

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL GREENING PROGRAM (NGP) IN CEBU PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role that women play in the implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP) in the province of Cebu. Forty People's Organizations (PO) were randomly selected from the four Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) stations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Cebu. Surveys and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) were used in the collection of data. Specifically PO presidents or their representatives were convened for a Focused Group Discussion and members of eight out of 40 PO's were visited and personally interviewed to triangulate information provided by their respective leaders. Results show that more than half of the PO members in Toledo, Carmen and Cebu City are women while only 40% are women in Argao. In the implementation of NGP, women act as resource managers in most of the POs we have visited. Officers are mostly women. Women members were also involved in nursery activities such as bagging, transplanting and watering seedlings. They are also involved in site preparation such as brushing, hole digging, planting of seedlings and also in maintenance activities. Results also show no discrimination between the role of men and women in the project. While men consider giving women lighter jobs because they care for them, women also believed that they can do whatever man can in implementing the NGP.

Keywords: people's organization, focused group discussion, climate change

INTRODUCTION

Governments all over the world are now seeing the global dimension of a number of environmental problems, such as climate change, ozone depletion, dumping of hazardous wastes, destruction of biological resources and forests and the impact of desertification therefore the need to protect the environment became imperative. (American Journal of Environmental Protection, 2014). Climate change will have a progressively increasing impact on environmental degradation and environmentally dependent socio-economic systems with potential to cause substantial population displacement. The key concerns in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) will include serious threats to food security and health, considerable economic decline, inundation of coastal areas, and degradation of land and fresh water resources (Reuveny in Polit Geogr, 2007 as cited by Warner *et al.*, 2010).

As such, there is a strong consensus about the need of adaptation to changing climatic conditions. Adaptation is believed to enhance the resilience against increasing climate variability. However, the availability of clean technology in developing countries will play the decisive role in controlling their growth rate of emission. This will be made feasible only when there is a better understanding of the problem between the developed and developing world about the eminent danger arising out of climate change (Warner , *et al.* 2010).

A lot of studies on women and environment have shown that women are significant actors in natural resources management and they are major contributors to environment rehabilitation and conservation. Women through their roles as farmers and as collectors of water and firewood have a close connection with their local environment and often suffer from environmental problems. (Wuyep, Solomon *et al.* 2014). Women act as informal but primary resource managers, carriers, end users and family health educators. But women also play significant roles related to , protection of the environment, they act as natural conservators and nurturers of their local environments. (Lahiri-Dutt,*et al.*, 2006)

In the Philippines, said environmental problems are mostly attributed to rampant illegal logging and industrialization which caused the drastic reduction of the country's forest resources. The Philippine government in its efforts to mitigate such dilemma established by virtue of Executive Order No. 26 issued on February 24, 2011 the National Greening Program (NGP). It is massive rehabilitation program with the main objective of growing 1.5 billion trees in 1.5 million hectares nationwide with a period of six years commencing in 2011 until 2016. The NGP is also aimed as climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy since it seeks to enhance the country's forest stock to absorb carbon dioxide, which is largely blamed for global warming. Furthermore, it is also designed to reduce poverty by providing alternative livelihood activities for marginalized upland and lowland households thru seedling production and care and maintenance of newly planted trees.

Women have recorded successes in solving environmental problems all over the world. In the Philippines, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources ensure the representation of women in multi-sectoral body. Women's participation in decision making process in project management is now recognized by ensuring that people's organizations officers and members should be represented by at least 30% women (For. Mayumi Q. Natividad,DENR, 2011).

In this backdrop, the objective of the present paper is, therefore, to systematically and critically review the existing literature on the impacts of climate change and choice of adaptations across countries and draw insights for suggesting a comprehensive policy framework particularly for developing countries in this regard. The paper finds that the role of government and civil society is crucial for enabling efficient adaptation methods. The main purpose of the study is to assess the role of women in the implementation of the National Greening Program in Cebu Province.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized qualitative type of research using triangulation method. The study focused on the women members of selected People's Organizations of the 4 Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of Cebu Province. The respondents was randomly selected from the list provided by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources the selection was based on the involvement of the PO's with the National Greening Program. Leaders/ representatives from forty (40) Peoples Organizations representing four clusters were interviewed, and eight (8) project sites were visited and members were also interviewed.

