



WOMEN, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE IN RELATION TO FOOD SECURITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

BACKGROUND

Rights to land and resources are human rights meant to be enjoyed by all persons regardless of their economic standing, race, and gender. Women, in particular, play vital roles in landscape governance, given their contributions to agricultural production and processing, as well as in household management.

In many Asian countries where agriculture is the main driver of economic growth, women's contributions are equal to or exceed those of men (Food and Agriculture Organization

of the United Nations/FAO, 2011). However, women's access to land is often implicitly recognized through male members of their households. Therefore, they risk losing such access in cases of widowhood, divorce, and male outmigration from rural areas. Moreover, it has been more difficult for females to gain access to credit and productivity-enhancing inputs and services, compared to their male counterparts (FAO, n.d.). These challenges that women face in agriculture hamper their productivity, thus contributing to the underperformance of the agricultural sector in many Asian countries (FAO, 2011).

Box 1. Roles and responsibilities of tribal women in Mt. Kalatungan

While the Talaandig and Manobo tribes in Mt. Kalatungan in Mindanao, Philippines remain male-dominated, women of these groups exercise sufficient power of their own and contribute significantly to the economic and cultural sustenance of their communities.

The roles and responsibilities of the Talaandig and Manobo women include the following:

- The *bae* (usually the wife of the local male tribal leader or the *datu*, or a woman who has been conferred the title for extraordinary service to the tribe or who possesses skills essential to the tribe), provides counsel and support to the *datu*, leads the women in her community, and ensures that the women contribute to the tribe's economic activities.
- Women in both tribes are actively involved in farming activities, and in gathering forest products and medicinal herbs.
- Headed by the *bae*, the Portulin Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. Women's Group (PTTA, Inc. Women's Group) have implemented several income-generating activities which involved poultry farming, marketing locally-grown flowers, and rice-retailing. Proceeds have been used for hospitalization and burial assistance for association members, administrative expenses in following-up their ancestral domain title claim, and for setting-up organizational meetings.
- The PTTA, Inc. Women's Group are at the forefront of recruiting and training children to be part of the local performing arts group, which showcases the Talaandig culture through music and dance. The same women are lobbying the Department of Education to establish an indigenous school within the local elementary school, and are also assisting the tribe's youth in putting together a dictionary of the Talaandig language.
- The Manobo women on the other hand are the bastion of their tribe's traditional practices. They serve as the community's healers and ritualists, using herbal products and traditional knowledge. These women also produce mats, baskets, and souvenir items which are either used by the community, gifted to guests as tokens of the Manobo hospitality, or sold for additional income.

In both groups, it is apparent that the women have taken up the vital role of ensuring that the tribes' culture and traditions continue to thrive, and that the natural resources are preserved, for the benefit of succeeding generations. □

Reference material: *More than homemakers: The Talaandig and Manobo women of the Mt. Kalatungan* (Dumlao, 2019)

Provided equal land rights and sufficient support, women will be as productive as men. Progress on gender-equal access to land abounds in the laws and policies in the Philippines, yet obstacles such as patriarchal attitudes rooted in culture or religion, lack of information, and lack of political will and resources remain.

WOMEN'S ROLES AS KEY TO ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY

Women are directly involved in all aspects of agricultural production such as in land preparation, weeding, planting, and harvesting. In developing countries, women harvest staple crops such as rice, maize, and wheat, which comprise of more than 90 percent of the rural poor's diet. Since women are often tasked with tending to home gardens in which legumes and vegetables are cultivated, women are able to provide critical contributions to households' nutrition and economic well-being (FAO, 2001). Females are also heavily engaged in the post-harvest processing and marketing of agricultural produce. Livelihoods that involve agricultural inputs, such as handicraft-making and food processing, are often fueled by women's labor.

Women play integral roles in achieving food security within the household and beyond. Studies have shown that women utilize almost all of their earnings from agricultural products and handicrafts, to meet their household's needs. Men, in comparison, spend at least 25 percent of their earnings for other purposes (FAO, 2001). Studies have further concluded that improving women's land rights have positive effects on household nutrition and children's education. Improving women's access to and control over land will thus enable them to have more power over agricultural and household decisions (Landesa, 2012). According to FAO

(2011), providing women with equal access to agricultural resources may reduce world hunger by 12 to 17 percent.

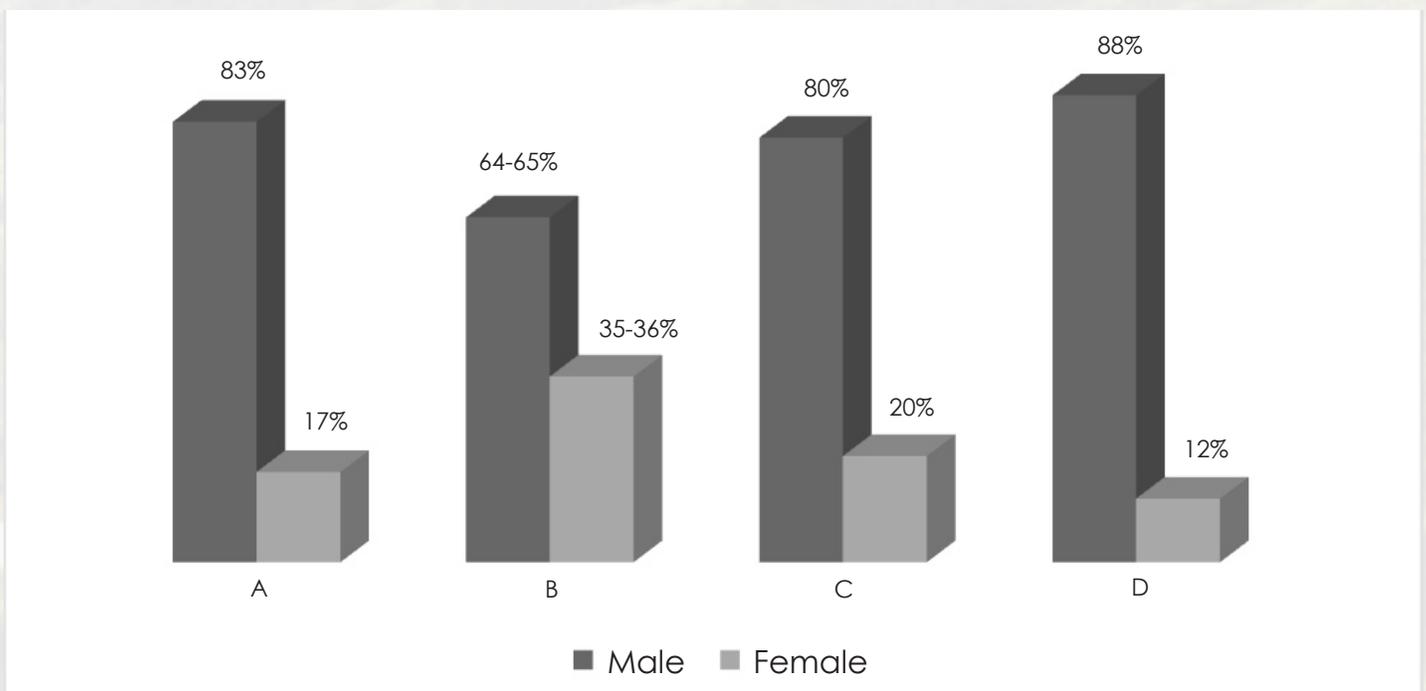
Apart from the mentioned agricultural roles, women remain as the primary caretakers at home, even in instances when they are not the head of the household. They are expected to cook for the household, take care of children, do the laundry, clean the house, and perform other household chores. All these reproductive activities, although often left unnoticed, significantly contribute to the productivity of the household at large. Since household tasks are already being taken care of, and because of the physical care provided by women to the family, other household members are enabled to focus on and function better in school or work.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Compared to other countries in Asia, the status of women in the Philippines is much better. Men and women are more equal in the Philippines, relative to other Asian States. In 2018, the Philippines was 8th out of 149 countries in the world, and 1st in Asia in closing the gender gap, according to the Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2018).

In other countries in Asia, feminization of agriculture exists, wherein more women are engaged in agricultural activities, due to the out-migration of male labor from rural to urban areas. In the Philippines however, women also out-migrate from rural areas to pursue other employment opportunities in cities or in other countries (ANGOC and Land Watch Asia, 2015).

Figure 1. Status of women in agriculture in the Philippines, compared to men



- (A) Percentage of males and females working in agriculture as of 2014. In 2009, a slightly larger percentage of those engaged in agriculture were women (18 percent) (Philippine Statistics Authority/PSA, 2016).
- (B) Percentage of male and female agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) as of 2015. Those classified as ARBs in this figure are farmers who have Emancipation Patents or Certificates of Land Ownership Award issued in their name (PSA, 2016).
- (C) Percentage of self-employed males and females in agriculture as of 2014. Self-employed men in agriculture outnumbered women from 2006 to 2014. However, the number of self-employed women in agriculture increased incrementally from 2008 to 2014 (PSA, 2016).
- (D) Percentage of male and female employers in their own family-operated farms as of 2014 (PSA, 2016).

Figure 1 illustrates the unequal status of women and men in the Philippines, in terms of employment in agriculture and ownership of land.

Males have also historically received higher average agricultural wages compared to females. PSA data reveals that the average daily wage of male agricultural workers was at 285 PHP per day, while female agricultural workers received 256 PHP per day in 2017 (PSA, 2018). It must be noted though, that the disparity in agricultural wages between sexes have started to slowly decline since 2000.

CHALLENGES FACED BY RURAL WOMEN IN RELATION TO TENURE

The legal framework in the Philippines states that men and women ought to have equal status and rights, as manifested in the 1987 Constitution as well as in the Magna Carta of Women (2009). The Magna Carta even expressly states that men and women shall be provided with equal status in the titling of land and issuance of stewardship contracts and patents.

Asset reform laws such as the 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), and the 1998 Fisheries Code, all mention men and women's equal rights to ownership of land, access to resources and opportunities, and participation in decision-making. However, these provisions are not elaborated upon, and do not translate into reality on the ground.

Overall, the status of women in the Philippines is challenged by the culture of patriarchy that persists, and is entrenched in the traditions and everyday mindset of people. The prevalence of this culture, which views women as being of lower status compared to men, manifests in the deprivations of women's land rights. Table 1 exemplifies the effects of gender stereotypes on women's land rights.

Owing to patriarchal views, the following scenarios take place:

- Male heirs are prioritized in bequeathing land;
- Titles are often registered in the name of the male head of the family (i.e. for the land to remain registered under the family name);

Table 1. Effects of gender stereotypes on women's land rights

Gender stereotypes	Implications on land access and tenure security
A woman's place is in the home/kitchen; the man is the breadwinner of the family.	Men are given more opportunities to use land as a source of income; sons and other male relatives get priority in land inheritance.
The man is the head of the family.	Land tenure instruments (e.g. land titles, leasehold contracts, usufruct certificates, etc.) are placed in the name of the man.
Women are weak, dependent and emotional, whereas men are strong, independent and rational. Thus, men are better leaders than women.	Women are not involved in decision-making pertaining to land and other properties of the family; women are [either not represented or under-represented] in community decision-making structures.

Source: Rebecca Ochong, *Land and GLTN Unit, UN Habitat (2017)*

- Women's land rights are threatened in the absence of the male household members (i.e. widowhood, separation from spouse);
- Limited recognition of the roles of women as farmers or fisherfolk;
- There are shallow provisions on women's land rights in laws, or a total lack of sensitivity to women's needs in some policies;
- Gender-equality safeguards in existing policies are not fully implemented; and,
- Community governance bodies are still dominated by male decision-makers, both in terms of number and influence.

WAYS FORWARD

In order to contribute to addressing the challenges faced by women in terms of securing their rights to land, the following are recommended:

- *The culture of patriarchy must be challenged.* While international conventions and national policies have already highlighted the need to change mindsets, it is more challenging to drive this point down to local levels. Both men and women must do their part in raising awareness regarding the everyday deprivations faced by women merely due to patriarchal beliefs. CSOs, communities, and concerned individuals alike must assert the recognition, respect, and fulfillment of women's rights and entitlements, in accordance with the law.
- *Provide greater access to land, resources, and support services for women.* Related to the points raised in the preceding sections, there is a need for greater recognition of women as rural producers who contribute significantly to economic development and food security. Women's rights to land and natural resources must thus be upheld even in the absence of male family members. Further, they must

be provided with adequate (financial, technical, etc.) support in their agricultural and other livelihood endeavors.

- *Women's representation and participation in governance bodies must be enhanced.* Decision-making within government and community governance mechanisms are arguably still male-dominated. There is no shortage of strong female political figures, and at the community level, figureheads like the *bae* (female counterpart of the *datu*) are respected. However, individuals and communities must continue to strive for more inclusive governance systems, wherein females are rightfully represented and heard.
- *Women's land rights must be monitored.* There ought to be continuous efforts from CSOs and government to track progress in terms of securing women's rights to land, using gender-sensitive indicators. There are various qualitative and quantitative methods that may be utilized towards this end. Established instruments such as the Global Land Tool Network's Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC), which assesses the gender-responsiveness of land tools, may be applied. Data to be gathered from these monitoring initiatives must then be shared, reported, and applied to shape policy reforms. □

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(The views expressed in this brief do not necessarily reflect those of GLTN, UN Habitat, and BMZ.)

The Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC) as applied to efforts to improve tenure security of smallholder farmers in the Philippines

At the global level, the GLTN devised the six Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC) to assess whether a land tool, plan, policy, or instrument is gender-inclusive, and considers the rights and needs of both men and women in both urban and rural settings.

ANGOC and XSF implemented the project, *"Improving Tenure Security of Smallholder Farmers in Select Areas in the Philippines,"* with the view to uplift the status of women in indigenous communities. Below are the six GEC vis-à-vis how the project strived to promote gender-inclusivity and respond to the needs of women.

1 – Participation: Project implementers consciously encouraged indigenous women's participation in project activities such as training courses, workshops, and data-gathering for the participatory enumeration. Eighteen out of the 23 enumerators were women, while housewives were observed to have actively participated in the surveys. Particular issues faced and needs of community women were also identified during the landscape governance training. To monitor the gender balance in event participation, implementers consistently produced gender-disaggregated attendance data.

2 – Capacity-building: Enumerators trained to gather data for the household survey, most of which were women, were introduced to the basics of survey studies, as well as to the use of global positioning system (GPS) devices and an open-source geographic information system (GIS) software. Selected male and female participants joined training courses where they were (re-)oriented about rights and entitlements for indigenous peoples, and were educated in landscape governance with sensitivity to the equal rights of people regardless of age and gender. Through the landscape governance training course, participants were also introduced to global land tools such as the GEC, Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning (TRLUP), Continuum of Land Rights, Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM), and Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria (YLRC), which they may use in governing their ancestral domains.

3 – Legal and institutional considerations: The training courses instilled in both men and women the value of equal land rights, as well as equality of responsibilities in governing their ancestral domains. Related to this, the project issued certificates of customary land occupancy under the names of both the husband and the wife within a household, countering the more common practice of issuing official titles in the name of the male household head. Although

not equivalent to legal land titles, the certificates of customary land occupancy serve to support households' claims to residential and agricultural lands they have long-utilized, through the recording of relevant spatial information affirmed by neighbors and tribal leaders.

4 – Social and cultural impact: Through the surveys and the landscape governance training course, women in the communities reported increased awareness about their legal entitlements and gender-equal land rights. Women have also mentioned that they have gained greater confidence to actively participate and speak up during meetings and events. Women in the communities also developed a greater appreciation for their roles in the community as workers on and stewards of land, managers of the household, peacemakers within the community, and mothers of the future generation. Both men and women found a deeper appreciation for the complementarity of their roles within the community, while also recognizing the capacity of women to be effective leaders and contributors to land and community governance.

5 – Economic impact: Those hired for the participatory enumeration were provided with honoraria proportionate to their outputs. In the course of the fora and workshops, not just the community leaders but also the women and other members of the indigenous communities, were able to network with government agencies directly involved in land tenure and livelihood programs for indigenous peoples. During the landscape governance training courses, women identified their need to be more equipped with skills for livelihood development, and listed opportunities which they may utilize to meet such a need. There are present plans to pursue livelihood training courses, especially for women in indigenous peoples' communities, through XSF's EcoSEED project.

6 – Scale and sustainability of impact: While the land governance training course was participated in only by selected individuals, the same people signified their intention to echo their learnings to their communities. Further, as part of the training, participants identified ways in which they could work towards addressing the concerns (on land governance, land conflicts, gender, youth) raised during the sessions. More importantly, it is expected that communities will consciously become more gender-inclusive, with ongoing discussions on gender, women's roles, rights, and their empowerment, which the activities under the project initiated. □



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PROJECT IMPLEMENTERS AND PARTNERS



The **Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)** is a regional coalition of national and regional CSOs in Asia actively engaged in promoting food sovereignty, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance, and rural development. For more information, refer to www.angoc.org



The **Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF)** is a legal, non-stock, non-profit, non-government organization advocating programs and projects that will alleviate poverty and promote social empowerment. XSF serves as a conduit of funds to support

development projects, innovative programs, fora, and dialogues. For more information, refer to www.xsfoundationinc.org



The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** is working

towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. It facilitates the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and hosts its Secretariat. For more information, refer to www.unhabitat.org



The **Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)** is an alliance of global, regional, and national partners contributing to poverty alleviation through land

reform, improved land management, and security of tenure particularly through the development and dissemination of pro-poor and gender sensitive tools. For more information, refer to www.gltn.net



The **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** is the primary State development body in Germany. BMZ's governing principle is the

protection of human rights, which includes the right to live in peace and freedom, and to help address the poverty issues in the world. For more information, refer to www.bmz.de

Concerns over food insecurity in developing countries are reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. Given that land plays an important role in the livelihoods of most people in developing countries, food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless issues of access to land, security of tenure, and the capacity to use land productively and in a sustainable manner are addressed.

Thus, the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), as facilitated by UN-Habitat, is implementing "Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR)" Project through the support of Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with the overall goal of improving land and natural resources tenure security of rural smallholder farmers in Uganda, the Philippines, and Laos.

In the Philippines, while a number of land laws are being implemented, several gaps need to be addressed to improve the situation of their intended beneficiaries. Hence, "**Improving Tenure Security of Smallholder Farmers in Select Areas in the Philippines**" aims to contribute to the goal of SALaR Project.

This project is implemented by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) in partnership with Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF), with technical and financial support from Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

For more information about this project:

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