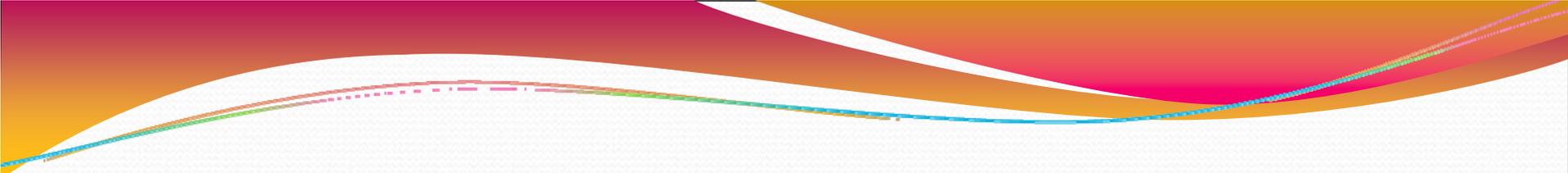


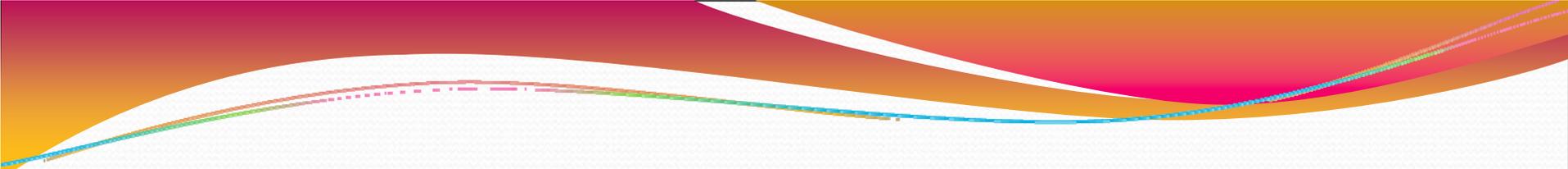
*Enhancing Women's Role as  
Natural Managers of Coastal Resources:  
The Case of an Island-Town  
in the Philippines*

*Marieta Banez Sumagaysay  
University of the Philippines*

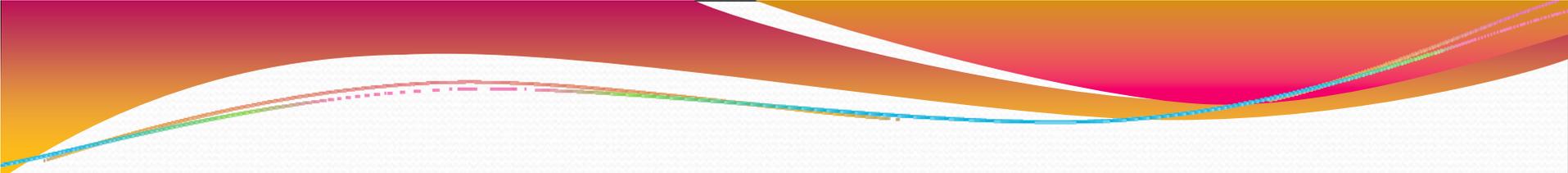


# Objective of the Study

To advance the notion that women are the natural managers of coastal resources

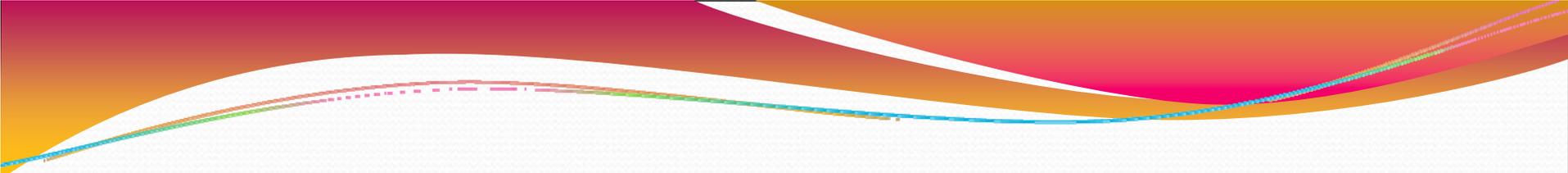


*It is hypothesized that  
being able to identify current  
coastal resource utilization practices  
and, consequently,  
heightening awareness of  
its impact on fishing communities  
will enhance women's role as the  
natural managers of coastal resources*



