municipality of Hinatuan. 2002 Annual Budget. Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur (unpublished).

Mondragon, Northern Samar

The Municipality of Mondragon has a recognized GAD in its annual budget, but unlike the Hinatuan budget, its budget did not set aside a specific budget allocation for GAD. Its gender budget allocations had to be shared with other programs such as CIDSS and IRAP found under the 20% development fund.

Aside from the budget allocation under the 20% development fund, gender-related projects and activities can still access funds from the contingency reserve. This was expressed at the beginning of the budget presentation under the message of the mayor stating that, “...*Further, this budget did not specifically provide the Gender and Development (GAD) programs/ activities but it has been incorporated in some funded programs of the DSWD and DOH devolved programs... but if the activities of the above programs declared the appropriation to be insufficient, such additional funding will be charged out of the contingency reserve*”³⁹ The statement expressed by the mayor showed the LGU’s awareness of the GAD framework. However, the traditional view of women as among the vulnerable sectors may have hindered the LGU from producing an entirely separate program for gender and development. Incorporating the program under traditionally women-biased departments like the DSWD and the DOH may have made the task more convenient for them.

This may also be a manifestation of the inability of the municipality to operationalize GAD, and besides, putting the program under the DSWD and DOH would make the operationalization easier because they would be contextualized under the abovementioned departments.

Calbayog City

The City of Calbayog did not set aside specific appropriations for GAD in its annual budget. Gender or women-related projects and activities were incorporated in the programs of City Health and the City Social Welfare and Development.

The only budget allocation specifically for women concerns was the Women Welfare Program under the Social Welfare and Development Office worth P50, 000. There were no gender or women-related projects in other departments where GAD should have been integrated such as the City Population and the City Cooperatives.

³⁹ (Mayor Elito Dapulag).

Samar Province

The annual budget of Samar Province did not appropriate specific budget allocations for GAD. In fact, there were no clear and definite gender or women-related programs and projects in the said annual budget.

At first, there were indications that gender and women concerns would be given of high importance, especially under the Social Welfare Office, judging from the governor's message which says "*We will support and intensify the social welfare program of the province. Instituting basic family-friendly, needy-friendly, child-friendly, women-friendly and disabled-friendly social welfare program is but of high policy...*"⁴⁰ Moreover, the budget allocation for Social Welfare Program under the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) amounted to P200,000.00 in addition to the budget allocation of P3,000,000.00 taken from the non-office department.

However, the truth of the matter was that there was no single project or any activity, under the PSWDO, related to gender and women concerns. It must also be noted that despite the huge budget allocation for the social welfare program, several sectors were to share from it aside from the women's sector. Hence, such budget allocation does not ensure that gender or women concerns would be fully addressed under the program, especially so that the social welfare program was not itemized in the budget. This variance is something that could have been properly undertaken had there been a separate GAD budget.

The problem though was noted by the Regional DBM Office which reminded the province to comply with LBM No. 40 mandating the mainstreaming of GAD in the local level, and stated that "*Compliance is hereto enjoined to items 6.4 and 6.5 of the LBM 40 which mandates the LGUs to mainstream "Gender and Development" (GAD) in their respective programs, activities and projects in accordance with RA 7192...*"⁴¹

⁴⁰ (Governor Milagrosa Tan).

⁴¹ Province of Samar. 2003 Annual Budget. Samar Province (unpublished).

Conclusion

It is one thing to affirm support for the equality of men and women in nation-building and another thing to concretize this support through projects and initiatives especially at the local level. The prevalence of policies for women does not automatically mean women benefiting from what these policies have to offer. This is the over-all picture of the comparative situation of written policies and actual policy implementation with regards to women based on the review of literature made for this research.

Adding the fisherfolk dimension further showed how women especially from the fisheries sector are marginalized at the level of policy formulation. This aggravates their situation leading to further disempowerment because they are not explicitly supported by legislation. Women's vulnerability towards disregard is heightened because of this non-recognition.

On the one hand, the lack of clarity of women's substantial benefits from these policies (e.g AFMA, Fish Code, Municipal Development Plans) may be interpreted as areas for advocacy. But given the traditional thinking of local executive offices, the absence of clear frameworks or guidelines for genderizing development plans becomes one other layer of lobby work and slows down the efforts for gender mainstreaming.

