

Role Of Queen Pineapple Farmers’ Cooperative In Addressing Gender-Divide Needs In The Philippines Rural Communities Amidst Pandemic (COVID-19)

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Abstract

The objectives of the study are to determine the issues and challenges that the FCs encounter in their way to address the needs, and also to identify issues for the intervention of gender roles in pineapple farming that are not clearly defined. In terms of addressing the gender-divide needs and role of Farmers’ Cooperatives, the researcher studied the strategic and practical needs of men and women, other needs of farmers, gender mainstreaming in cooperatives, and gender participation in farming production.

The study showed that there is no gender bias among cooperative members yet women have limited roles in farming due to other obligations in the family. Men’s participation in pineapple farming production is greater than women’s. Opportunities for earning an income and sharing child-care labor are among the gender needs of men and women. Women's involvement is higher only in selling the harvest during postproduction while both are participating in decision-making in handling managing resources and activities.

The respondents’ main problem encountered during the pandemic is no marketing due to business closure because of lockdown and borrowing money is the coping solution of most households. The Farmers’ Cooperatives addressed the needs during the pandemic through a commitment to the economic development of both genders. The cooperatives are linking farmers to the market which increases the farmers’ income, cooperatives are providing support to farmers equally and the utilization of women's involvement in business transactions of cooperatives is being practiced rather than in farming activities which is still men’s participation is large.

Keywords: pineapple farming, gender-divide needs, farmer’s cooperative, COVID-19 Pandemic, practical needs, strategic needs

Introduction

Camarines Norte is a province in the Philippines located in the Bicol Region in Luzon. The province borders Quezon to the west, Camarines Sur to the south, and the Philippine Sea to the north. It has historically been a Bikol-speaking region, however, there has been a language shift in recent years to Tagalog which is more commonly used nowadays. It has a total land area of 2,320.07 square kilometers occupying the northwest coast of the Bicol Peninsula in the southeastern section of Luzon. The province is divided into 12 municipalities with 282 barangays. According to the Census 2015, Camarines Norte has a population of 583,313 and still counting.

Aside from beaches, mountains and religious places which draw tourists in, the economy of the province largely depends on agriculture, with grain crops, vegetables, coconuts, root crops, and fruits, but Camarines Norte is well known for small sweet pineapple. Pineapple production is one of the four major manufacturing and processing industries in the province together with mining, jewelry craft, and coconut industry. Of the eight festivals held every year in the province, one of the most notable is the Pinyasan (Pineapple) Festival which showcases Camarines Norte's premier agri-product which is the sweetest pineapple called Formosa.

One of the most promising components of Philippine agriculture is the fruit sector. Pineapple is one of the important fruit crops in the country and it is a traditional fruit export of the Philippines. The demand for fruits in the world market is getting a big boost from the health-conscious sector of the populace across the globe. Hence, it remains the second top fruit export of the country. The crop is extensively cultivated with large plantations found in Mindanao mainly for

export while those in Luzon and Visayas primarily supply the domestic markets.

Among the income-generating crops in the country is pineapple, particularly the Queen variety which has vast potential in the local and international markets. Because of these, an increasing number of farmers, particularly the marginalized, have started to focus on pineapple farming, particularly the Queen pineapple. The most common pineapple cultivars planted in the country include the Smooth Cayenne or Hawaii variety, the Queen or African Queen known locally as "Formosa" (*Ananas comosus* Linn.), and the third is the native or Red Spanish variety. The Hawaii variety is the heaviest, most popular, and best for canning which is why it is planted in the major production areas in Mindanao. The native Red Spanish pineapple is grown primarily for its fiber. The queen or African Queen, which is traditionally grown in Bicol, is noted for its sweetness. Aside from its distinct sweetness, it is also nutritious because it contains vitamins A and C, calcium, phosphorus, fat, sugar, and carbohydrates.

According to Yap (2019), the production of Queen pineapple is expected to increase with the development of a propagation protocol and corresponding planting system which was done by the Visayas State University (VSU), in cooperation with the Camarines Norte State College and the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office V. These were the outputs of a program dubbed "Enhancing the productivity and marketability of Queen pineapple" which was funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD).

In terms of area planted, the province of Camarines Norte is in the fourth rank in the

top ten Queen pineapple-producing provinces throughout the country. The variety is highly adapted to the soil and climatic condition of the province. It is grown largely as coconut intercrop with an average density of 30,000 plants per hectare. Only 50% of the 98,000 hectares of coconut areas in the province are available for pineapple production. The potential for increased Queen pineapple production in Camarines Norte can be realized through an increase in the productivity of existing areas, expansion of area planted, and the adoption of improved production technologies such as land preparation, plant density, weed control, and fertilization.

There were existing farmers' cooperatives that address the needs of women but no studies have been done to determine how FCs address the gender-divide needs of pineapple farmers in Camarines Norte. Being an institution, which could help in alleviating the advancement of farmers, FCs could also be of great support in promoting gender equality through frameworks and policies that address the needs of both men and women.

Organizations play an important role in society, being structured with a common goal makes the people move in unison for a purpose. Each organization has its mission, vision, goals, and objectives that serve as a guide in achieving each purpose.

Adoption of a gender-responsive community-driven approach in shelter provision towards safe and secure communities is one of the 2017-2020 Development Framework of the National Economic and Development Authority. Oftentimes, women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination such as women in poverty, women with disabilities, and women living in geographically inaccessible areas. Societal norms impose additional risks as their unequal power

relationship between women and men. This sociocultural norm for one's gender dictates how they will be perceived regardless of other factors like needs, status, and capabilities. It implies gender inequalities in our society which interfere with the social and economic potential of women to contribute to the community.

Several organizations built with a common goal of empowering women have set their respective organizations as a driving force to continue the full support and recognition of women's in and out capabilities. However, despite gaining attention to gender in rural development, the role of women remains an issue in the agriculture sector.

In agricultural development, mostly the focus has been on men which put women at an even greater disadvantage. Achieving gender equality requires rebalancing by emphasizing gender-divided needs. It is important to identify the role of farmer's organizations in how they empower their women members and small-scale women farmers.

Agriculture is the main source of employment in rural areas and considering the underperformance of the agriculture sector because of economic crisis and environmental issues, women's needs become the least priority and are often neglected. Although there were farmers' cooperatives that address the needs of women no studies have been done to determine the gender-divide needs of pineapple farmers in Camarines Norte and how FCs address those needs. Furthermore, it is important to determine the issues and challenges that the FCs encounter in their way to address the needs, and also to identify issues for intervention gender roles in pineapple farming that are not clearly defined. The study generally aimed to determine the role of pineapple farmer's cooperatives in addressing gender-divide needs in rural

communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Materials and Method

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey method to determine the role of pineapple farmer's cooperatives in addressing gender-divide needs in rural communities. The respondents were the officers of the farmer's cooperative. Furthermore, this study used the qualitative type of design. The quantitative aspect includes the sociodemographic profile of Camarines Norte and the socio-economic profile of the respondents.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Province of Camarines Norte. Camarines Norte covers a total area of 2,320.07 square kilometers (895.78 sq mi) occupying the northwestern coast of the Bicol Peninsula in the southeastern section of Luzon. One of the six provinces comprising Region V (Bicol), it is bounded on the northeast by the Philippine Sea, east by the San Miguel Bay, west by the Lamon Bay, southwest by Quezon province, and southeast by Camarines Sur. Its capital town, Daet, is 342 kilometers (213 mi) southeast of Metro Manila, an 8 to 10-hour drive by bus, and 6 to 7 hour by private car. There is no airport in Camarines Norte. The province is divided into 12 municipalities.