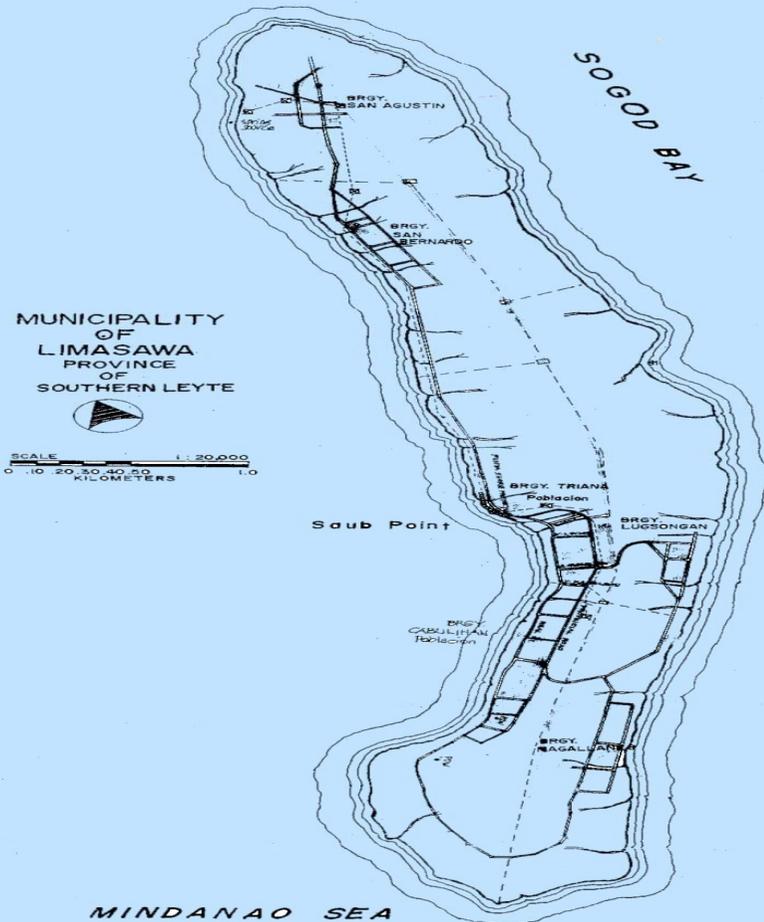
# The Challenge Today:

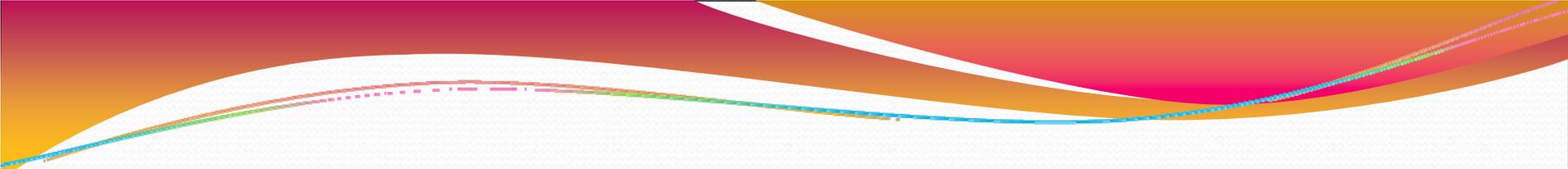
**A gender-fair  
coastal resource management  
through the sustainable use of  
resources.**

- 
- Ensuring fish security for the future
  - Undertaking measures for widespread fisheries recovery and prosperity
  - Rebuilding depleted fish stocks
  - Widening women's participation in sustainable coastal resource management.

