

Pangabuhì sa

Pandemya :

COVID-19 challenges and responses of women shell fishers in small island communities



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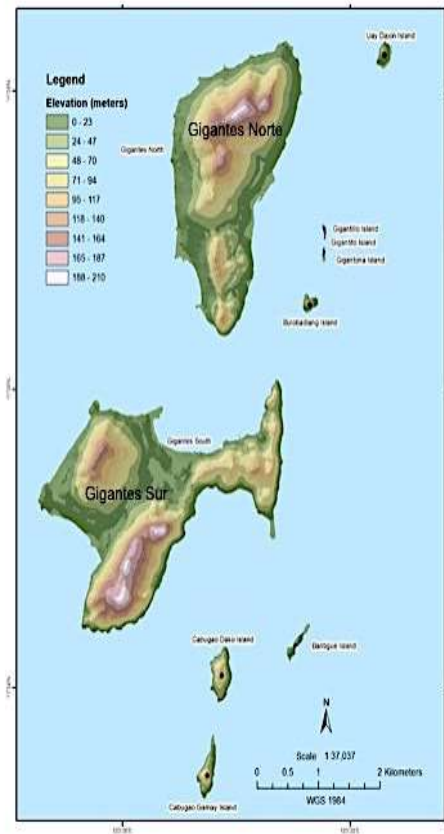
Philippines

- Total fisheries production 4.35 million metric tons in 2020
- Contributed to 1.52% of country's GDP
- 2,312 metric tons are shellfish and their by-products
- PH shellfish industry provides cheap meat source, employment and income to Filipinos



COVID-19 Pandemic

- Emerged in December 2019 declared as pandemic on March 2020
- PH declared a lockdown to restrict movement and curb COVID spread
- Restriction limited fishing activity and access to fishing inputs
- Greater physical and mental demands for already vulnerable women shell fishers in small island communities



METHODOLOGY



- two island *barangays* namely Brgy. Asluman and Brgy. Gabi, Carles, province of Iloilo, Philippines
- Profiling of 37 women shell fishers through a Barangay Management Information System (BMIS) tool
- Thematic analysis of 326 minutes Key Informant Interview transcripts

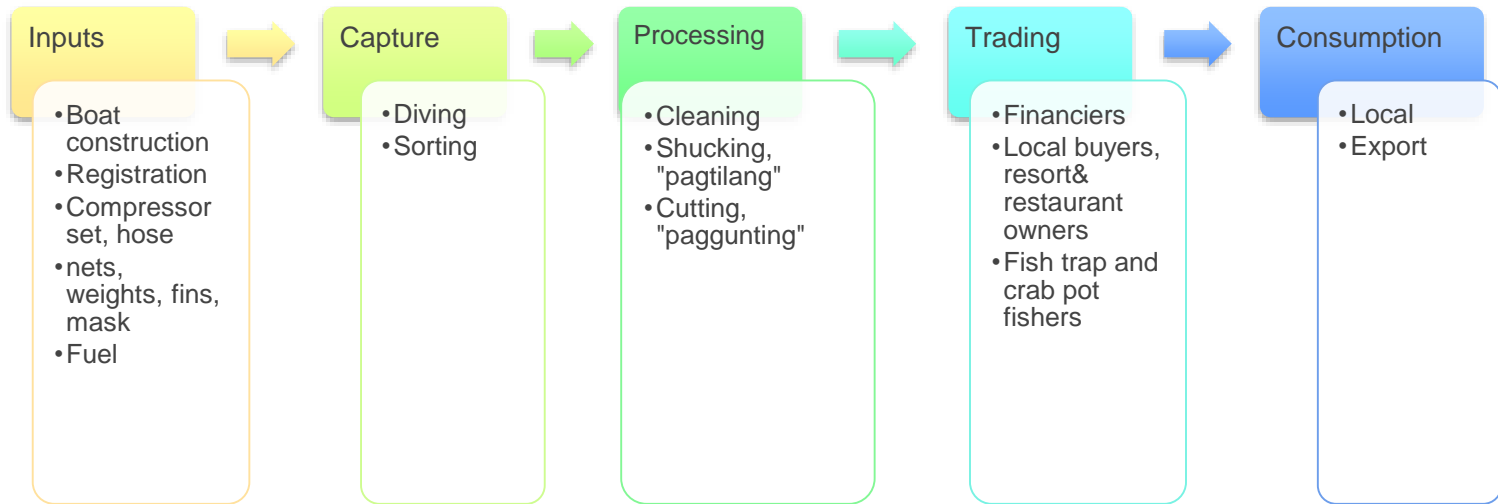
- **Document the multispecies shellfish trade industry** focusing on the commercially traded shellfish which are *tikab* (scallops), *bukol bukol* (spiny oysters) and *litob* (ark shells).
- **highlight the challenges and responses of women shell fishers to the pandemic.** Understanding these COVID-19 impacts to the Isla Gigantes shellfish industry and the women shell fishers is vital to ensure continuity of the food security in the country.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

