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Roles of Various Family Members in Abaca Production in Baganga, Davao Oriental

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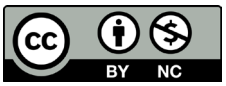

ABSTRACT

Women play a vital yet often underrecognized role in the rural economies of developing countries, particularly in agriculture, which is traditionally viewed as a male-dominated field. This study focused on gender roles in abaca farming, aiming to analyze how family members—husbands, wives, and children—contribute to production and the household economy. This study was conducted in Barangay Mikit and Barangay Campawan in Baganga, Davao Oriental. The research involved 42 abaca farmers selected based on their livelihood. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire translated into the local language. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 62, with the largest group between 34 and 41 years old. Households had slightly more males (54%) than females (46%). Educational attainment was generally low, with 67% having only elementary education, reflecting limited financial capacity and access to schooling. Most respondents (95%) owned their homes, and 29% cultivated 5–6 hectares of land, often inherited. Labor in abaca farming was divided among family members. Husbands take primary responsibility for planting and harvesting due to the physical demands of these tasks. Wives assisted mainly in maintaining the farm, such as clearing weeds, while children provided additional support when needed. Marketing activities involve minimal participation from wives and children. Overall, the study highlights that although men dominate key farming tasks, the contributions of women and children were significant and essential. Their involvement supports productivity and strengthens the family's economic stability, emphasizing the need for greater recognition of their roles in abaca farming.

Keywords: Abaca, Baganga, gender, PhilFIDA, textile Industry

INTRODUCTION

Women play an important role in shaping the rural economy in developing countries. It is perceived then that agriculture is mainly a man's world. But some women participate as either laborers or farmers, but are not yet recognized in society. For Etenesh (2005), this manifestation of women in any agricultural activities has a disparity that a woman has a great contribution that does not matter towards gender. This shows that women are engaged in agriculture but not yet empowered, and that the community does not understand that women participate and exert effort in agricultural activities, especially in abaca farming, related but still unknown to everyone.

Hence, the study of gender mapping help analyze the different roles performed by the members of the family in abaca farming. By understanding the roles of husbands, wives, and children in the relation to their daily activities. This empowers us to provide necessary intervention. According to Gloop (1990), Knowing men and women where function according to the division of labor they executed leads to more production roles. Men performed roles that generate living and meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, education, and others while women performed nurturing and caring roles in Baganga.

Baganga, is an agricultural municipality in Davao Oriental, which produces various crops (abaca, banana, coffee, coconut, and rice), which are the main source of income for the residents because of its location in upland areas. Among these crops produced, abaca is considered the number one crop because of its consistent production. Besides, this crop, a number of residents are very much engaged in its production. However, it was learned that there were women and children who were also engaged in this activity but are less recognized for their participation. Women in abaca farming is not a well-researched area, and how this activity affects their everyday lives. Account of this, the involvement of husbands, wives, and children in this study will help analyze the impact of this activity in shaping their lives. Thus, the ctivities performed by wives and children will help inform their contribution to the economy of the family. This would present how roles are being executed by different household members. The study of gender mapping presents the framework of the situation and analyzes the gender participation of abaca farming in Baganga, Davao Oriental. Generally, this study examines the gender roles performed by each household member in abaca farming. Specifically, it seeks to determine the socio-economic profile of the respondents, analyze how their participation contributes to the family's economy, and examine the working conditions of wives and children involved in abaca production.

The main objective of the study was to map and analyze the gender roles performed by family members in abaca farming. Specifically, it aimed to determine the socio-economic profile of the respondents, identify how their participation contributes to the family's economy, and examine the working conditions of wives and children involved in abaca production. By studying the gender roles in abaca farming provides information and knowledge about the different activities performed by husbands, wives, and children in the farming process. The participation and contributions of the respondents are valuable to several sectors. For women advocates, the findings can serve as a foundation for promoting policy changes that empower women in generating income from agricultural activities and help challenge societal perceptions that women are less capable than men. For the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA), the study provides insights into the role of women in abaca production, encouraging the promotion of women's participation in agricultural activities and development projects. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) may also use the study as a source of information about the roles and responsibilities of each family member, which can guide

the implementation of policies and programs related to family welfare and appropriate role distribution among children. Furthermore, for the academe, particularly the Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST), the study can serve as baseline data for future research on gender role mapping and for the development of extension activities that highlight and strengthen women's participation in school and community initiatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Locale of the study

The study was conducted in Baganga, Davao Oriental, in Barangay Mikit and Barangay Campawan. These were identified as upland areas of abaca farming. Identification of the chosen barangays was based on the data of the Municipal Agriculture Office in Baganga. These barangays were considered to have a geographical location where a bigger number of abaca farmers are residing. The chosen locations of the study were situated in the upland part of the barangays. These were those who were engaged in abaca farming as their main source of income, as these are the only activities suited to their skills necessary to earn a living.