Be that as it may, advocates of fisherwomen rights may draw lessons and inspiration from what women advocates (i.e reproductive rights, anti-VAWC, etc.) have achieved so far. Treating women as part of the vulnerable sectors of the society can, in one way show her marginalized situation, and this recognition should be an issue which has to be addressed not just through policies but programs as well.

Recommendations

Study the AFMA, particularly the slim windows of opportunity for credit and marketing for the benefit of women. Although not explicitly stated, organizations of fisherwomen may try to maximize the different funds available under this provision of the AFMA.

At the national level, find ways on how to participate in the periodic review of the different policies on women such as the PPGD to ensure more recognition for the fisherwomen.

Cross-advocacy and learning between women groups and the fisherfolk sector, as well as among other sectors of the society, should be enhanced. It is noticeable that most often, women's rights in terms of violence against women and reproductive rights are the only ones regarded as women's issues in the government sector and in the local level, hence, these are the only ones reflected in the gender plans of the municipalities. The issues and nuances of the fisherwomen remain unidentified and has not been appropriated enough space in fisheries policies and local development plans.

Existing policies on women from the international and national level should form part of the awareness-raising activities of the NGO and PO for its gender development programs. In the Philippines, knowledge of laws and polices is an important asset for the ordinary citizen. Dissemination and understanding of gender-related policies will spark more advocacy of women's rights similar to those experienced by fishers after going through paralegal courses on fisheries and environmental laws.

Coordinate with LGUs and advocate for the integration of fisherwomen's issues and potentials in their general women programs and plans. LGU representatives may even be invited to join CBCRM gender mainstreaming activities to familiarize them with issues and programs of the fisherwomen. This will be a way of integrating women in the fisheries issues in municipal development plans.

Institutionalization of structures at the municipal and barangay levels that would ensure women participation from policy-making activities to the operationalization of women programs and evaluation of these programs. Studying the Local Government Code will help a lot in identifying these structures and processes on how to access and maximize them. Local Development Councils and Local Sectoral Representations are some of the opportunities that the LGC provides.

Understanding and maximizing the GAD Budget Policy to the fisherwomen's advantage. GAD plans often lump women concerns in the Social Welfare Office together with other vulnerable sectors like the youth and the aged. This means lesser funds for women programs and activities because the funds have to be divided among the groups under the sector. By understanding the essence of the GAD budget fisherwomen should be able to access the allocation that is due them.

References

Batongbacal, Jay. 2002. Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act and the Fisheries Code of 1988. Key Areas of Conflict and Recommended Courses of Action.

- Budlender, Debbie, et.al (eds.). 2001. Gender Budget Trail: The Philippine Experience. The Asia Foundation. Makati City, Philippines.
- Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Regional Office 4. 2002. BFAR Southern Tagalog 2001 Annual Report. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Regional Office No. IV. Quezon City, Philippines.
- Department of Agriculture. 199?. A Primer on the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (Republic Act 8435). Extension Communication Division, Agricultural Training Institute. Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.
- Department of Agriculture. 2001. Department of Agriculture CY 2001 Gender and Development (GAD) Plan by Unit/ Agency (Compilation). Unpublished.
- Department of Agriculture. 2000. Implementing Rules and Regulations Pursuant to Republic Act 8435: The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 and Republic Act 8550: The Fisheries Code of 1998. Fisheries Resources Management Project- Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture. Quezon City, Philippines
- Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Local budget Memorandum #30: Tentative Allocation for the 1999 Internal Revenue Allocation (IRA) and other related Budget Preparation Matters. 1998. Manila, Philippines
- Towards a Gender –Responsive Legislation: Volume 2
- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 2002. National Commission on the Role of Filipino women: Making government work for gender equality. Office of the President, NCRFW. Manila, Philippines.
- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 1989. Philippine Development Plan for Women 1989-1992. NCRFW. Manila, Philippines.
- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 1998. Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025. Office of the President, NCRFW. Manila, Philippines.
- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). 2001. Republic Act 7192 (Women in development and Nation-Building Act) Implementing Rules and Regulations. NCRFW. Manila, Philippines.
- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). Transforming Women’s Lives: the Philippine Experience (Country Report). June 2002. Office of the President, NCRFW. Manila, Philippines.
- National Economic and Development Authority. 2001. The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2001-2004 with the 2001 State of the Nation Address by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. National Economic Development Authority. Manila Philippines.
- Overseas. The Online Magazine for Sustainable Seas. April 2002. Volume 5. No. 4

Philippine Peasant Institute. 2002. PONDONG GAD: Paano Pakikinabangan ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan? PUNLA Praymer. Philippine Peasant Institute. Quezon City, Philippines.

