SEAWEED FARMING IN WESTERN VISAYAS: STRENGTHENING THE ROLES OF THE WOMEN OF SABANG, GUIMARAS

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Objectives

• To describe the gender roles in seaweed farming for the Sabang Seaweed Growers Association

• To identify the issues and challenges faced by the women seaweed growers

• To propose strategies to address the issues and challenges
Major Species Produced in Aquaculture, 2016 (in Metric Ton) *(Source: BFAR 2016)*
Euchuema spinosum

Kappaphycus cottonii

E. spinosum

K. cottonii
Growth of seaweed farming in the Philippines

• increased demand and stable resource base for carrageenan

• started as simple bottom culture and evolved into floating raft

• individual family farms along intertidal and subtidal zones

• source of food, livelihood and income
Sibunag Seaweed Production and Marketing Enterprise

• Started as Sabang Seaweed Growers Association
  ✓ established in 2013 with 103 members (60 active)
  ✓ seaweed production, drying, and processing of seaweed-based products, marketing
  ✓ sold as fresh or dried

• Philippine Rural Development Project
  ✓ financial grant for the Municipality of Sibunag
  ✓ seaweed culture, enterprise production and marketing
  ✓ first phase: 67 members (51 females; 16 males) but only 10 completed the training (all females)
Seaweed Farming and Production Activities
## Preparatory Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of materials (bamboos, ropes, monolines, nylons, etc.)</td>
<td>√ √</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staking of bamboo poles (in the water)</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing of perimeter with nets</td>
<td>√ √</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Seaweed Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tying of seedlings per monoline</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tying of monolines in the water</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily monitoring (checking for parasites)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and washing of fresh seaweeds</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of seedlings/propagules for nursery and future planting</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tying of seedlings
• 1 m monoline with 6-8 bunches per line
• hired labor -- P1/m

Staking
• hired labor – P 150 - 200 /day
• monoline method
## Drying Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drying (hanging method or spreading)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of drying seaweeds</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauling/transport of dried seaweeds to Association storage area</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating with the Association (costing, transport, etc)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Post Harvest Maintenance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning/washing of lines and ties</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting of expenses and income</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Other Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance to Association and Barangay meetings</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRDP Project in Sabang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in seaweed raft culture</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processing of seaweed products</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1000 sq m area; raft method and with net enclosure

PRDP drying platform
Impacts of seaweed farming and seaweed processing to the community
• Social Impacts

✓ farming activities serve as family bonding time

✓ more community interaction resulting to better interpersonal relations in the community, especially during monitoring activities

✓ greater and better governance in the community
✓ learn new skills
✓ recognizes the economic productivity of women and children
✓ educating the community and increasing their awareness to value the environment and themselves
• Socio-Economic Impacts

✓ source of livelihood and employment
✓ ability to send their children to school
✓ provide extra for their daily needs
✓ improve their houses and buy other appliances
✓ build small boats or purchase new motors for their boats
• money for medical bills and medications
• ability to earn income from farming, selling of fresh, dried and processed products; selling of seedlings
• children start to learn the value of work and money
• contributes to the steady supply of dried seaweeds to processors
• Environmental Impacts

✓ may result to lesser fishing effort and allow the fish stocks to recover

✓ negative effects
  ▪ conflict with other resource users
  ▪ increase in number of growers, farming units and site expansion may affect the carrying capacity of the environment
Issues and Concerns

• diseases

• high water temperatures

• insufficient and poor quality of seedlings

• typhoons, strong winds and waves
• mixing of strains affect the quality of carrageenan

• fluctuating and low buying price

• fertilizer and spray run-offs from agricultural farms
• multi-tasking for women
  ✓ seaweed farming, daily monitoring, processing, care of the household and family, farming, association and community duties
  ✓ health concerns
  ✓ low or no valuation of work

• concern for the future of their farms
  ✓ some children would rather have a more stable work when they graduate
• additional workload with the PRDP Project
  ✓ deeper waters, a little farther from shoreline
  ✓ but additional income

• PRDP Project limits age to 60 years
• for the Association Officers, they feel that some members do not appreciate their work contribution but expect a lot from them

✓ the wait and see attitude of some members

• Ecological concern for the waters of Guimaras Strait with the increase in number of growers and culture area
Conclusion

• Seaweed farming has a very big impact on the lives of the coastal community, not only economically but also socially and politically.

• Direct engagement of the women in culture and processing activities results to their inclusion in the economic and productive sectors.
• Issues and challenges faced by women seaweed growers include:

1. reluctance of many women to put any monetary value on their seaweed workload and contribution, particularly when they work on their own farms (“it is ours”)

2. carrying capacity of the culture area

3. incentives to attract others seaweed growers to be involve in processing
Recommendations

- Convert into a Cooperative for better and more financial opportunities and incentives
- Values orientation for both women and men on the valuation of their social and economic contributions
- Learn other processing methods for seaweed-based products to make it more market competitive
Financial management trainings to better manage their individual incomes (per household)

Zoning scheme to protect the carrying capacity of the waters (dimensions of sustainability)
The Sabang Community of Seaweed Growers and Food Processors
Thank you...