Figure 1. The map of Barangay Mikit and Barangay Campawan, Baganga, Davao Oriental.

Research design

The study used a descriptive method of research relying on recording, analyzing, and interpreting socio-demographic and socio-economic profiles of respondents. The study used a one-shot survey research design wherein the demographic and economic characteristic of every household of abaca farmers in Baganga, Davao Oriental was adopted. Key Informant Interview (KII) was also used in the study to obtain in-depth information and background on gender mapping.

Respondents

There were forty-two respondents (N=42) of abaca farmers: twenty-four from Barangay Campawan and eighteen (N=18) from Barangay Mikit. They were chosen based on livelihood and on the number of abaca farmers as identified by PhilFIDA. Respondents were chosen through purposive sampling. In which whoever the researcher encountered in the area, unless an abaca farmer, will be a respondent in the study.

Research instrument

A survey questionnaire was used in gathering the data. The questionnaire was translated into the vernacular language for easy comprehension by the respondents. The questionnaire was based on the three objectives of the study. These were the socio-economic profile, participation, and contribution to the economy of the family and the working conditions of wives and children relative to abaca production.

Methods of analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using statistical tools such as frequency distribution and percentages in consolidating the collected data for the socio-demographic profile, socio-economic profile, and the working conditions that were encountered by the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic profile of respondents in abaca farming

Age

The result showed that respondents have a varied distribution of age, ranging from 18 to 62 years old. About 10% of the respondents belonged to the bracket age of 18-25; 19% are between the ages of 26-33; about 26% are 34-41 years old; 14% are aged 42-48; 19% are 49-55 years old; and 12% are 56-62 years old (Figure 2). The result showed that the majority of the respondents belonged to the age bracket of 34-41, which comprised 26%. It is because they are old enough to work in the farm area and they have enough strength to support the needs of the family in Abaca farming. The middle-aged or older workers are more likely to have families, which may affect their attitude toward working. On the other hand, the least number of 10 % belonged to the age bracket of 18-25.

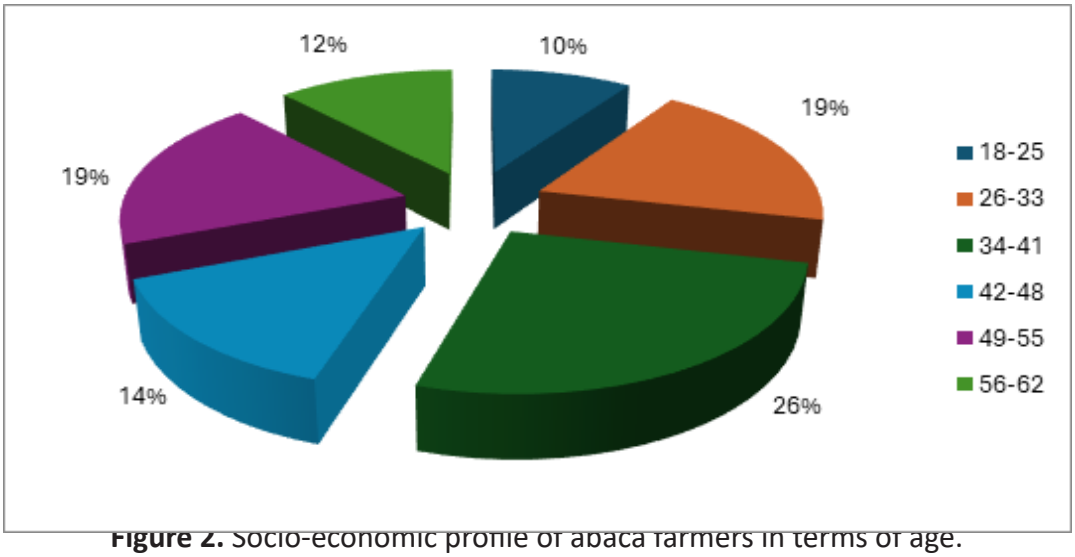

Figure 2. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of age.

Sex

In terms of sex in the number of family members in the family, the figure revealed that males have the bigger number comprised 54% in households than females, comprised 46% (Figure 3). This meant that males in the area are more dominant than females. This supported the study of Hans (1977) that males control females in most domains of social life.

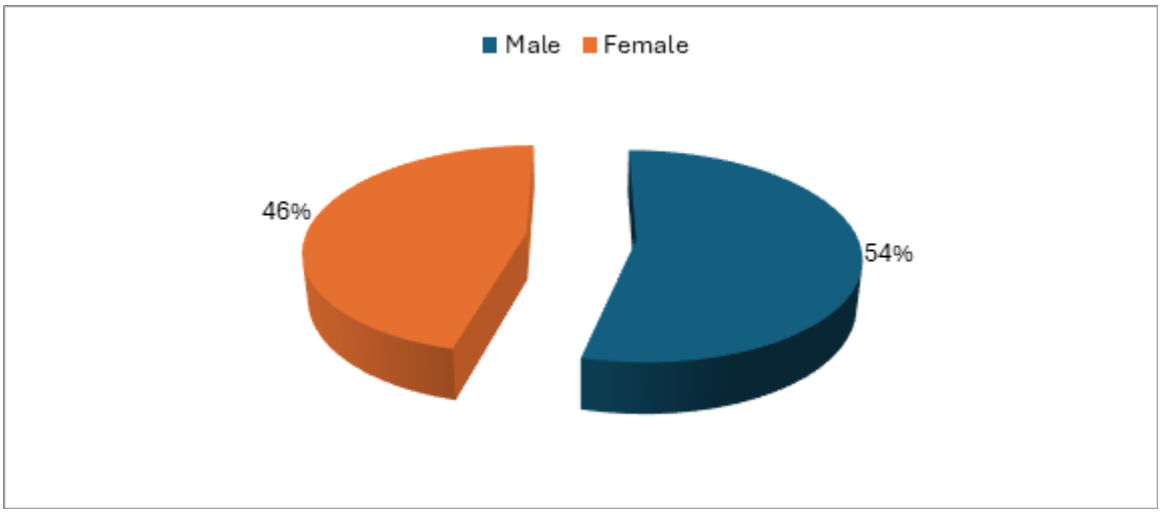

Figure 3. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of sex.

Civil status

Based on the result, the majority of the respondents, or 88%, are married (Figure 3). They are mainly engaging in Abaca farming because they have children to feed. This supports the findings of Waite & Gallagher (2000) that married people usually have better financial well-being, better health, longer life, and higher hopes for their children. While widowed and separated respondents have almost the same percentage, comprised 7% and 5% respectively. They exerted most efforts in abaca farming because they do not have life partners to help raise their children. Separated wives in this study are not legally separated from their partners. Thus, these separated respondents are mostly females.

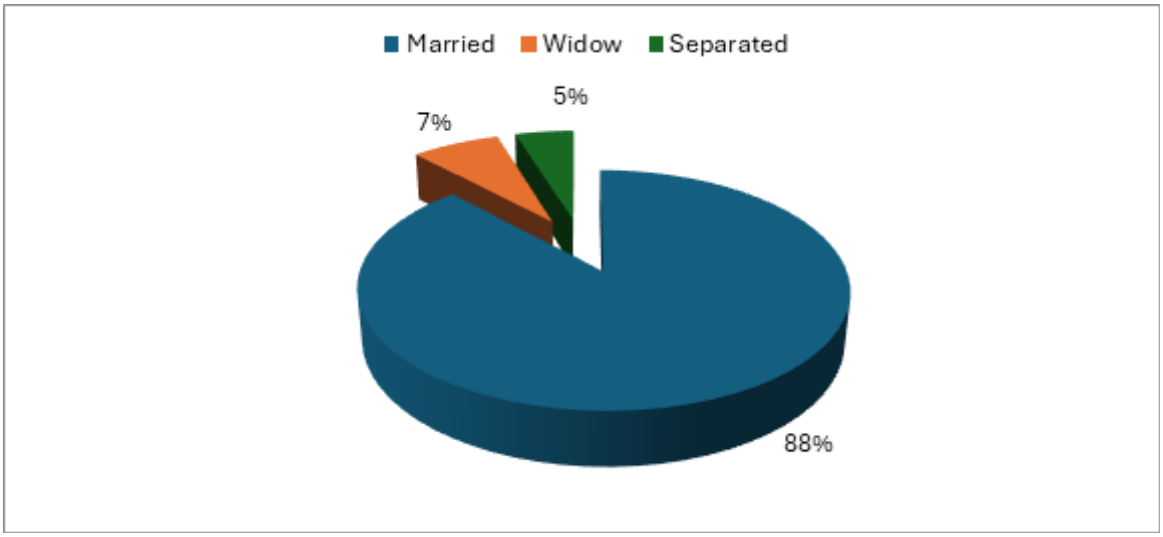

Figure 4. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of civil status.