Figure 1. Location of Camarines Norte in the Philippines

Population and Sampling Procedure

From the list of the Office of the Provincial Agricultural Office of Camarines Norte, there are seven (7) established pineapple farmer's cooperatives in Camarines Norte (Table 3). Among these identified cooperatives, purposive sampling was done to identify the top three largest cooperatives in terms of the number of members and most established in terms of

years of being established. The three identified cooperatives were the focus of the study. Since most of the officers of the cooperatives are pineapple farmers also, gender-divide needs and how the cooperatives deal with those needs were also addressed from the farmer's perspective.

Table 1. List of Pineapple Farmer's Cooperative in Camarines Norte

NAME OF FARMERS' COOPERATIVE	ADDRESS
Caayunan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (1)	Caayunan, Basud, Camarines Norte
San Lorenzo Ruiz Farmer's Cooperative (2)	San Lorenzo Ruiz, Camarines Norte
San Lorenzo Ruiz Farmer's Agriculture Cooperative	San Lorenzo Ruiz, Camarines Norte
Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative (3)	Malasugui, Labo, Camarines Norte
Guisican Multi-Purpose Cooperative	Guisican, Labo, Camarines Norte
Pang-Pang Farmer's Agri-Cooperation	Pang-Pang, Labo, Camarines Norte
Talisayon Multi-Purpose Cooperative	Calintaan, Labo, Camarines Norte

The key persons, which includes the officers of the cooperatives, were the respondents of the survey questionnaire and participants of the focus group discussion. There are thirty (30) officers for each cooperative including the chairman and members of the committee

and other staff. Since there is only a limited number of respondents, total enumeration was employed having a total of 90 respondents for the three identified cooperatives.

Table 2. Number of Respondents per Cooperative

NAME OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFICERS PER COOPERATIVE
Caayunan Farmer's Coop	30
San Lorenzo Farmer's Coop	30
Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative	30
Total	90

Unit of Analysis

One of the most important ideas in a research project is the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis is the major entity that a researcher analyzed in the study (Trochim, 2020). The unit of analysis for this study was the pineapple farmers. However, analysis for the comparison of specific gender-divide needs of both men and women was also considered.

Research Instruet

Data Collection methods include interviews, questionnaires, experiments, observation, sample surveys, census, etc that are either personally administered, send through the mail, or electronically administered; observations of individuals and events with or without videotaping or audio recording, and a variety of other motivational techniques such as projective tests (Tim, 1997; Burchfield,1996).

The questionnaire was drafted based on the statement of the problems and their objectives. The survey instrument for the cooperative was evaluated the Pineapple

Farmer's Cooperative with regards to addressing gender-divide needs of farmers in terms of the following; Part 1 identified the socio-economic profile of the cooperative; Part 2 determined the specific roles of the farmers' cooperative in pineapple farming; Part 3) differentiates the needs of men and women involved in the pineapple farming industry; Part 4 is to evaluate the Pineapple Farmer's cooperative with regards to addressing gender-divide needs of farmers in terms of the following; a. Organizational structure; b. Mission; c. Vision; and d. Projects and activities; the last part of the questionnaire assessed how the activities and

projects of farmers' cooperatives address the needs.

Aside from the survey questionnaires, there are a variety of ways used to collect data such as an interview. An interview is a series of questions a researcher addresses personally to respondents. An interview was structured (where you ask clearly defined questions) or unstructured, where the researcher allows some of the questioning led by the responses of the interviewee. Especially when using unstructured interviews, using a tape recorder can be a good idea, if it does not affect the relationship with the person being interviewed. Interviewing method is subdivided into the following: Face-to-face interviews, Telephone interviews, etc. (Checkland et al 1998). For this study, Face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews were used. Face-to-face interviews rich data, offer the opportunity to establish rapport with the interviewees, and help to explore and understand complex issues. Many ideas that are ordinarily difficult to articulate were also surfaced and discussed during such interviews. On the negative side, face-to-face interviews have the potential for introducing interviewer bias and can be expensive if a big sample of subjects is to be personally interviewed (Tim, 1997), (Erricker, 1971), (Burchfield,1996), (Matt, 2001). While telephone interviews were used for respondents dispersed over various geographic regions and obtained responses from them immediately on contact. This is an efficient way of collecting data when one has specific questions to ask, needs the responses quickly, and has the sample spread over a wide geographic area. On the negative side, the interviewer cannot observe the nonverbal responses of the respondents, and the interviewee can block a call. Personally

administering questionnaires to groups of individuals (Tim, 1997).

A telephone interview was also applied due to the pandemic where face-to-face contact was minimized, and online interviews using Zoom or Google meet were also employed both for the safety of the researcher and the respondents. In any case that face-to-face conduct of interviews or field visits were allowed, it was assured that all safety protocols were followed.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were obtained by gathering primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from respondents in the study area and the respondents using the questionnaires while the secondary data were obtained through library research and internet searches.

The researcher coordinated with the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist because they are the ones handling the different farmer's organizations in Camarines Norte. Upon getting the list of the Pineapple Farmers' Cooperative, they were contacted for coordination and to have the list of pineapple farmers included in their organization. Data for the socio-demographic profile of Camarines Norte were collected

Level of Analysis

As discussed by Lavrakas (2008), the two levels of analysis are micro and macro. Micro-level is when individuals are analyzed while the macro level of analysis involves aggregates of individuals such as households, wards, precincts, firms, neighborhoods, communities, counties, provinces, states, or nations. Therefore, the level of analysis of this study is at the macro level because it dealt with cooperatives.

Theory/calculation

also from the Provincial Capitol Office. Questionnaires were distributed to the identified respondents.

