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Socio-economic status and livelihood prospects of solo parents in Catanduanes, Philippines

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Abstract

This study has shed light on the socio-economic situation of solo- or single-parent households in Catanduanes Province of the Philippines. As of 2018, 489 were officially registered as solo parents in Catanduanes. For all of the solo parents, we investigated their general profiles, e.g., financial situation, livelihood and occupational skills, and intention toward developing sustainable perspectives. The results revealed that 62% were under low-income or unemployed conditions and facing financial hardship, while the rest were engaged in rather stable job opportunities. Common skills among the low-income group were gathering shells and fishing, food vending and abaca stripping. Under the circumstances of the Kuroshio Current flowing up from south to north at the eastern part of this province, there exist diverse jobs related to fisheries, but on a small and part-time basis. Abaca production is also common in this area and utilizes stripping practices that are labor-intensive. However, daily income tended to be low and on a non-regular basis. In order to encourage improvements in their economic situation, more local-based job opportunities are needed together with the scaling-up of occupational skills. In conclusion, this study has clarified the present social status and economic situation surrounding solo parent households as a case study. Action plans are also examined and countermeasures proposed from short- and long-term points of view.

Key words: solo/single parent, RA 8972, livelihood, entrepreneurial empowerment, Catanduanes

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, there are 14 million solo/single parents out of 94 million total population in 2017. According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), out of 15.1 million households assessed in the country, 1.8 million or 11.9 percent have a solo parent member. The population of solo parents will continue to increase in the years to come. This is also the trend for single parents in other parts of the world (Stack and Meridith 2017, Burgund et al. 2013, Iovan and Oprea, n. d.).

There are many circumstances facing the solo parents. Their plight include being handicapped in domestic chores, multiple role as a mother and a father to a child, the loneliness while earning a living away from the child, and earning double to augment for the needs of the child. Solo parents are mostly worried by financial concerns (Dawe 2005, Burgund et. al.

2013). The difficulties of a solo parent, if not properly managed, will impact the child development. In 2003, Bicol Region ranked third from Caraga Region (Region XIII) and Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), among regions in the Philippines with highest percentage of child poverty (Castro 2010).

In the Philippines, a law providing privileges to solo parents is known as Republic Act No. 8972 dubbed as “The Solo Parents’ Welfare Act of 2000”. RA 8972 categorized “solo parent” depending on the marital status and molested women. A woman who raises a child as consequent to violence is also considered as solo parent. Likewise, a parent left with the sole responsibility of taking care of a child due to a spouse who is dead, convicted, physically and/or mentally incapacitated, legally separated or annulled, or absent, or disappeared for a long time is described as solo parent. According to RA 8972, solo parents in the Philippines whose

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income fall under the poverty threshold set by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) is accorded with support as long as the concerned had been assessed by DSWD, the primary government agency to carry out the said Republic Act. A solo parent is entitled with educational benefits for the child or children, housing benefits, and medical assistance. Furthermore, the comprehensive package for solo parents includes trainings on livelihood skills, basic business management, value orientation, and provision of seed capital or job placement. In the occasion that the claimant of support is categorized as income earner above poverty threshold, he or she is also privileged with flexible work schedule, parental leave, and rights against work discrimination.

In order for a solo parent to perform the responsibility of being a parent, he or she needs a stable income. Providing job opportunities *per se*, is not a lifelong support. It is imperative that qualifications as beneficiaries of government support be anchored on the interests and willingness of solo parents to partake in livelihood programs to foster sustainability. There should be profiling of solo parents to determine what they are best suited in and to identify their needs. The process of obtaining the database of solo parents as reflected with the existing data of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices (MSWDO) in Catanduanes is also important.

This study will help alleviate poverty among solo parents in the province in the long run and will provide strategies to reduce risks, adversities and deprivation of basic needs of solo parents' families. Specifically, it sought answers to the following objectives: profile of registered solo parents from the different municipalities in Catanduanes in terms of age, sex, category as a solo parent, educational attainment, number of dependents, employment, monthly income, and needs and problems; financial problems and common livelihood skills in the family, i.e., present skills, in order to develop a profile of the selected unemployed or low-income solo parents; and an action plan for extension with a short, medium, and long term sustainable livelihood and entrepreneurial empowerment perspectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies were conducted regarding solo parenting however, the emphasis is about psychological impact on the child and the social inclination and anxiety confronting the solo parent brought about by single rearing of a child. Studies on determining solo parents' status particularly on livelihood development and on employment opportunities will serve as an eye-opener to concerned agencies on whom to dole-out support.

A study about social aspects and vulnerability of solo

parents' families states that preventing increase in the growth of a solo parent's family must rely on complete knowledge of the social phenomenon with the need to establish databases and map the dispersion of solo parents' families (Iovan and Oprea, n. d.). Likewise, the findings of Cancian and Meyer (2018) revealed that child support program should increase financial resources for children living with a single parent with a secondary goal of holding parents responsible for supporting their children.