Religion

In terms of religion, the figure revealed that most of the respondents were 95% Catholic (Figure 5). This reflects the earlier impact of catholic evangelization, as they have the largest number of respondents. Adventists had the fewest respondents, which comprised 3%, and the least number of respondents 2% were Baptist. This implied that the church plays an important role in the creation of community as a major source of social

and economic assistance for those in need. The idea of community of shared values and enduring association is often sufficient to motivate persons to trust and help one another even in the absence of long personal relationships (Hirshman, 2003).

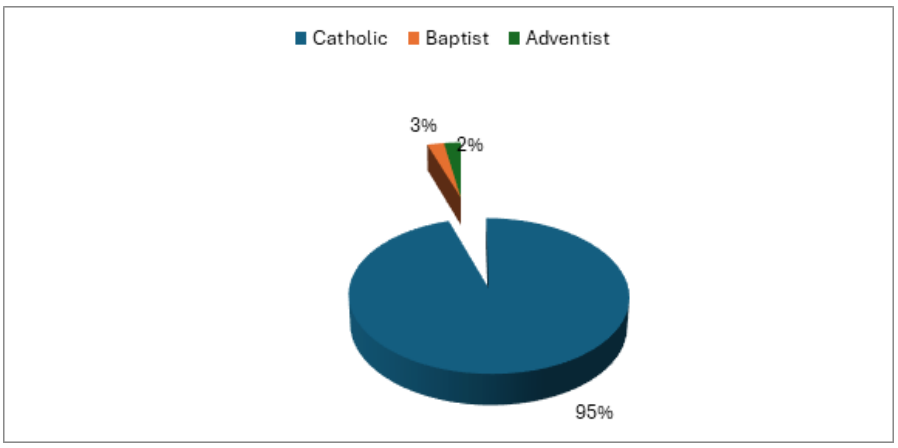

Figure 5. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of religion.

Language

The language datum is not presented here because 100% of respondents are all Mandaya. This revealed that the highest number of Abaca farmers in the area belonged to the Mandaya culture. They are early settlers whose primary livelihood is Abaca farming. Thus, most of the Mandaya reside in the upland area where their source of living is located. This supports the findings ofthe Asian Development Bank (2002) that a group of indigenous people has the key concept of self-identification, linguistic identity, cultural, economic, and political systems, and unique ties to ancestral territories.

Education level

According to human capital models, education is an important dimension of the non-homogeneity of labor. High educational attainment may imply a greater set of employment opportunities, specifically in the rural context (Chaudhry, 2009). On the other hand, the result below showed that most respondents, or 67%, are only at the elementary level (Figure 6). This implied that poverty is present in the area. Respondents have a scarcity in terms of financial resources to support the schooling. Secondary has 28 %, and college is distant from their home. On the other hand, only 5% of the respondents had gone to college. These respondents are lucky enough to continue their schooling despite financial scarcity.

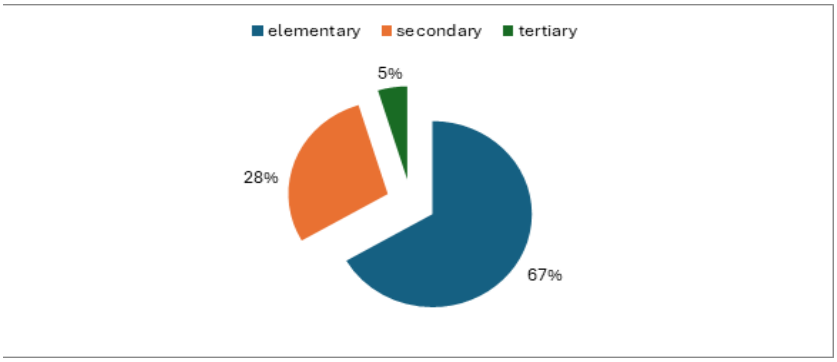

Figure 6. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of educational level.

House

The result showed that respondents have their own house, which comprised 95% (Figure 7). They have enough support in building their own houses as part of their basic needs. Hence, the upland area in these two barangays is wide enough for the construction of their houses. The area is abounded with trees and sani for roofing, which are the raw materials in making their houses. Their income from abaca production has made it possible to buy the construction materials. Thus, only 5% of the respondents were renting a house because they don't have enough finances of their own, and they are only depending on their parents. These respondents were newly married.

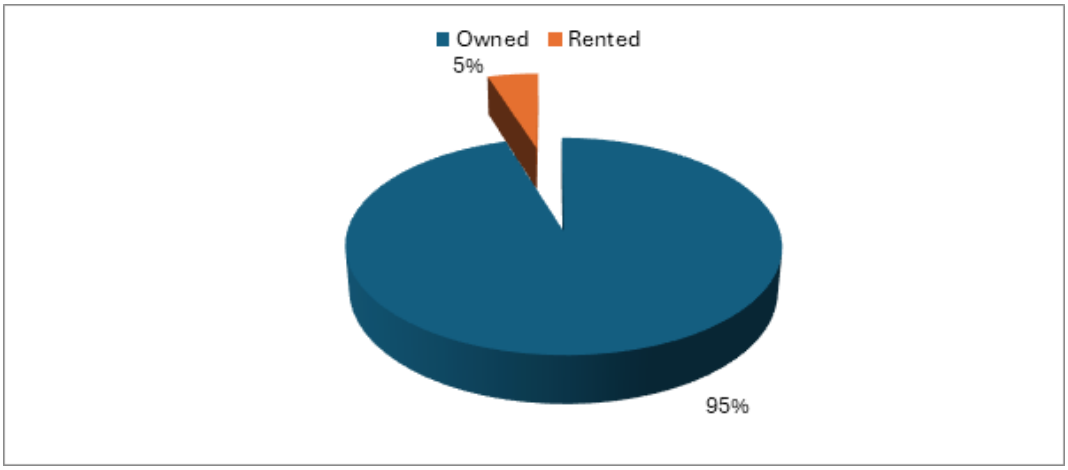

Figure 7. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of house ownership.

Farm land

The study revealed that 29% of respondents have 5-6 hectares of land (Figure 8). Some of these lands were inherited from their parents. This supports the findings of Chan & Clayton (2006) that land is inherited and subdivided according to the number of members in the family. On the other hand, only 2% of respondents have less than one (1) hectare of land. The results above showed that they were mainly engaged in farming that is planted with different staple crops for production.

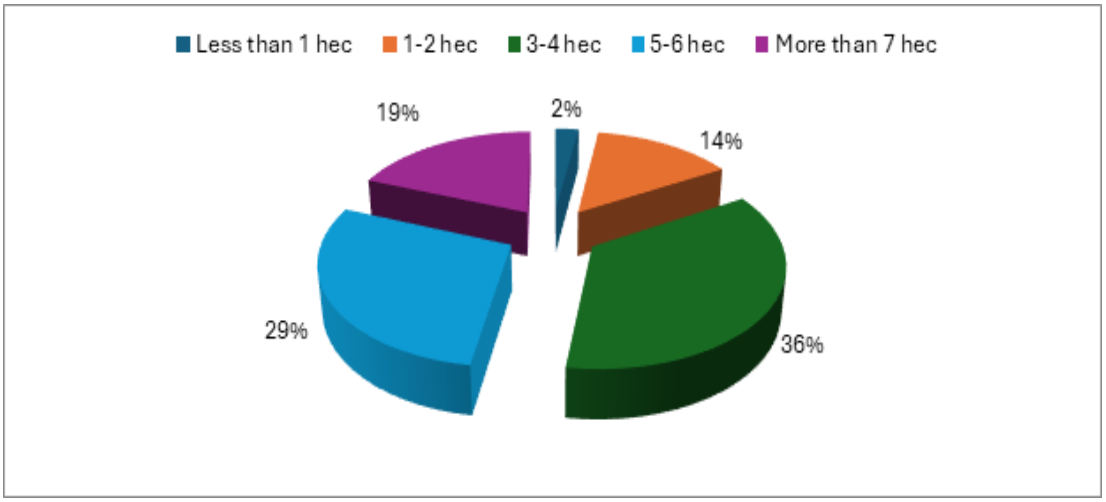

Figure 8. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of farm land.