Philippine Peasant Institute. 2001. RURAL WOMEN: Standing Up for their Rights. Farm News and Views, the Official Quarterly Publication of the Philippine Peasant Institute. Philippine Peasant Institute. Quezon City, Philippines.

Program for Governance and Rural Empowerment Support Services (PROGRESS). July 2002.
PROGRESS: Kapangyarihan at Kaunlaran sa Barangay. Balitang Kaunlaran- Opisyal na pahayagan ng Program for Governance and Rural Empowerment Support Services (PROGRESS). Taon 1, Blg. 1. Helvetas-Philippines.

Tanyag, G.B.2001.Women in Fisheries: A Review of Limited Literature. Unpublished

City of Calbayog. 2003 Annual Budget. Calbayog City, Western Samar. Unpublished.

City of Calbayog. 200?. Action Plan on Poverty Reduction thru Good Governance of Calbayog City (2002-2007).

City Planning and Development Office. 2001. Calabayog City Socio-Economic Profile. Calbayog City, Western Samar. Unpublished.

Municipality of Almagro. 2002 Annual Budget. Almagro, Samar. Unpublished.

Municipality of Hinatuan. 2002 Annual Budget. Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur. Unpublished.

Municipality of Mondragon. 2003 Annual Budget. Mondragon, Samar. Unpublished.

Province of Samar. 2003 Annual Budget. Samar Province. Unpublished.

List of Fisheries Administrative Ordinances

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 195 Series of 1999 SUBJECT: Rules and Regulations Governing the Importation of Fresh/Chilled/Frozen Fish and Fishery/Aquatic Products	Series of 2000 SUBJECT: Guidelines on Fish Transshipment
FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 196 Series of 2000 SUBJECT: Guidelines in the Creation and Implementation of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Councils (FARMCs)	FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 197 Series of 2000 SUBJECT: Rules and Regulations Governing the Lease of Public Lands for Fishpond Development.
FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 199	FAO 198 s. 2000 SUBJECT: Rules and Regulations on Commercial Fishing
	FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 200 Series of 2000

- SUBJECT: Guidelines and Procedure in
Implementing Sec. 87 of the Philippine Fisheries
Code of 1998 (Poaching)
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
202
Series of 2000
SUBJECT: Ban on Coral Exploitation and
Exportation
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
204
Series of 2000
SUBJECT: Restricting the Use of Superlights in
Fishing
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
206
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Disposal of Confiscated Fish and Other
Items in Fishing Through Explosives and
Noxious or Poisonous Substances
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
207
Series of 200?
SUBJECT: Prohibiting the Imports and Culture of
Imported Live Shrimp and Prawn of All Stages
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
208
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Conservation of Rare, Threatened and
Endangered Fishery Species
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 210
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Rules and Regulations on the
Exportation of Fresh, Chilled and Frozen Fish
and Fishery/Aquatic Products
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
212
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Guideline on the Implementation of the
HACCP System
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
214
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Code of Practice for Aquaculture
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
215
Series of 2001 SUBJECT: Insurance for
Aquaculture crops/ Stocks
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
216
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Obstruction to Navigation in Streams,
Rivers, Lakes and Bays
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
218
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Yearly Report on Aquaculture Projects
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
220
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Operation of Fish Health Laboratories
and Collection of Fees and Charges
Therefor
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
203
Series of 2000
SUBJECT: Banning Fishing By Means of “Muro-
Ami” And The Like, Destructive to Coral Reefs
and Other Marine Habitat
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
209
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Guideline on the Production,
Harvesting, Handling and Transportation of
Shellfish for Implementation of the Local
Government
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
219
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Collection of Fees for Documents and
Services
- FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
213
Series of 2001
SUBJECT: Establishment and maintenance of
BFARs Quality Control Laboratories and

Collection of Fees and Charges for Examination
Services

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
201

Series 2000

SUBJECT: Ban on Fishing with Active Gear

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
198

Series of 2000

SUBJECT: Rules and Regulations on Commercial
Fishing

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.
205

Series of 2000

SUBJECT: Price List of Tilapia Fingerlings and
Breeds, and Carp Fingerlings For Sale By
the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources