

# **GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATABASE OF THE HOUSEHOLD-OCCUPANTS IN THE MAKILING FOREST RESERVE**

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## **Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to determine the gender-sensitive profile of the household-occupants in the Makiling Forest Reserve. Specifically, the study attempts to generate a gender-disaggregated database on the MFR communities in terms of access to and control over resources; participation in decision-making; and productive, reproductive and community management functions.

## **Methodology**

This study was done in selected communities within the Makiling Forest Reserve (the MFR communities are those which may not necessarily be located inside the MFR but are directly dependent on its resources). Eight communities with formal farmers' organizations affiliated with the federation of farmers' organizations called *Kaisahan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka sa Bundok Makiling (KASAMA)* were randomly selected as the research sites. These Laguna communities are: Bagong Silang, Los Baños, Lalakay, Los Baños, Timugan, Los Baños, Tranca, Bay, Masaya, Bay, Sta. Cruz, Bay, Bagong Kalsada, Calamba, and Pansol, Calamba. Secondary data collection and literature review were undertaken from September to December 1997. Informal discussions with MFR

farmer-leaders were also held during this period. Primary data collection was delayed due to an equally delayed dialogue between the farmers and the UPLB administration officials, which tackled, among other topics, the research activities of UPLB and other agencies. Primary data was gathered by utilizing mainly the techniques of focus group discussion and key informant interview. This was completed in April 3, 1998 after the data tabulation, analysis, and interpretation were done.

### **Framework for Analysis**

Gender refers to the roles, resources, and responsibilities of men and women that are defined by society (Li, 1993). Gender roles are

*learned behaviors in a given society, conditioning which activities, tasks and responsibilities are considered feminine and masculine. Gender roles are affected by age, class, religion, ethnicity, regional origin and history; they can likewise be affected by change brought on through development efforts. Thus, the resulting role configurations of women and men could be similar or different, complementary or conflicting (Illo, 1991:3).*

The major topics analyzed in this study are: access to and control over resources and benefits; participation in decision-making; and productive, reproductive and community functions. "Access" means the ability to participate in the use of resources, of benefits and in the decision-making process, or the burden of costs. "Control" means the ability to determine who, when and where resources and benefits can be used or when and where decisions will be made by whom; or the ability to pass on costs to others. Access and control are considered basic to the definition of women's roles, opportunities, constraints, and potential futures.

Resources are factors involved in the productive, reproductive and community management activities. Benefits are the outputs or outcomes of activities. The consideration of the three aspects of work (productive, reproductive, and community management) provides a holistic view of the gender division of labor. Productive activities include all work directly related to the production of market goods and services. Reproductive activities include all work related to the daily maintenance of the household including subsistence production. Community management includes all work related to the participation of the household in the activities of the community.

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Summary**

This study aims to determine the gender-sensitive profile of the household-occupants of the MFR communities. It attempts to generate a gender-disaggregated database on these communities in terms of access to and control over resources and benefits; participation in decision-making; and productive, reproductive, and community management functions.

Eight out of the 22 MFR barangays were randomly selected as study sites: three in Los Baños (Bagong Silang, Lalakay and Timugan), three in Bay (Tranca, Masaya and Sta. Cruz), and two in Calamba (Bagong Kalsada and Pansol). Focus group discussion and key informant interview were utilized as the main data collection techniques. Review of secondary materials as well as limited ocular survey were also done.

The results of the study are best seen as general trends that are probably rich in still-to-be-documented nuances and

details that are specific to individual households or communities. Although there are certain limitations inherent in the data-collection techniques used, the objectives of the study were met.

It is difficult to synthesize the gender profile of the eight MFR communities into a single generalized profile. In number and types of categories alone for resources, benefits, decision-making issues, and activities, there is already a wide variability among the eight communities. What more for the gender data for each of these categories! There is diversity from barangay to barangay. However, it is possible to discern certain trends or patterns in the gender dimensions of the MFR communities.

*Access to and control over resources and benefits.*

In the eight MFR communities, both women and men have access to and control over many resources and benefits. There is no barangay where only men or only women have access to or control over all the resources and benefits. However, certain resources and benefits tend to be accessed and/or controlled by either sex dominantly or exclusively. Women have exclusive or dominant control over credit which is more often informal, i.e., from relatives, neighbors and friends. Other resources and benefits mentioned as being accessed and controlled by women are cash from harvest, income, appliances, water for washing clothes, income-generating projects, and gender training seminars.