Number of hectares of land planted with abaca production

In terms of the number of hectares planted with Abaca production, there are 1-2 hectares that have the largest area planted with Abaca in the area (Figure 9). It is because the other lands are planted with other crops such as rice, maize, rubber, banana, etc. Thus, this revealed that Abaca production has the biggest contribution to their needs as it is the source of income of the family. According to Lacuna (2002), abaca is frequently the source of cash income for poorer households. They chose abaca farming because it has a wider area and offers a higher income among the other crops planted in the area. Although the pricing of Abaca per kilo is variable, they still preferred to plant Abaca in a large portion of the land because the price of Abaca now is P 62.00 per kilo.

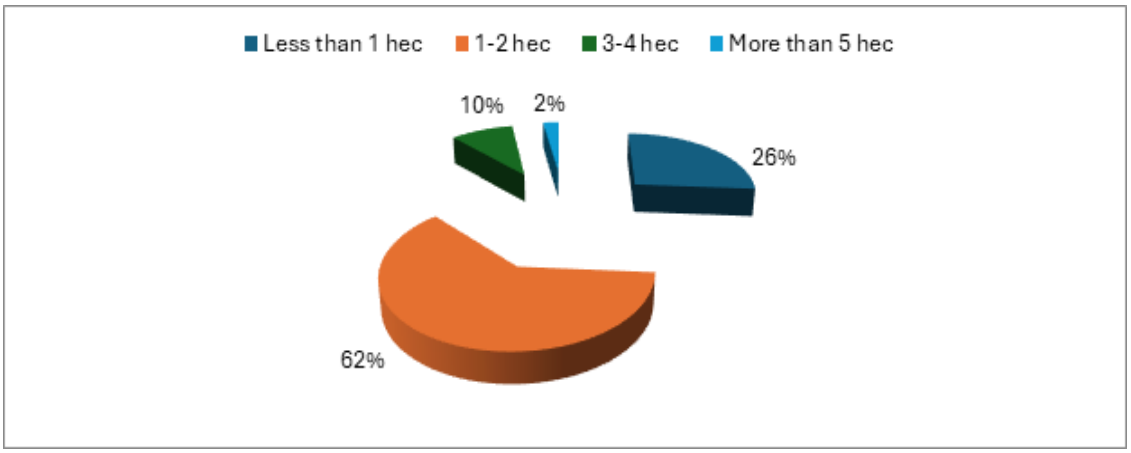

Figure 9. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of land hectares.

Income

According to Chaudry (2009), income represents a very important area of consideration when characterizing the poor. The level of income is important not only for households, but also for its distribution among household members and various socioeconomic groups. The figure revealed the sources of monthly income of the respondents. Based on the data presented, the abaca farmers have adopted multi-cropping in the farm area, and the majority of the respondents have 30% income from abaca (Figure 10). This is followed by 23% in banana. The income from coconut also comprised 20%, and vegetables comprised 15%. Other sources had the lowest percentage, which is 12 % of their income. These other resources came from small ventures and labor.

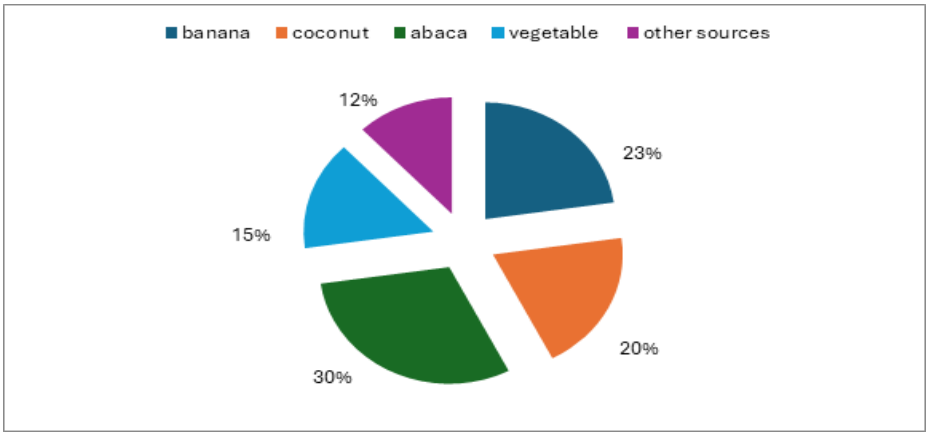

Figure 10. Socio-economic profile of abaca farmers in terms of income.