# Research Locale:

- Limasawa is an island-town in Eastern Visayas, Central Philippines



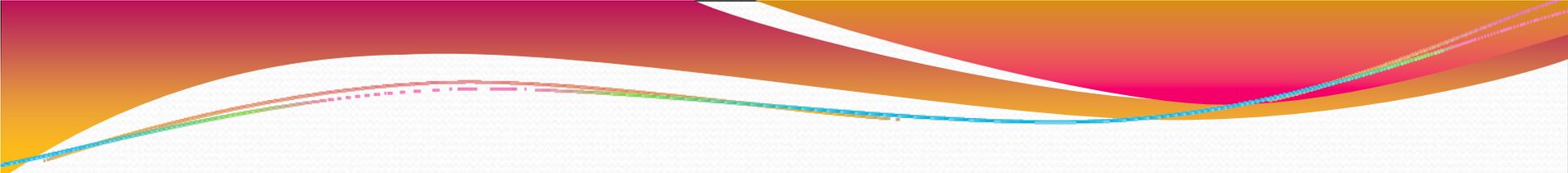


# Methodology

- Survey of 237 women fishworkers (about 18% of total women fishworkers/population)
- Random sampling, distributed proportionately across the 6 barangays of Limasawa: Triana, San Agustin, San Bernardo, Lugsongan, Magallanes, Cabulihan
- Focus group discussions (FGD)

# The Women of Limasawa

- As young as 22 years old and as old as 82
- About 60% have elementary education. Only 6% reached college level.
- Married to men of similar educational status

- 
- Women contributed an average of PhP1,122.18 (US\$25.50), with zero as the lowest value and PhP2,576.92 (US\$58.57) as the highest value to monthly family income from fishing.

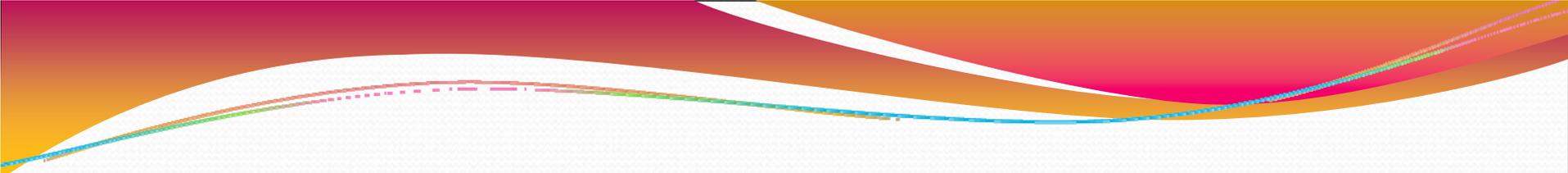
*Poverty is feminized*



# What do women know about the coastal resources?

**Women are aware of the existing coastal resources and its uses**

**Unsustainable resource utilization practices go unabated**



## **Economic Reasons:**

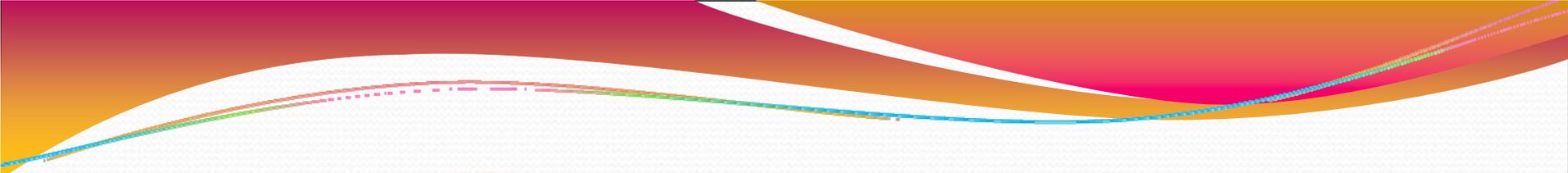
- Shells/corals for décor command a high price
- The only source of income (absence of alternative employment opportunities).
- For additional income that can send children to school.
- There are ready buyers (i.e., tourists) of rare finds.
- Better alternative than to spend cash for feeds, fuel, and food.

## Personal consumption effect

- To save the family from hunger, hence, achieve higher welfare state and satisfaction.
- The resource is delicious when cooked.
- Some sea grasses are believed to cure goiter and illnesses.
- Some marine resources are believed to contain lots of vitamins.

## **Behavioral (Values and Attitudes):**

- There will still be a lot more fish in the seas.
- The practice is seldom done, anyway.
- Other households are doing it. Why won't I do the same?
- God will always provide. Have a strong faith in Him.