Men have dominant or exclusive access to and control over land, fertilizer, labor, animals used in farming (horses), handheld radio (which is an important communication equipment considering the relative isolation of the communities), and specific kinds of training-seminars provided mostly by the UPLB-CF (leadership, farm management, surveying and

map-making, contour farming, cattle raising, and barangay maintenance).

*Participation in decision-making.*

Women and men in the eight communities decide on different issues in various ways. Separate decisions are often made by women and men regarding voting in elections, although some barangays reported joint decisions for their votes. Decisions of both sexes or dominantly of women involve issues of number of children to have, children's education, selling harvest, and "all other issues". Women generally decide on caring for the sick, marketing the harvest, buying things for the house, and selling hogs. Religious issues are also decided on by women. It is interesting to note that in one barangay women were said to have made decisions about the distribution of land among the children.

Men are dominant if not exclusive decision-makers on issues related to farming (what to plant, going to the farm). Only single or widowed women make similar decisions on their own. Men also decide on community matters such as peace and order and implementation of barangay ordinances. Raising livestock and buying in the market are also issues for men to decide on. Attending meetings for some is a man's decision but for other communities is decided on separately by the sexes. Budgeting is either a male or a female decision, depending on the barangay. Men decide whether to indulge their vice of drinking alcohol or perform their task of repairing the house.

*Productive, reproductive and community management functions.*

Because there is a lot of sharing of responsibilities, division of labor according to gender (and even sometimes

according to age) is not rigid. However, we can say with certainty, that reproductive activities are the major tasks of women. In general too, we can say that men tend to take on tasks that are physically strenuous.

Women and men share responsibilities in many activities. In many communities, the sharing requires that specific roles be taken by women and by men. Again, the physically arduous tasks as well as those that require longer absence from the home (e.g., fetching water or firewood gathering from a place far from the home) are generally undertaken by men. Men often do planting and soil preparation, farm maintenance, harvesting and transporting of products to the market. Selling the harvest and processing are usually done by women. Different communities assign the tasks of marketing to either women or men.

Tricycle-driving, raising of horse and chickens, regular employment are productive activities of men. Tending the sari-sari store is a woman's task. Women play dominant roles in child care, house cleaning, washing clothes, and clearing the table. In community activities, everyone participates in the barangay feastday. But only men solicit funds and dominate in farmers' meetings.

## CONCLUSIONS

Women and men are important individuals in productive, reproductive and community management activities as well as in decision-making. The MFR communities are in the midst of very rapid social and ecological changes. It is only logical to expect that gender roles too will continue evolving to adapt to these changes. Indeed, it is most probably this dynamic milieu that influences gender division of labor to creatively re-work the more traditional stereotypes. What we see in the

MFR communities are human adaptations to ensure sustained and sustaining ways of life despite the uncertainties within the Reserve.

The agencies with programs in the MFR must consider the gender dimensions of the communities to better ensure the successful attainment of authentic and sustainable development:

1) Women play active and varied roles in the management of the family farm in the MFR. They provide not only their labor but also their specialized knowledge and experience. Women and men have evolved distinct interests in specific kinds of land use and their associated cropping regimes. The farming knowledge and practice of women and men are important considerations in planning changes in the farming system.

2) Women and men utilize different resources because of their roles in the gender division of labor. Also, some women are actual or potential future household heads in case of the spouse's death, separation, or migration. The full recognition of women's rights in issues of tenure and access is necessary.

3) Both women and men provide for the livelihood of their family through off-farm and off-MFR activities. Women and men have different actual and potential skills and therefore adapt to opportunities in gender-specific ways.

4) Many studies have shown that the status of women is closely related to population regulation in family size. Women's educational level, occupation, income, and decision-making roles reflect their status. Also important is the children's labor in the household. Women in the MFR are involved in more productive work, and children are an additional labor source in assisting women in their productive-reproductive "double burden". Often, it is the development

efforts of external agencies that negatively affect the status of women by considering men as household heads, leaders, and decision-makers.

5) Women and men themselves observe that they have distinct roles, concerns and interests. This observation must be further explored by the people in terms of issues and priorities in the development of the MFR.

The work of women is a combination of a multitude of tasks carried out in varied settings. Gender-specific access and control over resources and benefits as well as decision-making offer an analysis of the gender power relations. The complexity and intricacy of the gender dimensions of both the communities and the development interventions indicate the need for a much deeper and more insightful way of understanding and introducing change in the MFR communities.