Land tenurial status

Land tenurial datum is not presented here because all the respondents are 100% farm owners. The respondents have their own farm area. This suggested that they work in their own area and manage their own land. Farmers had full responsibility for the farm area and the income from farm production.

A. Participation and Activities performed during abaca production

The participation of husband, wife, and children is categorized according to their activities, namely: planting, maintaining, harvesting, and marketing. The planting involved the preparation of land to be planted, bringing seedlings to the planting area, and planting abaca seedlings. In maintenance, it involved cleaning of the area, cutting possible weeds along the abaca area. Harvesting is the process by which abaca farmers gather the leafstalk into a fiber. This is through manual stripping or the use of a stripping machine, when available. These stripped fibers are left to dry in the sun. As soon as fibers are totally dried, this product is now ready for marketing - the selling of finished strips of abaca. These production activities are made by farmers as a set of interdependent decisions. Thus, farmers decide what production methods are best suited for the system of farming (Trost, 1980). Moreover, most wives in the planting area had prepared food for the laborers. The preparation of food is not part of the abaca production but is a performance of a wifely duty in the family.

Planting

Husband has the biggest contribution in planting abaca. This represents that the wife also has a participation in their living. Hence, the wife helped in preparing the land by weeding, at times she brought the seedlings to the area for planting. This is in support of the study of Lee-Smith & Hinchey Trujillo (1992) that women participated in all aspects of rural life, like raising crops and animals. Moreover, there are children who also participated in the production process. Like their mother, they also brought seedlings to the planting area, and they also helped in the land preparation.

Maintaining

In maintaining the area, there are wives who help their husbands in keeping their planting area free from possible destructive weeds. They cleaned the area of weeds that grew along the leafstalk of abaca. Children also helped their parents in cleaning the newly planted area. Both wife and children participated in maintaining the weed-free planting area.

Harvesting

The majority of the husbands do the harvesting activities. This meant that the husband is strong enough to harvest the leafstalk of abaca. Thus, the husband performed the hand stripping that requires more physical strength in pulling the leafstalk. On the other hand, there are wives who also participated in harvesting. Some wives assisted their husbands in pulling leafstalk. Then, they helped in drying the finished strips of abaca and hauled them depending on their carrying-load capacity. But some wives who are widowed and separated have to do the strenuous activities as they have no husband to rely on. Sometimes, they hire laborers to harvest the abaca in order to shorten and lessen the work in production. This practice is paid through “tresiohan” (two for the owner and one for the laborer).

Marketing

In terms of marketing, the wife and children had the least contribution in this activity. Thus, most husbands performed this activity. This supported the findings of Eastel (1994) in the Middle East that men were responsible for marketing agricultural produce. On the other hand, the husband put the finished strips abaca in a "katig" (motorcycle that is balanced with a flattened lumber on both sides) and brought the finished product to the market.

B. Economic contributions to the family

Furthermore, the participation of wives and children in the activities of abaca production makes a big contribution to the economy of the family. In which her wife also does what her husband is doing. This participation of the wife and children is an addition to the income of the family. This supports the study of Singh (1992) that economic practice leads to the employment of children in a gainful occupation with the intention of boosting the income of their families. Besides, this helps to lessen the activities in abaca production because most members of the family participate in the abaca production. Hence, some wives are not dependent on their husbands because they also work for the family. Moreover, children in the family already help their family. They already learned the work in abaca farming at an early age. They perform what the adults are usually doing. Hence, wives not only perform reproductive duty but also productive duty as well, a role that contributes to the economy of the family. On the other hand, Abaca farming is a man's work, but some wives and children help and exert their effort in farming, as shown in this data.

Table 1. The participation of husbands, wives, and children in abaca production.

Abaca Production Activities	Husband	Wives	Children
Planting	• Preparing land for plantation • Brings seedlings to the planting area • Planting abaca seedlings	• Preparing land for plantation • Brings seedlings to the planting area • Planting abaca seedlings	• Preparing land for plantation • Brings seedlings to the planting area • Planting abaca seedlings
Maintaining	• Cleaning the area • Cutting of weeds	• Cleaning the area	• Cleaning the area
Harvesting	• Pulling of the leafstalk of abaca • Loading of abaca • Drying of abaca fiber under the sun	• Loading of abaca • Drying of abaca fiber under the sun	• Loading of abaca • Drying of abaca fiber under the sun
Marketing	• Selling of finished abaca		