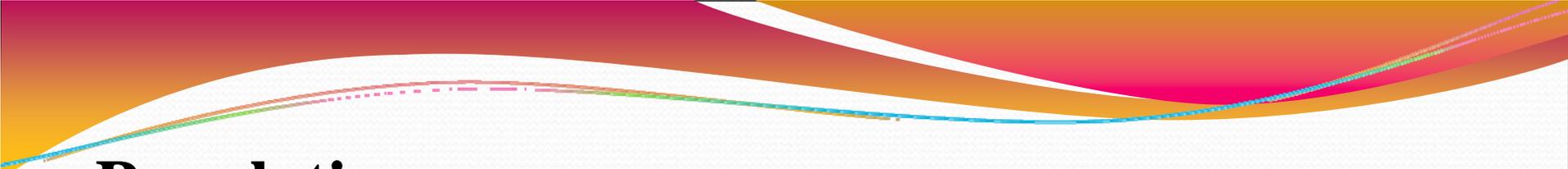


**Women have observed  
the depletion of their  
coastal resources.**

**Women have insights  
on the probable disappearance  
of coastal resources**

## Unsustainable practices:

- Illegal logging  
(for the disappearance of birds)
- Illegal fishing such as use of dynamite
- Use of “*tubli*” (*poison*) in fishing
- Big commercial fishers enter/destroy municipal waters
- Man’s abuse of nature
- Destruction of corals

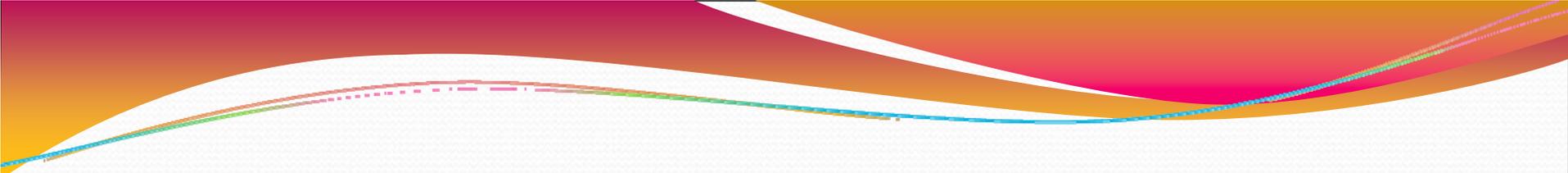


## **Population pressure:**

- Increasing number of households are gleaning
- There are more fishers today than in the past
- More households are gathering firewood, construction materials, herbs and feeds
- Sea turtles no longer lay eggs near the shore for these are destroyed/touched by households

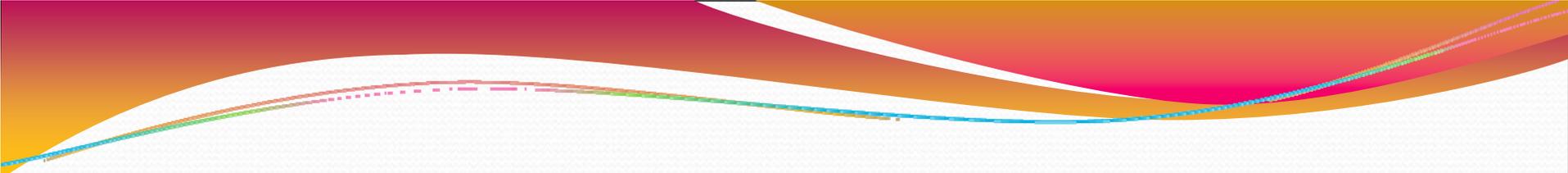
## Values, attitude and beliefs:

- The disappearance was God's will
- Sharks were used for squalene capsule production
- Takes very long time for some species to reproduce
- Drowned/destroyed by typhoons and big waves