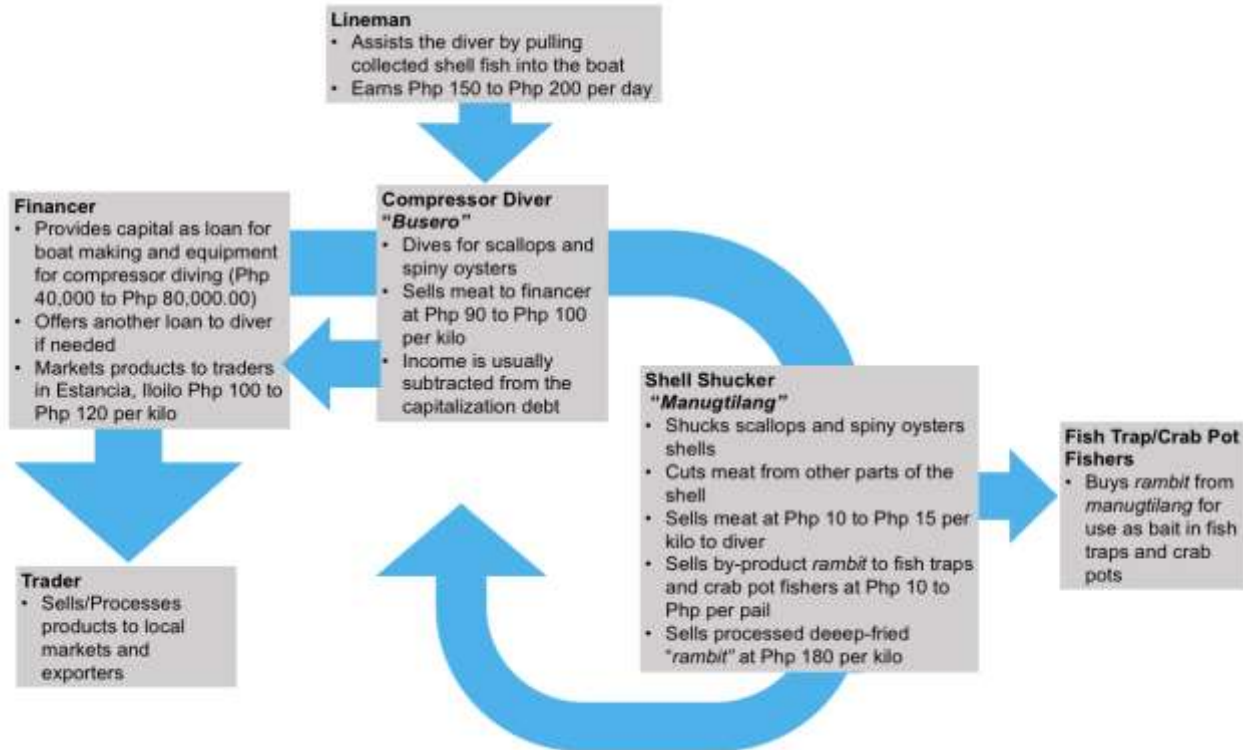


Results and Discussions

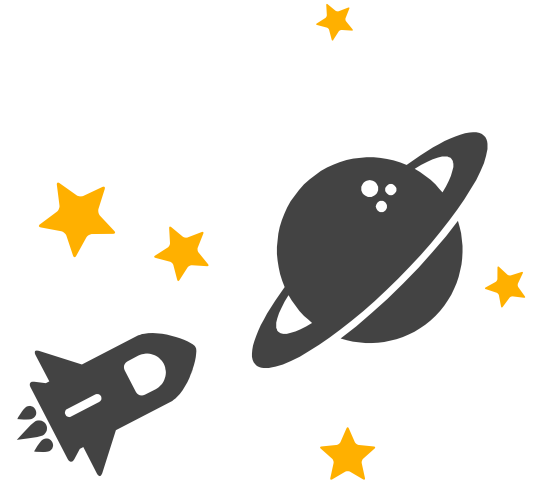
Isla Gigantes Shellfish Value Chain



Isla Gigantes Shellfish Value Chain



Thematic Analysis



Theme 1.

Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Fishery

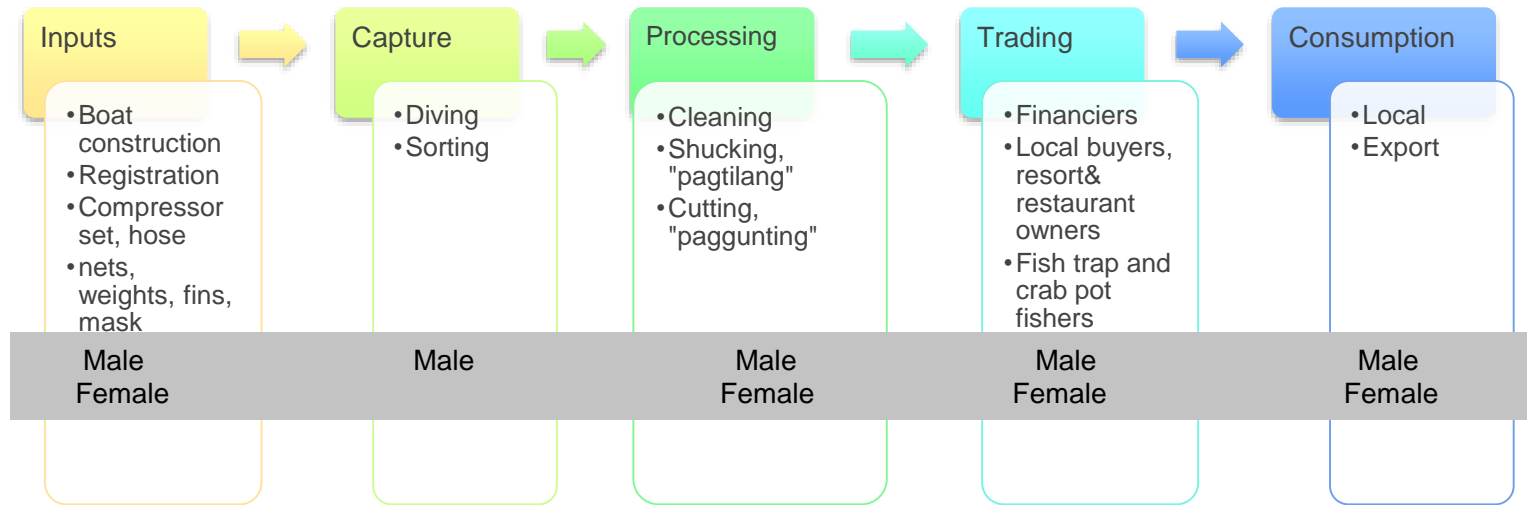
Theme 2.

Women shell fishers and the pandemic

Theme 3.

Responding to COVID-19

THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



- **Inputs.**
 - financiers or *kapitalista* provide a start-up capital of PHP 40,000 to PHP 80,000 per diver (*busero*)
 - boat registration, selection of lineman and procurement of inputs are handled by the *busero*.
 - A *kapitalista* can be a male or female depending on who handles the money in the household.
 - Our of 15 kapitalistas, 13 are women which implies women's role in household financial management

THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



- **Capture**
No women are *buseros*



THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



- **Processing** (*pagtilang and paggunting*)



THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



		Brgy. Asluman, Gigantes Norte		Brgy. Gabi, Gigantes Sur		TOTAL	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
No. of female <i>manugtilang</i>		17	100	20	100	37	100
Age	<18 years old	0		0		0	
	18 to 40	11	65	14	70	25	68
	41 to 59	6	35	6	30	12	32
	>60	0		0		0	
Civil Status	Single	1	6	3	15	4	11
	Married	4	24	6	30	10	27
	Common Law	12	71	11	55	23	62
Family Size	< 5 members	15	88	4	20	19	51
	5 to 10 members	2	12	16	80	18	49
	>10 members	0		0		0	
Years of Residence	< 10 years	0		0		0	
	11 to 20 years	1	6	6	30	7	19
	>21 years	16	94	14	70	30	81
Educational Attainment	Elementary Level	8	47	0		8	22
	Elementary Graduate	0		16	80	16	43
	High School Level	8	47	0		8	22
	High School Graduate	0		2	10	2	5
	College Level	1	6	2	10	3	8
	College Graduate	0		0		0	



PHP 6,564.29

Total household income

PHP 2,050.79

Income of women *manugtilang*

35%

Contribution to household income

THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



- **Processing**
Value-addition by women



Picked spiny oyster



Dried scallops

THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



- **Trading**



Rambit (by-products) sold to crab pot and fish pot fishers



Meat are sold to resort owners and 2nd level traders at PHP 100 – 120 per kilo

THEME 1. Women in the Isla Gigantes Shellfish Industry



- **Consumption**
 - There are two niche markets of the shellfish: **local and for export**
 - Resort owners usually caters locally to tourist visiting Isla Gigantes
 - the *kapitalista* sells the meat in mainland Estancia, Iloilo or in Cebu City.
 - The meat is usually shipped to 3rd level traders in Manila or for export.

Theme 2: Women shellfishers and the pandemic challenges



- They were faced with **cessation of income due to forced fishing restriction**, local implementation of the lockdown was somehow erratic since even shell gleaning for viand or household consumption was prohibited during march to June following the strict lockdowns.
- March to May – No income for *manugtilang*
- *Kapitalista* other sources of income like sari-sari stores, they trade other goods.

Theme 2: Women shellfishers and the pandemic challenges



- **Mobility restrictions and temporary disconnection** from the mainland due to strict travel protocols
 - Only 1 person per HH can be allowed to go to mainland.
- Access to basic services became difficult considering that the islands is 2 hours away from the mainland

“It is very difficult is you don’t own a pump boat for transportation.
(Budlay gid kapin pa kung wala ka pumpboat nga salakyan)”

Theme 2: Women shellfishers and the pandemic challenges



- **Struggles of home schooling**
 - Wife, mother, teacher
 - Later submission of modules
 - educational attainment of women shell fishers are low





“Its good that I don’t have kids going to school yet”

“how can I teach my children in high school when I haven’t finished elementary school?”

Theme 2: Women shellfishers and the pandemic challenges



- **Source of covid information are limited** thus challenged these women shell fishers in decision making most especially in practicing COVID-19 safety measures and availing vaccines.
- These pandemic challenges **exacerbated the multiple layers of marginalization of women shell fishers** in small islands on top of being mothers, wives and community workers.

Theme 3: Responding to COVID-19



Their responses include **shifting income generating activities from fishing** to being paid laborers, cosmetology, food vending, answering modules

accessing help in module preparation/ home schooling modules due for submission are paid PHP 100 for elementary and PHP 200 for high school

availing loans from *kapitalistas* since managing the meager financial resources is very challenging

Theme 3: Responding to COVID-19



providing emotional support to family members, especially to children who cannot understand why they can't go out

helping in enforcement of community quarantine

major decision makers in availing vaccines for their children,
“**pinakabudlay nga desisyon** (most difficult decision)”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



The women shell fishers in Isla Gigantes have been living with layers of marginalization in isolated small island communities.

The pandemic **exacerbated the difficulties of those families who are already struggling before the pandemic.**

Women had no choice but to **endure these multiple burdens.**

“ we cant do anything but to endure”

(Wala ka maobra kung indi mag-agwanta gid)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



It aggravated sense of solidarity among *kapitalistas* and *buseros*.

There is a long-term change in the family dynamics where husbands also did their part in household work.

“since there is no diving we both went to go line
fishing”

(Kay wala salom, duwa kami nanglabay)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Despite these challenges, **women shell fishers remain positive and hopeful** in navigating life towards the pandemic.

“We have not yet recovered from COVID because buying price now is still low but the kids are back in school, slowly, we can survive”

(Wala pa kami karecover sa COVID kay barato pa ang presyo pero gabalik na ang mga bata sa eskwelahan, sa amat-amat, makatibawas gid na)



THANK YOU!