C. Working conditions during abaca production

Based on the figure below, the majority, or 37% of wives and children work six to eight hours, 21% worked from three to five hours, 17% worked below 3 hours, and about 25% or above work 8 hours in the farm area. Those who work more than 8 hours are mostly separated and widowed. They go to the farm area at four to eight o'clock in the morning. This supported the standard working hours of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (2018) that working beyond eight hours is considered abuse because a person should work from eight in the

morning to five in the afternoon. In addition, the house of the farmers is situated far from the abaca farm (5 km). The farmers have to leave early so that they have ample time to work on their own farms. They walked for more than an hour to reach their destination. They started to walk at four o'clock in the morning and arrived at the farm by 6:00 AM, depending on the distance of the farm area from their home. The widowed and separated respondents have to double their effort for the sake of their children. This supported the study of Gloop (2008) that woman does not only perform a reproductive role but also a productive role in generating income for the family. Besides, there are widowed abaca farmers who bring their children early in the morning. At age 14, boys helped in preparing food in the area. These children are in school but have to be absent sometimes if needed on the farm. This is against the child labor laws that minors under the age of 16 cannot be employed. During the interview, the husband would not allow their wives to go to the farm if the weather is bad and their partners are not feeling well. Husbands in farming areas were more concerned for the welfare of their wives. But those wives who are separated and widowed, they sometimes were forced to go to the farm area because they didn't have their husbands to assist in their livelihood. Thus, after they are done with the household chores, they go to the farm area with their children, who can help with the production activities. On the other hand, if somebody in the family is sick, such as a child. Only the husband goes to the farm area. The wife stayed home and took care of their sick child. When the husband came home from the farm, he assisted her wife in taking care of their child and did the rest of the household chores. But those widowed and separated ones, they solely take care of their child and do the household chores.

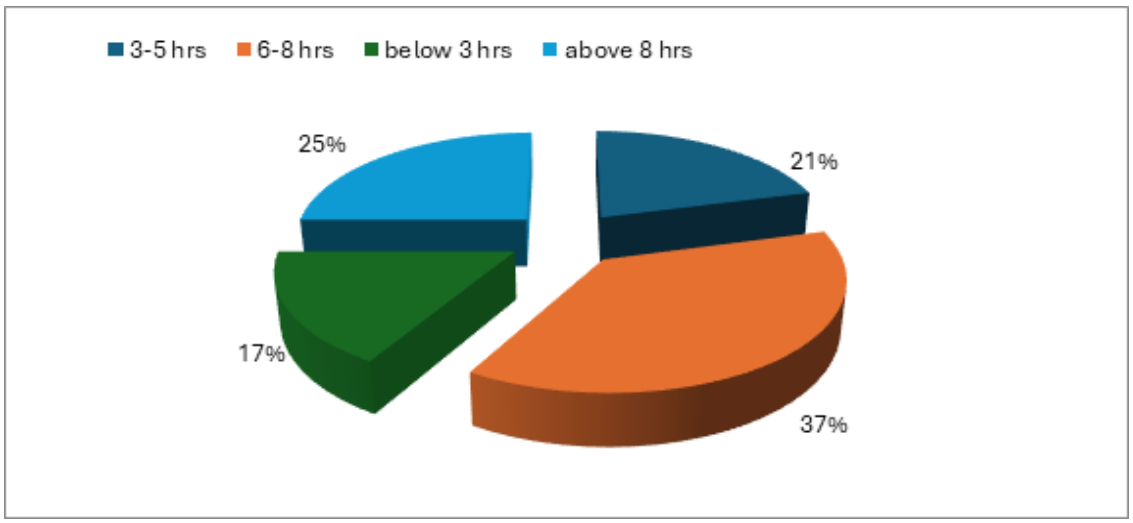

Figure 11. Distribution of working hours performed by each member in the family.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, Abaca production has different activities in which Abaca farmers, such as the husband, wife, and children, participated. The participation of wives and children was a big help in the contribution to the family economy. This helped to lighten the load and lessen the responsibilities in the working area because of the execution of the roles of wives and children. This collaboration of work among the members of the family helped to sustain the needs. Wives helped their husband to augment the income of the family. Widowed and separated wives worked harder to support their family. They exerted more effort as they were the sole breadwinner in the family. On the other

hand, it is perceived as an abuse that working conditions in Abaca farming are an abuse of respondents are not yet aware. Some respondents who are wives work in the farm area as early as 4 am and go home beyond 5:00 pm. This implies that they work more than 8 hours.

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