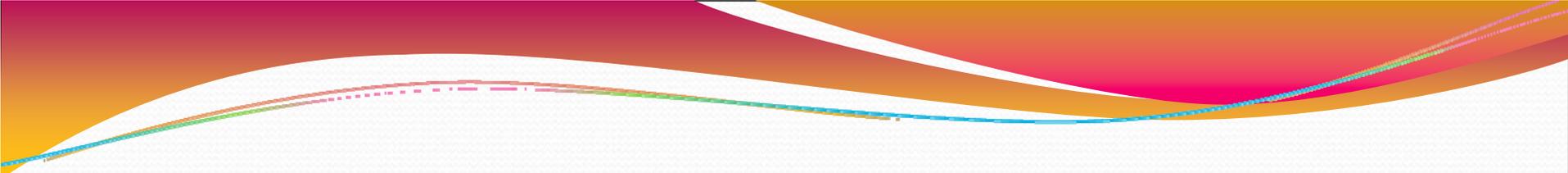


## **Environmental change:**

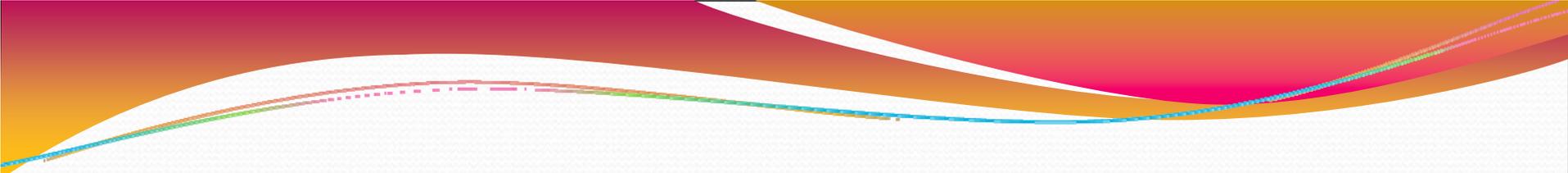
- Changes in the season throughout the years
- Migration of birds and fishes to other islands/waters
- Fishes changing “habits” and getting farther from the shorelines



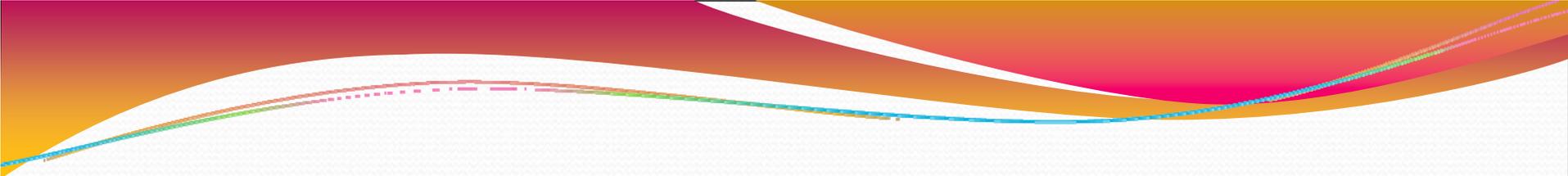
*The depletion in coastal resources that was observed in the past is expected to continue since the same hastening factors of rapid population growth along the coasts, and unsustainable practices exist today. These put heavy pressure on coastal resources.*



**An urgent call  
for sustainable  
coastal resource  
management**

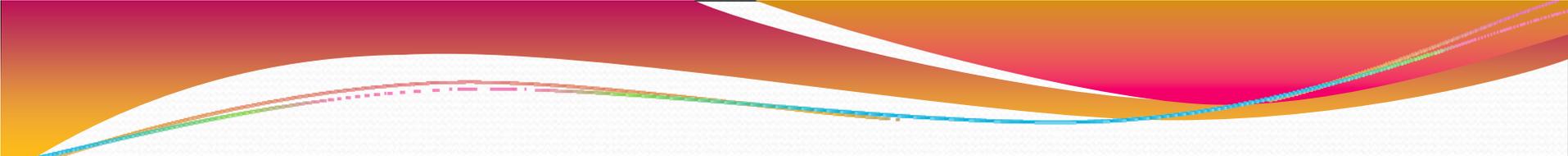


**Why are women the  
natural managers  
of coastal resources?**



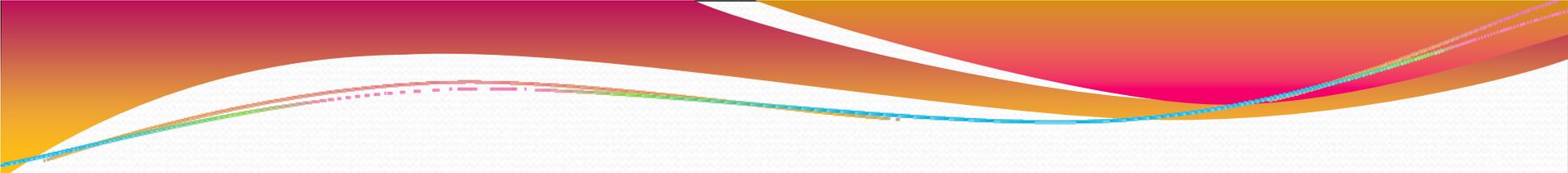
**Women have the more detailed  
knowledge of the coastal environment**