The questionnaires were collected right after the respondent finished answering them completely.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed quantitatively with a descriptive summary based on the results obtained by the researcher. During the data analysis, copies of the survey questionnaire were examined for correctness and completeness. All incomplete copies of survey questionnaires were not included in the analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, particularly the measures of central tendency which include the computation of the mean. The formula used for getting the mean is:

$$\begin{aligned} X &= X/N \\ \text{Where: } X &= \text{Mean} \\ X &= \text{sum of the total} \\ &= \text{number of scores} \\ N &= \text{Total Number} \\ &= \text{of scores} \end{aligned}$$

Cooperatives can play important roles in overcoming the barriers faced by women and in supporting small agricultural producers. Evidence shows that efficient cooperatives can empower their members economically and socially and create sustainable employment through equitable and inclusive business models that are more resilient to shocks. In this study, the Farmer's Cooperative was reviewed with regards to its Decision Making, Goals and Objectives, Mission and Vision, Legislation and ByLaws, Policies, Strategies, Plans, and

programs. Under the Farmer's Cooperative, there are

Gender Division of Labor and Gender-Divide Needs of Pineapple Farmers. Gender Division of Labor in terms of soil preparation, sowing the seeds, lopping the leaves, planting, application of fertilizer, mulching, weeding, harvesting, and selling the harvest. It also includes the gender-

divided needs of Pineapple Farmers, and how the farmer's organizations address their different needs as male and female. In addition, how the FC's goals, objectives, vision, mission, project, and activities help them with their needs in terms of pineapple farming and pineapple production. Below these, are the issues and concerns encountered by Pineapple Farmers.

Conceptual Paradigm

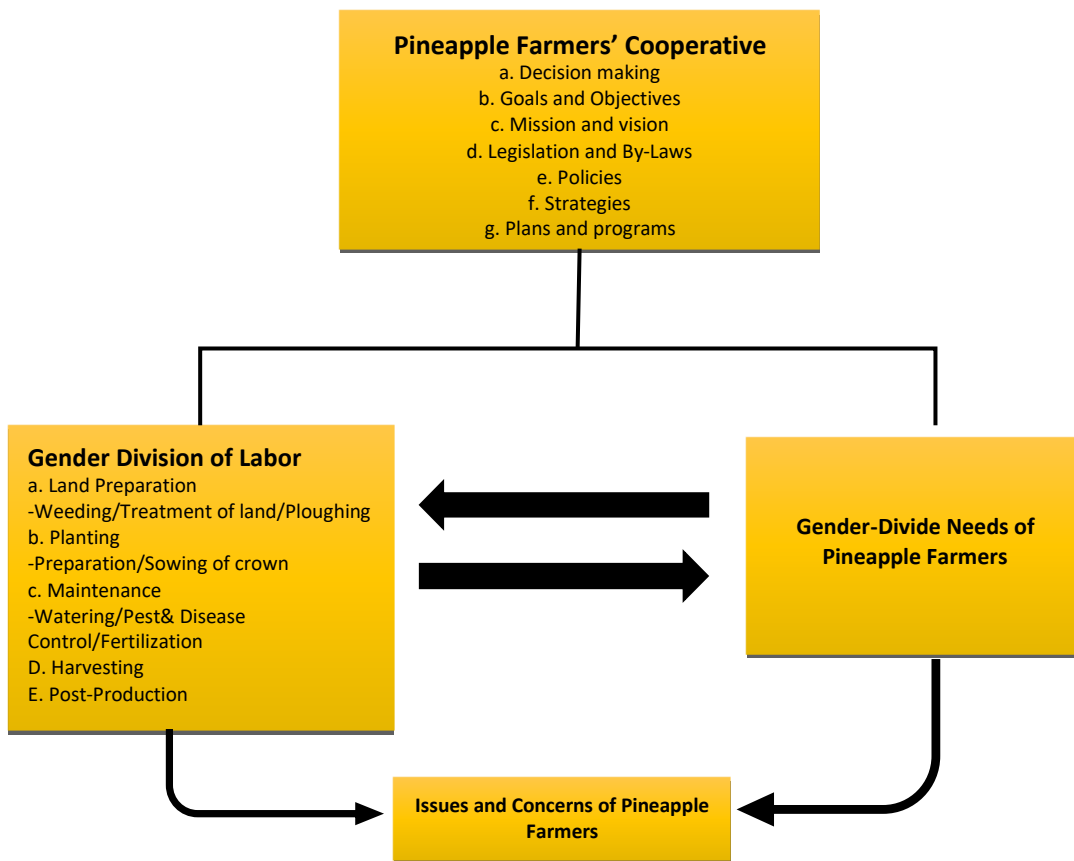


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Results and Discussions

Respondent's Profile

Figure 3 shows the position of the respondents in their cooperatives. They were composed of the Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and members, the General

Managers, staff, and cooperative members who are pineapple farmers. Out of 90 respondents, 43% are female and 57% are male (Fig. 4). As stated by Penunia (2011), women have a weak presence in the leadership of farmer's organizations.

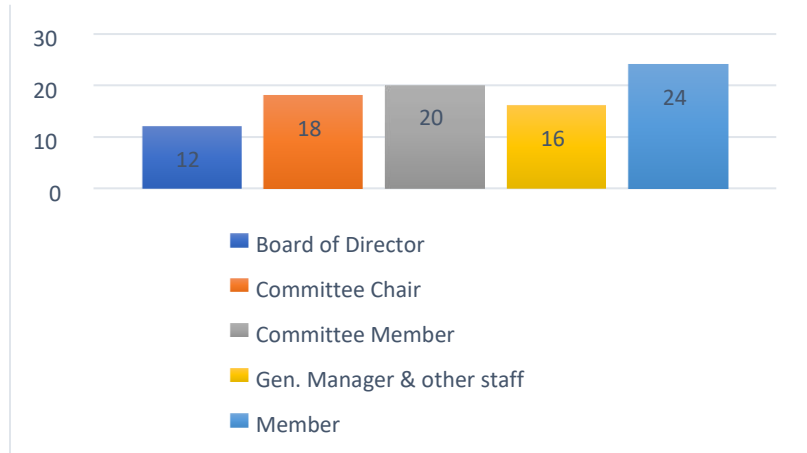


Figure 3. Respondent's Position in the Cooperative

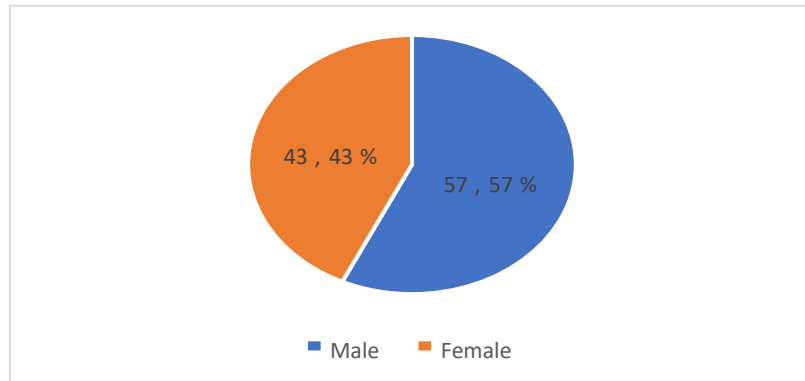


Figure 4. Gender of the Respondents

The majority of the respondents belong to middle-aged adults with ages ranging from 40-49 and the least number of ages are old adults aged 60-69 (Fig. 5). Since most of the respondents belong to the middle-aged group,

most of them are married already. For the civil status of the respondents, 66% are married, 29% are single, 4% are separated from their partners and the remaining 4% are widowed (Fig. 6).

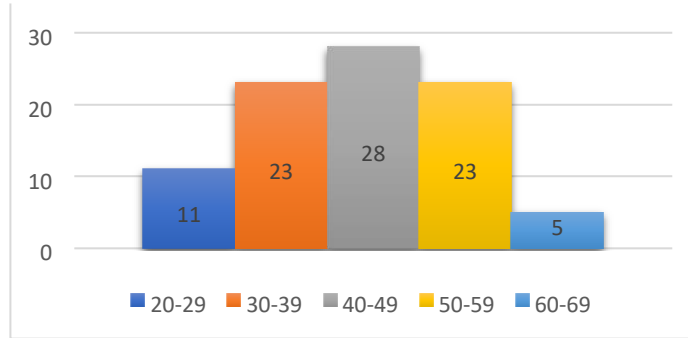


Figure 5. Age of the Respondents

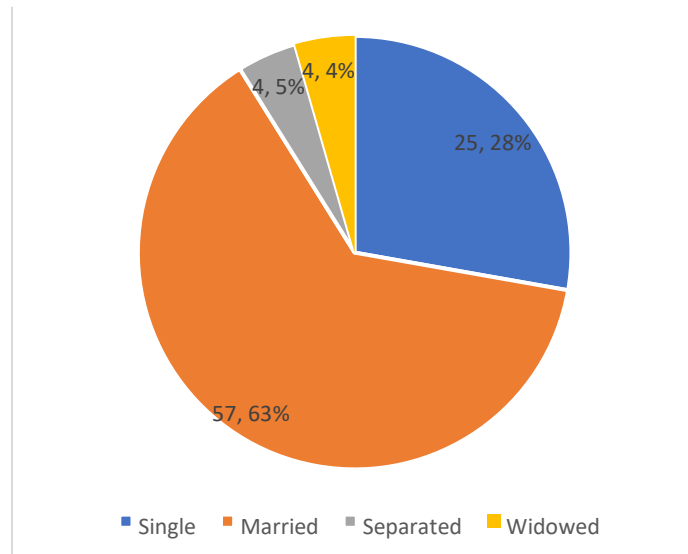


Figure 6. Civil Status

According to the interview conducted with the managers of the cooperatives, though some are practicing pineapple farming, most of their officers, staff, and members are directly engaged in it. This information is

supported by the graph below (Fig. 7) which shows that respondents' occupations are 76% farmer, 21% salary worker, and 3% trader.

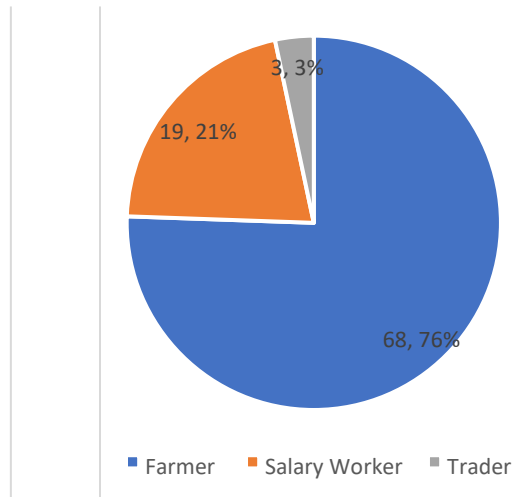


Figure 7. Occupation

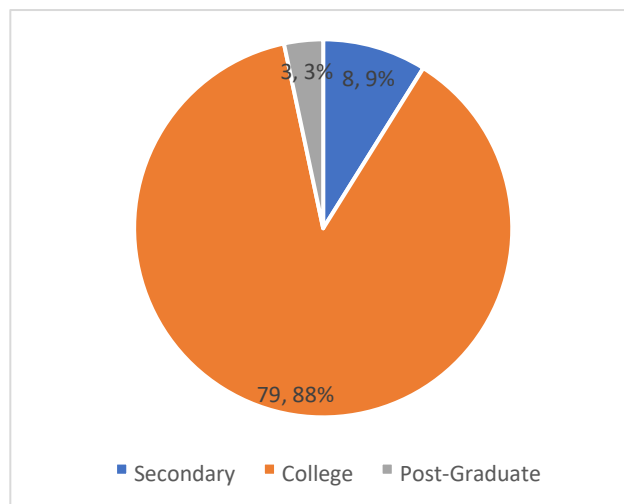


Figure 8. Level of Education

Household Information

The majority (81%) of the respondents' households are male-headed and only 19% are headed by a female (Fig. 9). The female-headed households were headed by single mothers, separated from their husbands or partners, and others are widowed. The majority of the house members are composed

of young adults with ages ranging from 13 to 39 years old and mid-aged adults with ages ranging from 40 to 49 (Table 3). Their average monthly income ranges from 10,000 to 20,000 pesos (Fig. 10).

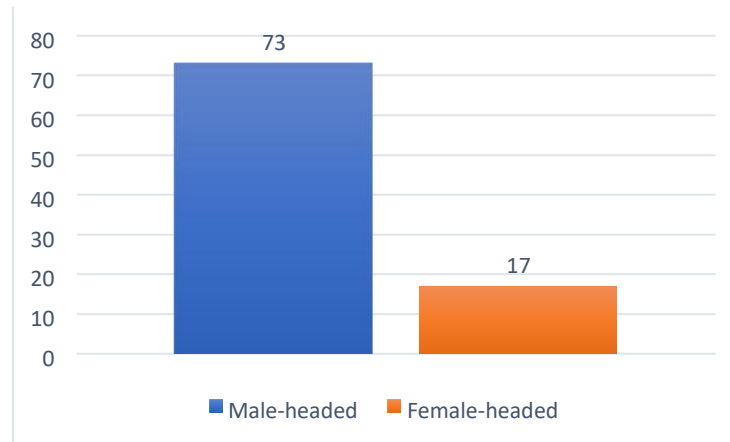


Figure 9. Type of Household

Table 3. House members.

AGE	FREQUENCY	RANK
Young Adults 13-19		
	40	
20-29	46	
30-39	18	
Total	104	1
Mid-Aged Adults 40-49	31	
50-59	20	
Total	51	2
Kids		
1-7	18	
8-12	25	
Total	43	3
Old Adults 60-69	6	
70-79	4	
Total	10	4

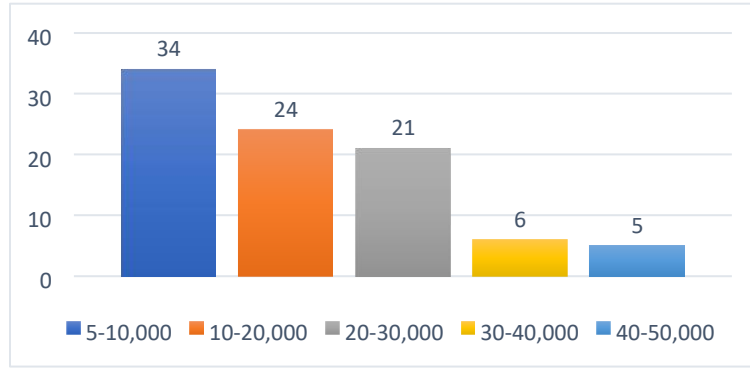


Figure 10. Household Monthly Income

Out of 90 respondents, 80% are engaged in pineapple farming and the remaining 20% are not (Table 4). Those respondents that are

connected to the cooperative but are not engaged in farming were working in the cooperative as general managers, cashiers, and secretaries.

Table 4. Engagement in pineapple farming.

ENGAGEMENT IN PINEAPPLE FARMING	TOTAL	%
Yes	66	80
No	24	20
Total	90	100

Role of Farmers’ Cooperative in Pineapple Farming

Reasons for Joining Cooperatives

In this part, the main reason for joining the cooperative is to gain access to credit which they will use as additional capital for their pineapple production activity (Table 5). For them, applying for loans in a cooperative is better than borrowing personal money from other people. They also joined cooperatives to improve their savings because of the increasing capital share and dividends that they get every time they apply for a loan.

Such privileges they cannot get on borrowing from other people. They also believed that being a member of a cooperative reduces marketing risks and increases their bargaining power because the cooperatives buy their pineapple products and help them market their products and link them to other agencies where they can market products.

Table 5. Reasons for joining cooperatives.

REASON	FREQUENCY	RANK
Access to credit	58	1

Improve savings	56	2
Reduce marketing risks	20	3
Increase bargaining power	18	4

Increase of Women’s Rights in the Cooperative

When asked about their opinion if women are fully heard in the cooperative, 90% of the respondents said that women’s rights have

increased and their voice is more powerful than before and only 10% believed that women are still suppressed by society and forced to live up to their gender.

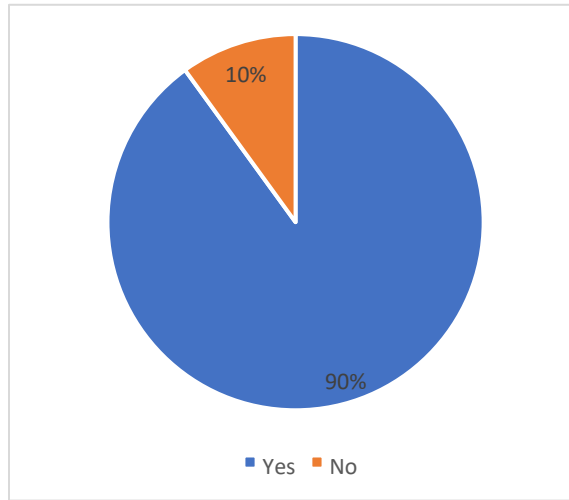


Figure 11. Increase of Women’s Rights in the Cooperative

Women's involvement in activities, projects, and decision-making in farming increases as many continue to support and propose gender equality in the agriculture sector. Though there are still other areas in farming, specifically in production, where women take small participation, cooperatives were found to engage women in business transactions like buying and selling products. This may be seen as minimal tasks compared to men’s

participation in farming production, it creates a large contribution to the economic standing of farming. Overall, this goes to show that enhancing women’s engagement in agricultural activities can not only help support and further their personal and household well-being, but the benefits that they accrue from it can also strengthen the local economy in rural agricultural communities.

Gender Dividend Utilization Purposes

Dividends are viewed by members as a major benefit of being a cooperative member. Dividend utilization purposes for women members are arranged as follows: purchasing of farm inputs/livestock, purchase of additional shares, paying the loan, and property acquisition (Table 6).

Table 6. Gender dividend utilization purposes

MEANS OF UTILIZATION	FREQUENCY	RANK
Purchase of farm inputs/livestock	50	1
Purchase of additional shares	45	2
Paying loan	24	3
Property acquisition	31	4

One of the purposes of the cooperative dividend is to enhance the commitment of members. The members take this as an opportunity for them to generate additional investment from purchasing farm inputs/livestock. This enhances women's independence and decision-making capacity within the household. However, not all cooperatives share dividends with their members. The distribution of dividends is

determined by the cooperative. Some cooperatives let the board decide regarding this matter and others included it in their bylaws. The bylaws would define when these shares could be issued, who can buy them, and how any dividend would be set. One of the cooperatives does not give dividends on a monetary cash basis instead, they add it up to the capital share of the members.

Purpose of Members' Business Transaction with their Cooperatives

Cooperative play an important role in contributing to achieving the economic and social empowerment of women. Like men members, women members should be able to enjoy the same services and accept the same responsibilities as men within a cooperative.

In terms of benefits and fair treatment for men and women in cooperatives, women are more engaged in taking advantage of services offered by cooperatives than men because they have less work in farming production.

Table 7. Purpose of members' business transactions with their cooperatives.

PURPOSE OF TRANSACTION	FREQUENCY	RANK
Savings	64	1
Purchase of agricultural inputs	48	2
Economic activities	43	3
Sell pineapple product	35	4
Purchase of merchandise	34	5

Based on the results shown in Table 7, the majority of members' purposes in a business transaction with their cooperatives are savings of 64 respondents followed by the

purchase of agricultural inputs (48 respondents) and economic activities (43 respondents). Saving as women members' top business transactions with cooperatives

shows that they prioritize keeping their money for security.

Linking farmers to the market topped the role of farmers' cooperatives in pineapple farming (Table 8). The farmers believe that the cooperative is a big help in terms of linking them to people and areas where they can market their products. This was made possible because the cooperative provides a platform for negotiating with buyers. The cooperative also delivers training on business plans and capacity-building services to the

members which capacitate the farmer members in increasing their knowledge and improving their skills in terms of pineapple production. Furthermore, it offers marketing and processing services wherein the farmers can sell their products directly to the cooperative and the cooperative will be the ones to market and process the pineapples for different by-products such as pineapple juice, and dried candies, pies, jams, and cloth made of pineapple fibers.

Table 8. Role of farmers' cooperative in pineapple farming.

ACTIVITY	YES	RANK
1. Links farmers to market	70	1
2. Provides a platform for negotiating with buyers	67	2
3. Delivers training, business plan, and capacity-building services to members.	60	3
4. Offers marketing and processing services	58	4
5. Provides distribution channels for primary products.	57	5

Increase of Pineapple Farmers' Income after Joining the Farmers' Cooperative

Though 90% of the respondents believed that their income as pineapple farmers increased after they joined the farmers' cooperative (Fig. 12), there are still other needs as pineapple farmers that they want the cooperative to help them with such as the purchase of production input material,

capital, fertilizers, pesticide and insecticide, marketing link, processing of raw fruit pineapple, increase in the price of pineapple product and additional training and info about pineapple farming (Table 9).

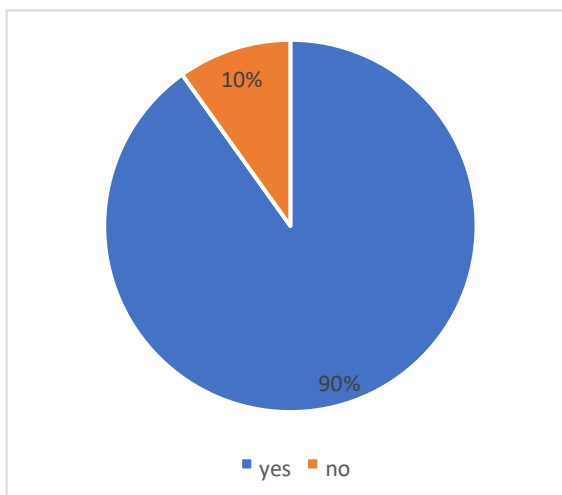


Figure 12. Increase in pineapple farmers’ income after joining the farmers’ cooperative

Other Needs of Pineapple Farmers in Farming

Given the assistance provided by cooperatives to its members in increasing income, pineapple farmers are still faced with challenges during production which is presented in Table 9. Providing the other

needs of pineapple farmers will increase not only their income but will greatly impact the production rate during and after the harvest period as these will meet their needs.

Table 9. Other needs of pineapple farmers in farming.

NEEDS	FREQUENCY	RANK
Purchase of Production Input Material, Capital, Fertilizers, Pesticide, and Insecticide	81	1
Marketing Link	77	2
Processing of Raw Fruit Pineapple	71	3
Increase in the Price of Pineapple Production	69	4
Additional Training and Information about Pineapple Farming	63	5

Gender Needs of Pineapple Farmers

According to the Bureau of Gender Equality (2000), the two types of gender needs are practical and strategic. As for the practical gender needs of the pineapple farmers, the top five needs are opportunities for earning an income, education, and training about pineapple farming, access to inputs for

cultivation, regular employment, and transportation (Table 10). For the strategic gender needs, the top five are sharing of domestic labor and child care by men, access to resources, access to capital investment, equal wages, and freedom of choice (Table 11).

Table 10. Practical gender needs of pineapple farmers

PRACTICAL GENDER NEEDS	FREQUENCY	RANK	MEN	RANK	WOMEN	RANK
1. Education/Training w/ regards to pineapple farming	63	2	33	2	30	1
2. Quality housing	52	6	23	6	29	2
3. Daycare/childcare facilities	47	8	19	8	28	3
4. Regular employment	56	4	29	4	27	4
5. Health Insurance	50	7	24	7	26	5
6. Access to inputs for cultivation	62	3	38	3	24	6
7. Opportunities for earning an income	64	1	41	1	23	7
8. Childcare is not solely women's responsibility	34	9	13	9	21	8
9. Transportation	53	5	37	5	16	9

For practical gender needs of pineapple farmers, women's top choice in education and training in pineapple farming and men's top choice is opportunities for earning an income. This survey shows that even though most men and women agree in considering opportunities for earning an

income as the top practical gender needs, women consider having more knowledge and learning in farming a necessity regardless of their living conditions while the majority of men want to have other means of earning to fulfill their socially accepted roles in the society as head of the household and provider.

Strategic Gender Needs of Pineapple Farmers

The strategic gender needs of pineapple farmers' survey result show that the top priority for women is sharing domestic labor and child care with men and access to capital investment is for men. For women, sharing

responsibilities is the key to achieving greater equality which is agreed by men in this survey.

Table 11. Strategic gender needs of pineapple farmers.

STRATEGIC GENDER NEEDS	FREQUENCY	RANK	MEN	RANK	WOMEN	RANK
1. Sharing of domestic labor and child care by men	63	1	13	7	50	1

2. Support from family/society	52	7	10	9	42	2
3. Equal wages	55	4	14	6	41	3
4. Changes in women's subordinate position within the household	49	9	9	10	40	4
5. Freedom of choice	54	5	15	5	39	5
6. Having a voice	50	8	12	8	38	6
7. Empowerment of women to have a choice over childbearing and sexual behavior	40	11	8	11	32	7
8. Access to resources	61	2	42	3	19	8
9. Access to capital investment	59	3	45	1	14	9
10. Ownership of Assets	53	6	43	2	10	10
11. Control over resources	45	10	36	4	9	11

When asked whether they have experienced or have seen gender bias in pineapple farming, 77% of them responded “No” and only 23% said “Yes.” Some of the gender biases they have seen include the following: a) men mostly do decision making; b) women are expected not to perform manly activities in pineapple production; c) men are more

valued in farming and women are just seen as a support system. In the case of the cooperative, though there are still some cooperatives that do not have women representatives on the Board of Directors and there is still no existing Gender and Development Committee.

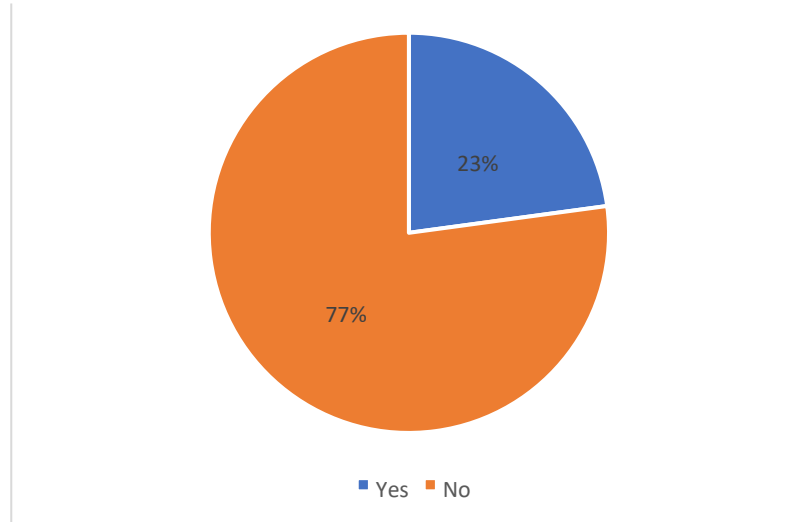


Figure 13. Gender-biases in Pineapple Farming

Gender Mainstreaming in Cooperatives

Gender mainstreaming in cooperatives includes an increase in women’s participation and decision-making on the cooperative board. Though there are still cooperatives that do not have women members on the board of directors, the majority of the cooperatives already have. Gender is also integrated into the goals and objectives, policies, strategies, plans, and programs. The cooperatives are planning to integrate gender into their

mission, vision, and amendment of the constitution and by-laws to incorporate other GAD-related concerns. As for the existence of Gender Committees to identify gender problems and solutions and conduct gender awareness training, there are some cooperatives with existing gender committees, and those who have no existing gender committees yet, said they are planning to create one.

Table 12. Cooperatives with Gender and Development Committee.

COOPERATIVE	WITH GENDER COMMITTEE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Cooperative 1	Yes, not fully functional	30	100%
Cooperative 2	No	0	0
Cooperative 3	Yes, not fully functional	30	100%

During the interview conducted with the Manager that doesn’t have an existing GAD committee, a few of the challenges they encounter in integrating the said committee into the organization are: (1) amendment of

the cooperative by-laws is still in the planning stage;
 (2) elected Cooperative Officers don’t finish full terms which results in continuous management flow and mostly are inactive in their functions due to other responsibilities

outside the role in the cooperatives; and (3) due to pandemic, the general assembly is on hold to give way to prioritizing resolution of the current situation brought by the pandemic.