The questionnaire and Focused Group Discussions included data on socio-demographic characteristics, livelihood options, women's roles and participations and problems encountered.

An intensive site description was provided based on the NGP Evaluation earlier conducted by CTU-Argao as commissioned by DENR 7.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio- Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Results showed that for Cluster A representing CENRO Argao, (40%) of its members are women and 60% are men. For Cluster B representing Toledo City station 64% of its members are women and 36% are men. For Cluster C representing Carmen Station 82% of its members are women and 18% are men. For Cluster D representing CENRO Cebu City 53% of its members are women and 47% of its members are men.

One hundred percent of the Peoples' Organizations were registered with the Department of Labor and Employment and 13% were registered both with Department of Labor and Employment and Securities and Exchange Commission and 13% were registered with Department of Labor and Employment and with the Cooperative Development Authority. Seventy Five percent of the People's Organization were long organized and registered even before the implementation of the National Greening Program of the government.

Available Livelihood Options for Women in the Community

One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents are dependent on farming like vegetable and root crops and in some areas under CENRO Cebu City cut flower farming is their main source of income. However, their participation in the National Greening Program activities has given them additional source of income. For Santo Nino Farmers Association at Pamutan, Cebu, members are paid monthly for their participation in the National Greening Program Activities. Another livelihood options present in the community includes small scale/backyard livestock production which is eighty seven per cent (87%) and thirteen per cent are engaged in basket weaving, accepting laundry, food vendor and hired-help. Skills training on cooking, handicraft etc. were conducted by several agencies, like CTU Extension Services of Tuburan Campus, which is mostly participated by women members, and some of the skills learned were used to earn additional income. Vegetable farming a project of the Cooperative assisted by the City Agriculture Office at Bunga, Toledo gave them enough weekly income to sustain their needs and are mostly participated by women members and wives of the members of the organization.

Extent of the Participation of the Women In the NGP Program

Women act as leaders or resource managers, thus decision making were mostly dependent on them. They performed maintenance and protection works as well. Those organizations whose members are mostly women eighty to one hundred per cent performed all the activities that men can do, which include, nursery establishment, seedling production and gathering of wildlings, plantation establishment and maintenance protection.

The women members believed that whatever men can do, women also can do, and they were very much willing to perform all the tasks as long as their health warrants. However, there were few people's organization where only few women members were allowed to participate fully on maintenance and protection, considering the distance of the project site, and the risk involved while on foot patrol, especially during night time.

Problems Encountered by Women Members in the Implementation of the Program

Common problems encountered by general membership and women members of the organization is the refusal of the absentee claimant to allow the peoples organization to include their lot in the program, Another problems encountered by few women members was the distance, especially those with young children, thus some of the women members participated only in the nursery establishment and seedling production. The risk involved in conducting foot patrol especially night time was also a problem of some women members. However, for organizations manipulated by women, all activities done by men were also done by women, its just time of conducting foot patrol was done during day time.

Successful Programs Attributed to Participation of Women

Sixty Per cent (60%) of the respondent People Organizations are mostly managed by women and National Greening Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was successful, proof of which was the additional contracts awarded to the organization since the start of the program last 2011. This is based on the high percentage of survival as shown in their accomplishment report. There were even organizations who offered their services for free, like the women in Bunga, Toledo for the implementation of the National Greening Program, proceeds of the program goes to their Cooperative, which in return gave them assistance in their vegetable production. When interviewed, for them the long term benefit that the tree plantation could bring to their land and the environment, especially the fruits that could be harvested in the future will be their legacy to their children.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The roles women play in the National Greening Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is very important. Women have shown their nurturing instinct and has proven that whatever men can do, women can also do it even more. They are good managers of the environment which proved that women are natural carers of the environment. Due to their nurturing instinct and caring nature, environmental programs, managed by them will be very successful. It is highly recommended that government programs on environmental protections should encourage more women to actively participate in similar projects. Finally, it is highly recommended that the output of this study will be utilized to strategize the inclusion of gender concerns in other projects and in the formulation of policies of the government.

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