- Women occupy different spaces in the landscape (*Marine Protected Areas News, 2002*)
- Women are more connected to the environment (*Oracion, 2001*)



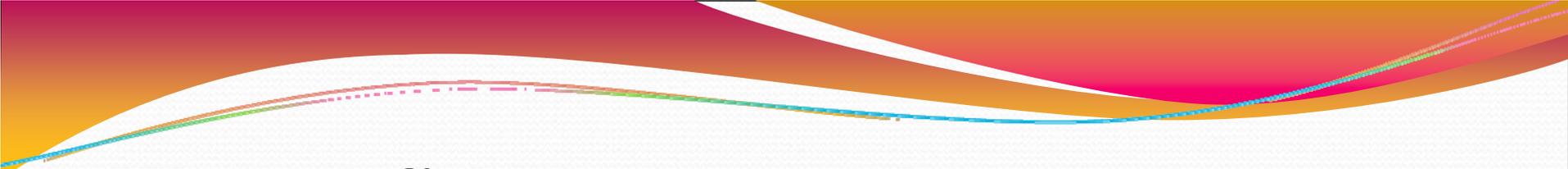
## **Women are witnesses to coastal resource depletion**

- As day-to-day home managers, women are also day-to-day depending on the environment to ensure family survival, especially in times when husbands do not bring home enough cash.
- Resource depletion has honed her planning and budgeting techniques such that there is still something left for tomorrow while feeding her family today.



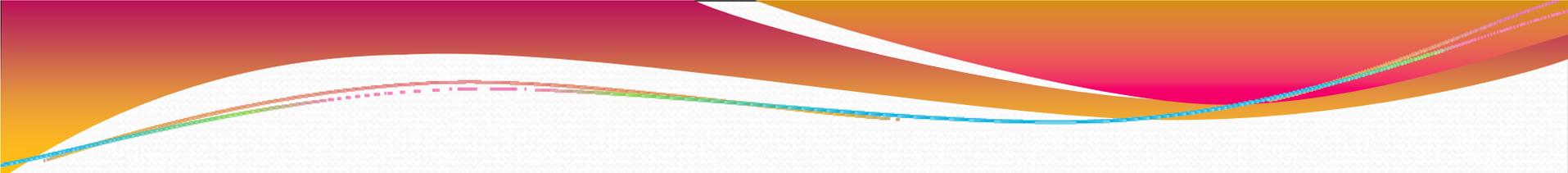
## **Women are easier to call and mobilize**

- Women can harmonize home time, work time and time for community extension activities.
- She has wider social networks than men.
- When she is at work, her workplace is her home or the frontyard/backyard.



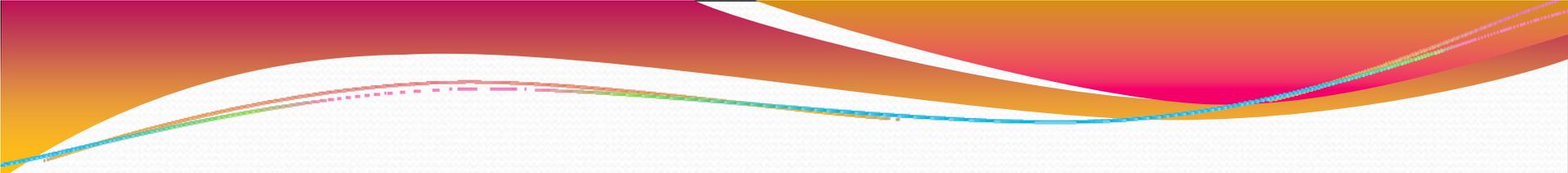
## **Women fishers are teachers, too**

- Women fishers have the biological and environmental knowledge and skills. When they glean, they know where to track certain species.
- Over generations, women have acquired skills and have stored in their memories a lot of fisheries data.
- Women work with their children, and passes on information and skills to the younger group.