Though other cooperatives have no existing gender committees yet, most of the cooperatives are already collecting gender-disaggregated data to identify challenges

involving gender issues. The cooperatives also allow and prioritize the participation of officers and staff in gender-related training and seminars such as gender awareness, gender sensitivity, violence against women and children, and gender and cooperation. In addition, some cooperatives have already conducted gender sensitivity seminars for their members.

Table 13. Gender Mainstreaming in Cooperatives

ACTIVITY	YES	NO	PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT
1. Mainstreaming of gender in the cooperative boards to increase women's participation and decision-making.	78	12	
2. Integration of gender in:			
a) Goals and Objective	77		13
b) Mission and Vision	80		10
c) Legislation and By-Laws	77		13
d) Policies	75		15
e) Strategies	64	26	
f) Plans and Programs	63	27	
3. Have existing Gender Committees to identify gender problems and solutions and conduct gender awareness training.	70	20	
4. Collect gender-disaggregated data to identify challenges involving gender issues.	81	9	
5. Does your cooperative allow/prioritize the participation of officers/staff in gender-related training/seminars?	71	19	

Gender mainstreaming in cooperatives is currently existing, however, integration of gender in the organizational structures is not yet fully implemented as shown in Table 13. It clearly shows that even though the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) released last November 13, 2012,

Memorandum Circular No. 2013-22 known as the Guidelines on Mainstreaming Gender and Development (GAD) in Cooperatives the status is still in process of implementation for some cooperatives. Gender issues are not one of the priorities in the farming sector because other matters require greater attention.

Gender Participation in Pineapple Farming Production

Men's participation in farming production is larger than women's from land preparation up to post-production (Table 14). Some activities are shared by men and women but the count of men is still larger than women because women only provide support for men, this

aligns with the statement of UNIFEM (2009) that women have greater workloads and time constraints in domestic activities. While in decision-making, generally, both men and women make fair decisions in most aspects

Table 14. Gender Participation in Pineapple Farming Production

WHO MOSTLY DOES THE FOLLOWING HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES?	MEN	WOMEN	BOTH
a) Land Preparation			
Weeding	47	18	25
Treatment of land (fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides)	73	5	12
Plowing	90		
b) Planting			
Preparation and sowing of crown	48	6	36
c) Maintenance			
Watering	60	14	16
Pest and Disease Control	60	12	18
Fertilization	70	3	17
d) Harvesting			
	44	12	34
e) Post-Production			
Selling the harvest	26	47	17
Transporting the Product	68	17	5
DECISION MAKING			
Who decides for the management of the following resources/activities?	18	13	59
Purchases of seed and other agricultural inputs	33	12	45
Daily purchase of other goods	11	32	47
Food crops (what crop to grow and when)	32	5	53
Who manages harvest from these crops	29	6	55
Who manages proceeds from these crops	10	35	45

The reasons why women cannot participate in other farming activities were because women have other domestic work to do such as attending housekeeping, taking care of kids, and serving as a vendor in their sari-sari stores. Some men prefer not to let women's family members help them work in the field

because of limitations such as women being sensitive to the sun and women cannot perform heavy work. Other women, stated that they prefer other work than farming because they think that farming should be done by men.

The extent of Attainment of Cooperative Objectives

In terms of the attainment of the cooperative objectives, those with very satisfactory ratings were committed to the economic development of both gender, organizing based on the felt needs of members, enhancing active participation of members, and adherence to open and voluntary

membership regardless of gender preference. On the other hand, adherence to the conservation of resources resolves conflict among members, and the conduct of continuous education and training for members, staff, and officers got a majority rating of satisfactorily.

Table 15. The extent of attainment of the cooperative objectives.

INDICATORS	VS (3)	S (2)	F (1)
Commits to the economic development of both gender.	50	31	9
Adheres to the conservation of resources.	44	40	6
Is organized based on the felt needs of members.	48	36	6
Enhances active members' participation.	48	38	4
Endeavors to resolve conflict among members.	31	39	20
Conducts continuous education and training for members, staff, and officers.	34	42	14
Adheres to open and voluntary membership regardless of gender preference.	45	38	7

Cooperative objectives are aligned toward the success of integrating gender mainstreaming which the data shows above. The satisfactory rate is higher which means that cooperatives are doing an effort to engage both men and women in the organizations through the resolution of

conflicts among members and got a higher fair rating, but it doesn't completely focus on gender issues. This conflict may be the result of undivided decisions, multiple resolutions, recommendations, or other matters which is beyond the scope of this research.

Problems Encountered due to Pandemic

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a great effect on people from every walks of life. This does not exclude the people involved in pineapple farming. The problems brought by the pandemic which the pineapple farmer has encountered include no market for their products due to business closure because of the lockdown; reduced earnings, and minimal

income due to a lesser number of travelers on the highways, which highly affect the small-scale pineapple vendors who only sells on the sideroads; restrictions on transportation due to the closure of provincial and barangay borders which led to non-marketing of their produce; and since the farmers cannot market their product outside their area another

problem is the lack of alternative options on marketing which led to rotting of their

products if they are not going to sell it in a price lower than their capital.

Table 16. Problems encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic

FACTOR	FREQUENCY	RANK
No marketing due to business closure because of lockdown	77	1
Reduced earnings due to a lesser number of travelers on the highways		2 76
Restrictions on transportation due to closure of provincial/barangay borders		3 70
Lack of alternative options for marketing	69	4
Price decrease of pineapple products	63	5
Poverty/Low incomes	51	6
Lack of education, training, etc. on pineapple farming	42	7
Lack of financial support from LGU	30	8

The reaction of the household to the pandemic event

Because of the situation brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the farmers' way of coping includes borrowing money from

family, friends, employers, etc.; taking a loan from financial institutions especially from cooperatives; engaging in other revenue-generating activities; reducing food consumption, and resorting to the household savings (Table 17).

Table 17. The reaction of the household to the pandemic event.

ITEM	FREQUENCY	RANK
Borrowed money from family, friends, employer, etc.	58	1
Took a loan from a financial institution	56	2
Engaged with other revenue-generating activities	46	3
Reduced food consumption	41	4
Resorted to household savings	39	5
Reduced non-food consumption	35	6
Advance sale of harvest	33	7
Took a loan with a savings and credit group in the village	31	8
Received assistance from an NGO or the government	30	9
Received assistance from family and friends	29	10
Sale of livestock	16	11
Sale of other property	14	12
Made purchases on credit	13	13
Delayed reimbursement obligations	12	14

Took away children from school	11	15
Sale of grain stock	10	16
Sale of tools or reduction in the enterprise inventory	7	17
Emigration of some family members to work	6	18
Sent children to live with relatives	5	19

Household Recovered from the Pandemic Survey

The restrictions caused by the pandemic in farming production limit the option of pineapple farmers to generate an income. Instead of using the money they borrowed from family, relatives, or financial institutions for farming production, they spend it on their daily expenses such as food

and bills. With no means or little amount of earning during the pandemic, the only way for farmers to cope with the situation is to ask for help from other people.

When asked whether the household has recovered economically from the pandemic, 65% said they have not recovered yet and the 35% who have already recovered said that it took them a year to recover from the pandemic (Fig. 14).

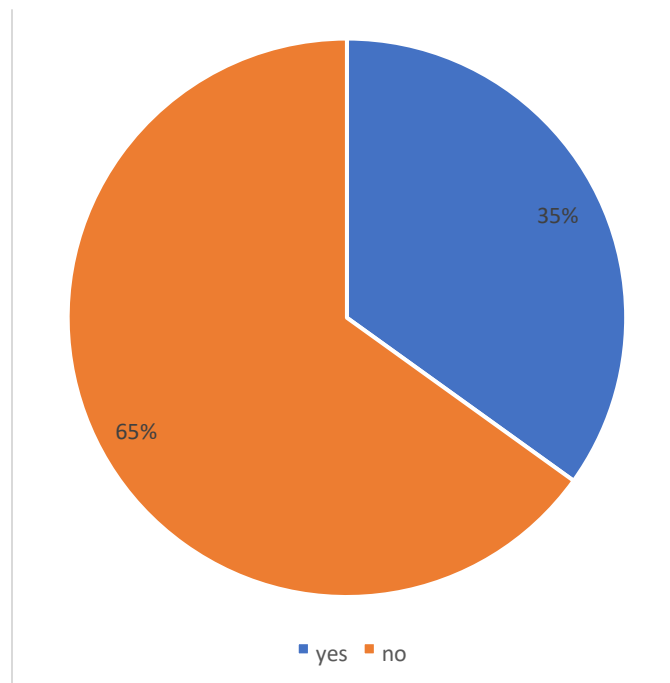


Figure 14. Households recovered from the pandemic survey

The effect of the pandemic on the economic status of the Philippines and other countries has been considered one of the major problems and the solution is slowly being in a place with no guarantee as to when will the

economy can fully recover from the situation. Even the 35% (Fig. 14) who said they already recovered struggled in selling products and increasing their income because of the price hike of goods and an additional expense for

the requirements required by the government for safety protocols.

Cooperative and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Measures of the Cooperative during COVID-19 Pandemic

Measures done by the cooperative during a pandemic to facilitate and increase rural women’s access, control, and management of

productive resources and farming services according to the survey is to adjust working conditions to manage work and family responsibilities with the highest yes vote then followed by easier facilitation of loan processes (Table 18).

Table 18. Measures of the cooperative during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACTIVITY	YES	NO
1. Advocate adjustment of working conditions to manage work and family responsibilities.	83	7
2. Additional financial aid/programs with flexible payment methods.	51	39
3. Easier facilitation of loan processes.	76	14
4. Deferred deduction of interest and payment of loans/credits.	56	34
5. the Bigger amount of loans for pineapple farmers.	58	32

As mentioned in the previous discussion, one way for pineapple farmers to cope with the pandemic situation is to borrow money that cooperatives provided to assist the farmers. Some cooperatives shorten the process of facilitating loans, extended or stretched the payment terms for paying loans, and some provided financial assistance to

their qualified members. However, other cooperatives are not capable of providing this measure due to a lack of funds and assistance from LGU. The adjustment of working conditions is done due to the implementation of a nationwide lockdown to prevent the virus from spreading which the cooperative has no control over.

Program/Activity of the Cooperative which is Helpful during the Pandemic

One of the focuses of the research is to identify the role of the farmers’ cooperatives during the pandemic and to gather data, cooperative members are asked which program/activity of the cooperative helped them a lot during the pandemic. Below were the respondents’ responses:

Table 19. Program/Activity of the cooperative which are helpful during the pandemic.

NO.	PROGRAM/ACTIVITY OF THE COOPERATIVE WHICH ARE HELPFUL DURING THE PANDEMIC
1	Savings
2	Loans with longer playing time
3	Loan w/ very minimal interest and easy access
4	Farming income provides for family
5	Participation in marketing and sale of goods
6	Fertilizer loans have no interest
7	Distribution of seeds and fertilizer
8	Kadiwa on wheels w/c provide direct market
9	Tanim mo benta mo (Plant and Sell) program of the cooperative w/c aims to provide a direct market for QP farmers. Increase farmer's income, lessen the participation of middlemen
10	Promotion support and technical assistance
11	As a staff, I saw the significance of different activities given by the cooperative in response w/ covid 19 such as mobile market, organic vegetable farming, palay buying, and disaster risk reduction management
12	Additional capital
13	Training on organic backyard gardening. Members are trained to perform organic backyard gardening and given starter kits (seeds, organic fertilizer, garden tools) for their food security during a pandemic

The cooperative offers members access to resources and services available during the pandemic like what was mentioned in the list above. Cooperatives put their effort into assisting their members by imposing

exceptions in terms of loan payments, distribution of materials and equipment, income-generating activities and projects, and livelihood training.

Conclusions

Based on the findings arrived at by the researcher, the following conclusions are given:

Farmers' Cooperatives members consist of most the men, middle-aged adults, married, with a college degree, practitioner farmers, male-household dominant, and with low-income salaries.

In terms of addressing the gender needs and role of farmers' cooperatives, no

gender bias among cooperative members yet women have a limited role in farming due to other obligations in the family. Linking of farmers to market is the other need of members to increase income. Opportunities for earning an income and sharing childcare labor are among the gender needs of men and women. Men's participation in pineapple farming production is greater than women's. Women's involvement is higher only in selling the harvest during post-production. Men and women are both participating in

decision-making in handling managing resources and activities.

In terms of assessing Farmers' Cooperatives addressing needs due to pandemic, cooperatives are providing support to farmers equally and utilization of women's involvement in business transactions of cooperatives is being practiced rather than in farming activities which still men's participation is larger.

Recommendations

Based on the stated conclusions, the following recommendations are being given:

1. Research on Farmers' cooperatives addressing gender-divide needs other than pineapple farming may likewise be studied to identify more gender-related concerns and issues in the agricultural sectors.
2. This research study suggests that more women should be involved in creating policies, projects, and programs in the farming industry to fully recognize gender-divide needs. This will also help in redressing centuries of gender imbalance in a male-dominant profession. Furthermore, it will create more opportunities for women to increase

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income and both genders will have access to fair privileges and advantages.

3. Further education and training must be given to women to extend their labor role in farming production and to expand their opportunity in having an additional wage or earning equally as men.
4. That cooperative must be audited annually by concerned bodies in terms of implementation of new guidelines and memorandum released by the government to ensure that it is widely being implemented and taken into consideration.
5. Cooperatives should be encouraged to gather and publish sex-disaggregated data on a range of issues including several women and men: as cooperative members; directly employed by the cooperative; in senior management and leadership positions; in different types of jobs (e.g. part-time, full-time, paid, unpaid, volunteer); and according to the quality of jobs created (e.g. contracts, social security benefits, etc.).
6. Examine cooperative practices of cooperation among its members in the resolution of conflicts.

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