

CONTRIBUTION TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EMPOWERMENT: THE CASE OF MARRIED WOMEN FROM FISHING HOUSEHOLDS IN GUIMARAS, PHILIPPINES

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The paper assessed the contribution to household income and the empowerment of married women from fishing households in Guimaras, Philippines. The data used in the paper came from a survey conducted on January to March 2007 with 376 randomly selected households in sixteen randomly selected coastal barangays in Guimaras, Philippines. Specifically, the data used were those of 123 currently-married women from fishing households who were interviewed during the survey.

On average, the women were 41 years old and, at most, high school graduates. Only 17 percent were not contributing to household income, while more than the majority (68%) contributed at most 50 percent, and the rest (15%) contributed at least 51 percent. Those with positive contributions derived income from regular employment, business, and other small jobs. The women with at least a 50 percent contribution belonged to households with the highest average estimated household income.

Results also showed that, for every ten women, three had personal savings; three could make decisions alone on what they want to do in a day; four had their own money to buy things needed without asking their husbands; nine had the capability to use their own money for family needs; seven had control of the factors of production, credit, training, and other services and benefits; five understood that the relationship with their husbands could be changed; nine believed that taking care of the children and the elderly is still their major responsibility; and, seven were active and visible as members of the community and its organizations.

The findings support the belief that women who contribute to household income are empowered women. When classified by categories of contribution to estimated annual household income, chi-square tests showed that women significantly differed in terms of ownership of personal savings account, having their own money to buy things without asking husbands, and having control over the factors of production, credit, training and other resources. The more the women contribute to household income the more likely they are to have personal savings, have their own money for buying things without asking their husbands, and the more control they have over factors of production. No significant difference was found in other variables.

The findings support policies aimed at ensuring women's income. Such policies could consist of promoting women's education, micro-credit, and skills training, among others. Further study is recommended to better understand the relationship between the women's contribution to income and household development.