## **Women are home managers**

- Resource management is an extension of home management, being a caring and nurturing activity which women do naturally well.
- When there are cash shortages at home, women are the ones who find ways to bring home the bacon and cook it, too.



**How can women's role as  
natural managers of coastal  
resources be enhanced?**

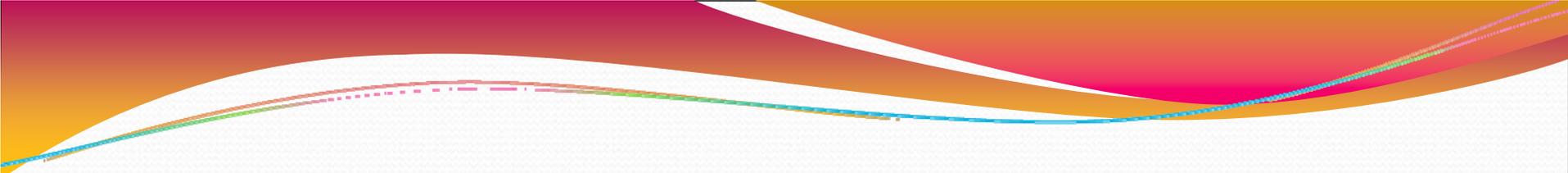
# Advocacy and awareness training

Ways to overcome community resistance to any coastal management initiatives:

- intensive information dissemination
- ecological and marine awareness
- appreciation of the value of sustainable resource utilization
- consistent dialogue with the community
- honoring fishers' knowledge of science and traditional information of the environment

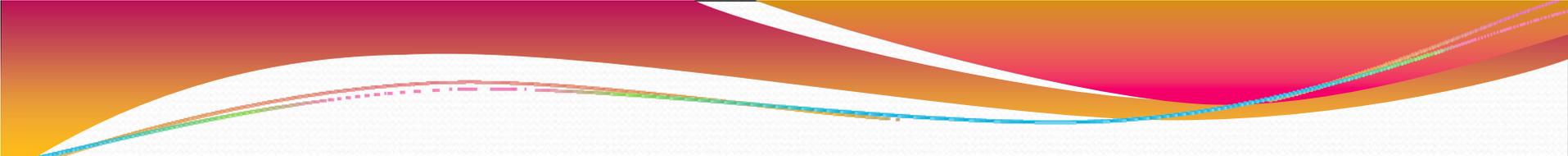
## Community organizing and linkaging

- mobilizing women's groups in the community
- organize women's groups that do not necessarily deal with direct fisheries concerns, but on family health, gardening, crafts, etc.
- women's role in peacekeeping and coastal resource use conflict (*Women are not viewed as competing for authority*)
- link with LGUs, NGOs and private business



## **Capacity building**

- training of fisheries extension officers
- prepare women as community teachers to train the community in coastal management
- capacitate women as community leaders to help improve general public awareness
- create a gender pool to promote gender-responsive coastal management initiatives



## **Participatory planning and decision making**

- women to contribute the “missing half” of the information that planners need
- opportunities for the inclusion of women in decision-making structures and processes
- women to help explain to the community the rationale of coastal management initiative
- women to assist in building a community sense of proprietorship and claim of ownership to resources



## **Environmental intelligence**

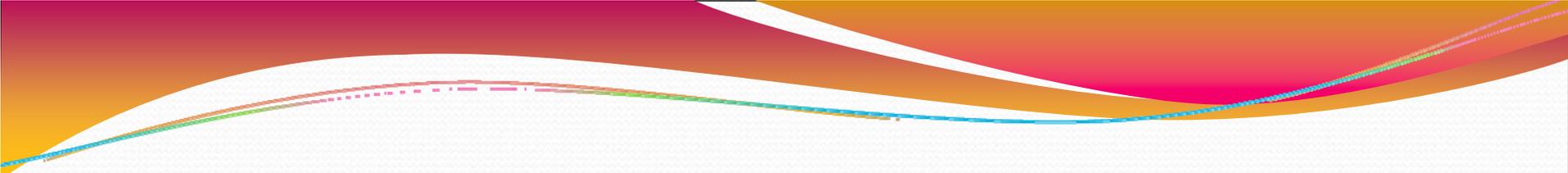
- train women the techniques of information collection and data gathering regarding their coastal resources
- train women on data processing, data analysis and data storage
- train women to conduct surveys, transect walks, monitoring and evaluation
- encourage women to update their community environmental intelligence



