



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND AND DECISION-MAKING  
IN RICE PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION  
IN RURAL PHILIPPINES**

**LINDA ALFARERO LUMAYAG**

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WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND AND DECISION-MAKING  
IN RICE PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION  
IN RURAL PHILIPPINES

By

LINDA ALFARERO LUMAYAG

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## DEDICATION

For Dong  
for long years of sacrifice,  
friendship,  
patience,  
and love.

I humbly dedicate this piece of work.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CARL	- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law
CLT	- Certificate of Land Transfer
DAR	- Department of Agrarian Reform
EO	- Executive Order
FAO	- Food and Agriculture Organisation
ILO	- International Labour Organisation
IRRI	- International Rice Research Institute
OLT	- Operation Land Transfer
PD	- Presidential Decree
RA	- Republic Act



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**Linda Alfarero Lumayag**

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Chairman : Zahid Emby, M.A.

Faculty : Educational Studies

Some studies generally argued that in rice-based farming communities women's access to land enhances their ability to influence men in decision-making in the rice production process and in social reproduction (income allocation) in the households. This study was basically an attempt to decipher the gender relations between husband and wife and sought to provide a tentative analysis of the position of Filipino women in the household and in the community.

Generally, this study examined the relationship between women's access to land as owners and tenants and their influence in decision-making in rice production and social reproduction. In particular, it tried to determine the extent of women's access to land and the factors which promote or





inhibit such access; to determine whether the different tenurial statuses of women landowners and tenants have varying degrees of influence in decision-making in production and social reproduction; to determine the involvement of women and their changing role in rice production; and to examine the degree of women's influence in social reproduction.

The study was conducted in seven irrigated rice villages in Valencia, in central Mindanao, Philippines. The survey involved 139 married women, 80 of them were landowners and 59, tenants. Analysis of the data was based on the survey questionnaire coupled with life-story method, as well as informal interviews and personal observations. Data collection was done in three months.

The study revealed that : 1) women landowners and tenants differed in their degree of influence in decision-making in rice production and in social reproduction; 2) customary practices, legal precepts and land reform programmes were the factors which deterred women's access to and control of the land; 3) women's involvement in rice production was deterred by some factors, such as mechanisation and prevailing perception of society towards women, thus changing their role in production; and 4) there tend to be medium influence of women landowners in the social reproduction sphere and low influence for tenant women.

The findings of the study suggested that policies which relate to legal precepts and education have to be modified in order to change the status of women in the society.



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**PELUANG MEMILIKI DAN MENYEWAKAN TANAH DI KALANGAN  
WANITA DAN PROSES MEMBUAT KEPUTUSAN DALAM PENGELUARAN  
PADI DAN REPRODUKSI SOSIAL DI KAWASAN DESA FILIPINA**

oleh

Linda Alfarero Lumayag

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Beberapa kajian yang telah dijalankan menegaskan pada amnya bahawa, di dalam komuniti penanam padi wujudnya peluang untuk wanita memiliki dan menyewakan tanah mempertingkatkan keupayaan mereka untuk mempengaruhi lelaki membuat keputusan dalam proses pengeluaran padi dan reproduksi sosial (pengagihan pendapatan) di dalam keluarga. Pada asasnya kajian ini cuba memahami hubungan gender di antara suami dan isteri; ia juga cuba mengemukakan satu analisis tentatif mengenai kedudukan wanita Filipina di dalam keluarga dan komuniti.

Pada amnya, kajian ini meneliti hubungan di antara peluang bagi wanita memiliki dan menyewakan tanah dengan pengaruh mereka dalam membuat keputusan mengenai pengeluaran padi dan



reproduksi sosial. Secara khusus, kajian ini telah cuba menunjukkan setakat mana wujud peluang bagi wanita memiliki dan menyewa tanah dan faktor-faktor yang mendorong atau membantut peluang mereka itu; menjelaskan sama ada status wanita yang berbeza, selaku pemilik dan penyewa, mempunyai pengaruh yang berbeza-beza pula di dalam mereka membuat keputusan dalam pengeluaran padi dan reproduksi sosial; menjelaskan penglibatan wanita dan perubahan peranan mereka dalam pengeluaran padi; dan meneliti tahap pengaruh wanita di dalam reproduksi sosial.

Kajian ini dijalankan di tujuh buah kampung yang mempunyai kemudahan pengairan untuk pengeluaran padi di Valencia, Mindanao Tengah, Filipina. Kajian ini melibatkan 139 wanita yang telah berkahwin sebagai responden, iaitu 80 orang pemilik tanah dan 59 orang penyewa. Analisis data adalah berasaskan soal selidik, kaedah cerita pengalaman hidup, serta temuduga tak formal dan pemerhatian. Pengumpulan data dibuat selama tiga bulan.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan : 1) Pemilik dan penyewa tanah wanita mempunyai pengaruh yang berbeza darjahnya dalam proses membuat keputusan dalam pengeluaran padi dan reproduksi sosial; 2) adat, undang-undang dan program-program reformasi tanah adalah faktor-faktor yang mengurangkan peluang bagi wanita memiliki dan menyewa tanah serta penguasaan mereka ke atas tanah; 3) penglibatan wanita dalam pengeluaran padi dibantut



oleh beberapa faktor, seperti penggunaan jentera dan persepsi semasa masyarakat terhadap wanita, sehingga mengubah peranan mereka dalam pengeluaran; dan 4) terdapat tahap pengaruh yang sederhana di kalangan pemilik tanah wanita di dalam reproduksi sosial manakala pengaruh penyewa tanah wanita adalah rendah.

Penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa polisi yang menyentuh soal perundangan dan pendidikan mesti diubahsuai jika perubahan pada status wanita di dalam masyarakat hendak dicapai.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background Information

The breakthrough in the studies on peasant women in the early 70s by liberal feminist scholars has shed light on the plight of rural women especially in Third World countries. In order to appraise the real conditions of women, the United Nations declared 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women. Critical studies emerged since then, describing women's subordinate position not only within the household but in the broader society as well. As Boserup, in her pioneering book Women's Role in Economic Development, put it, the integration of women in development, more often than not, displaced women from where they were. Varying reasons have been accounted for the relegation of women's role and status, such as the penetration of cash economy in the countryside and the onslaught of rural modernisation, together with 'packaged-deal' development programmes; and the prevailing patriarchal structures which view men as superior to women, among other things.

Modernisation of agriculture often precipitated the further marginalisation of rural women, accentuating differentiation between classes of women and between sexes, e.g. landless women becoming redundant to the economy with fewer work



opportunities, and landed women increasingly working for the male heads of household with diminishing influence over household produce and income (FAO, 1979). In other words, modernisation of economy has not only affected men but also women.

Moreover, modernisation has altered the pre-existing systems of economy and agricultural production, land ownership and control; thus, changing the sexual division of labour and patterns of ownership between sexes. In traditional subsistence economies, women's role in agricultural production was as important and complementary with the role men played. Men and women were both food producers though their activities in production were differentiated. Women had control of the land and its resources in most of these societies. Boserup (1970) found that women had rights to cultivation where swidden cultivation operated, and interestingly, their function was more important than men's in plough cultivation. Furthermore, Robert and Pauline Whyte contended that, the work of women had higher status than that of men in plough cultivation in tribal societies in Southeast Asia. Women were esteemed members of the hunting and swidden communities and had generally equal say in family decisions with their husbands, and often with a considerable role in community affairs (Hong, 1984). Relevant literature on women and development programmes, their impact to rural women's status or conditions were rich on the negative consequences of modernisation, mouthed by mainstream

development and policy-makers. The adoption of new farm techniques and 'improved' seed varieties, or the replacement of human and animal labour by machine implements, has not only changed the basic foundation of subsistence production, but has also brought a change in the position women occupy in the village social structure. Women's position in Third World societies has been affected by modernisation.

Rural development programmes, aimed at uplifting the status of farmers, have not likewise been sensitive to the specific problems faced by women. Palmer (1979) noted that programmes and projects designed without taking into account a major portion of the relevant population, that is women, can be doomed to failure, or at least partial success, from the start. Rogers (1979) criticised that, in most cases, women became objects rather than subjects of the development process. This means that women were viewed not as active participants in the improvement of their lot. The inattention has further caused division and powerlessness among the ranks of women (Hong, 1984; Rogers, 1979; Illo, 1983; Karl, undated). Clarifying at this point the factors which bring about the overturn of women's control in agriculture production as enjoyed in subsistence economies, it is remarkable to say that the intrusion of colonial policies perpetrated in by colonialist countries was the main contributory factor. The introduction of land laws (i.e. The Torren's System) has drastically changed the usufructuary rights enjoyed by men and women in the





village. Wittingly or unconsciously, perhaps, men were given due consideration in the registration of land titles, a strong reflection of society's patriarchal bias against women (Ng, 1988; Tadesse, 1982; Akeroyd, 1988; Rogers, 1979; Hayami et al., 1990). Karl (undated) clearly pointed out that the history of land policies, from those of colonial administration through those of development planners and land reform programmes, is the history of women losing their rights and access to land and the concomitant benefits.

Land is the most important means of production in countries where rural existence lies heavily on agriculture. The ownership, use and control of land determine who benefits from agricultural production. They are important for access to water, fuel, markets, credit and training as well as to membership and participation in cooperatives, community organisations, and decision-making bodies (Karl, undated; Stoler, 1977a; Wazir, 1988).

Tadesse (1982) argued that in Ethiopia, land ownership was the primary determinant of political, social and economic power. Hence, the lack of access to land ownership was also an important determinant of the powerlessness of rural women. The implementation of agrarian reform has further marginalised women in their quest for greater control to land (Akeroyd, 1988). FAO (1980) revealed that agrarian reform had in the past benefitted men at the expense of women. Since land is