# Today

there are coastal resource use conflicts  
that arise as fishing households  
daily attempt to strike a balance between  
immediate higher cash incomes and  
the burden of ensuring fish security  
for the generations

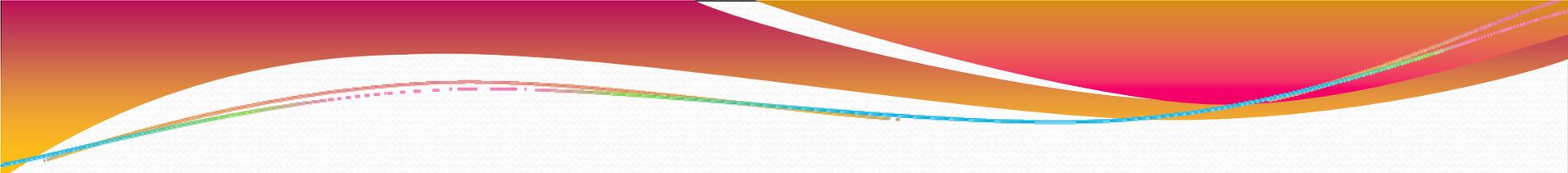
# Tomorrow



# Today

there are planning and management efforts  
to strike a balance between  
feeding a fast growing coastal population  
and rebuilding the depleted fisheries stocks  
for use of the generations

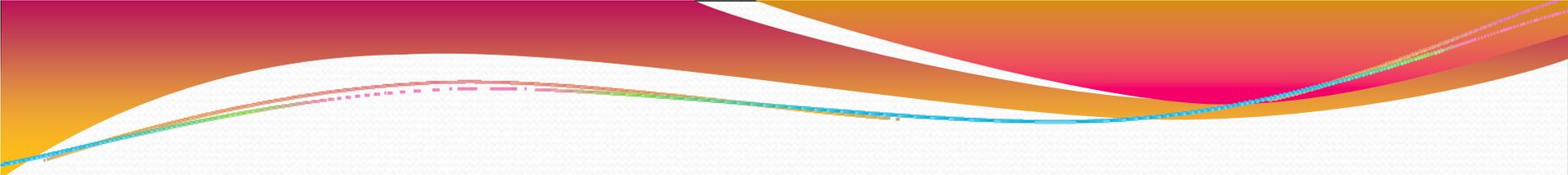
# Tomorrow



# Today

there are advocacies  
for the inclusion of **women**  
in coastal resource management  
for they own “half of the seas”  
that will feed the generations

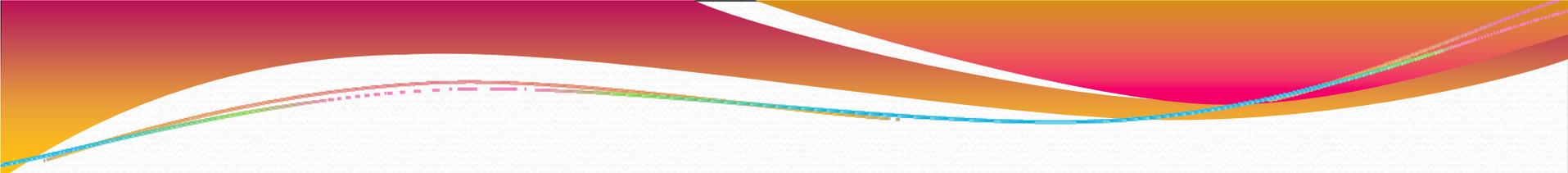
# Tomorrow



The real  
environmental disaster  
that can happen  
in modern times  
is finding . . .

**no fish on our tables**





*Salamat!*

*Thank you!*

*Paper delivered during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries,  
8<sup>th</sup> Asian Fisheries Forum, Kochi, India, November 20-24, 2007*