In another study, Bergund et al. (2013) presented a more detailed experiences of single parents about their specific difficulties, needs, and self-perception and marginalization. Similarly, Zarina and Kamil (2012) argued that low-income single mothers are not likely to save. Immediate needs take up most of the resources and results to accumulating assets and savings as their last priority. They stated that low-income single mothers reached low educational level with 98% of them leaving school after secondary level.

On the contrary, Widiyanti et al. (2018) talked about poverty through women empowerment by engaging in social activities. They revealed that network, trust and norm social capital dimensions have positive and significant effects toward women empowerment. These social capital dimensions also have a negative and significant effects toward poverty. On one hand, women empowerment also has negative and significant effects toward poverty. In other words, the higher the empowerment of women, single parents or not, the lower the poverty incidence. Engaging in entrepreneurial activities means empowerment. Saritha (2011) argued that most women entrepreneurs prefer catering and food stalls which provide support for their families and results to greater financial security. These women are 21-40 years old mothers and are highly influenced by entrepreneurial activities. The Self Help Groups (SHG) grants loans to member-women for the purpose of starting a business to empower them and their families resulting to increased income of SHG members. Most of the single mothers are found to be divorcees than widows.

The study of Pomeroy et al. (2017) on the analysis of livelihood projects and programs for fishing communities in the Philippines provides insights and tips about livelihood program experiences. The study selected 15 livelihood projects in the Philippines and content analysis was used to analyze data. To validate the results, the study conducted expert workshop and was able to provide additional insights to the results obtained from their own experiences in implementing livelihood projects. The results revealed three distinct analyses about livelihood projects and programs in fishing communities in the Philippines, namely: (1) components of livelihood projects, (2) general lessons about the design and implementation of livelihood programs and projects, and (3) specific factors to improve the success and

sustainability rate of livelihood intervention.

Studies about sustainable livelihood is also important especially in designing a livelihood intervention. Chambers and Conway (1991) defined livelihood as sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation. Their concept of sustainable livelihood is rooted in the integration of the different concepts of capabilities, equity, and sustainability which according to them are both a means and an end. As an end, livelihood provides the support for the enhancement and exercise of capability while as a means, capabilities enable a livelihood to be gained.

In another study by Scooner (n. d.) on sustainable livelihood, analysis starts from a particular context or policy setting, followed by finding the combination of livelihood resources matching with a livelihood strategies, resulting to the positive outcome. Of particular interest on the framework are the institutional processes which according to them could either help in implementation or obstruct in achieving the desired outcome.

The case study of Miller et al. (n. d.) on the Industree Craft used the four lenses strategic framework. This framework is used to analyze organizational behavior and performance of a social enterprise regarding four aspects: deep impact, blended value, efficiency, and adaptability. The premise of this framework is that high performance organization is linked to an organization's activities according to these lenses. Industree Craft is a hybrid type social enterprise, for profit and non-profit, based in Bangalore, India. It uses market industry intermediary model as a business model creating demand for its rural artisan's product. The non-profit arm collectively organized the rural artisans called Self-Help Group (SHG). The SHG then received capacity building support, trainings, entrepreneurial skills training, etc. and trades with Industree and other vendors.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a mixed method, involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches of research from sociological point of view. Mixed method aids in validating findings of each research approach (Fraenkel et al. 2013).

The qualitative approach was conducted through in-depth face-to-face interview and focus group discussions. Content analysis was used to analyze the responses. In quantitative approach, a documentary analysis was used to analyze secondary data, i.e., socio-demographic profile of registered solo parents in Catanduanes, obtained from the

different MSWD offices in the province, in September, 2018.

Units of analysis/Sources of data/Sampling

The scope of the study includes the registered solo parents in Catanduanes. The socio-demographic profile of registered solo parents were gathered from MSWDO from the different municipalities in the province. The ten municipalities were ranked according to the highest number of low-income solo parents. The top three municipalities with the highest number of low-income solo parents were chosen as the research site. The identified municipalities are San Miguel, San Andres, and Bagamanoc with the location shown in Figure 1. In each municipality, respondents were picked, regardless of registration, through purposive sampling to participate in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.



Fig. 1. Map of Catanduanes

Data collection/Instrumentation

Unstructured interview schedule was used in qualitative approach. The guide questions from interview schedule were thoroughly thought of and carefully reviewed from related literature and initial interview with the key informants (i.e., Heads of MSWD Offices). After in-depth, face-to-face interviews, series of focus group discussions were conducted.

Data Processing

The collected information were coded and analyzed differently in the mixed method approach. Responses from qualitative approach were coded and interpreted and provided with meanings while the information gathered through quantitative approach were tabulated and analyzed (documentary analysis) using descriptive statistics such as percentage and central tendency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic Profiles

Table 1 describes the socio-demographic profile of the solo parents in terms of sex, category as a solo parent, age, and educational attainment. The table also shows the frequency of these profile and the corresponding percentage. The total number of registered solo parents is 489 consisting of 32 male and 457 female.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of Solo Parents.

	Frequency N = 489	Percentage (%)
Category as a Solo Parent		
Abandoned	75	15.3
Widowed	131	26.8
Unmarried	108	22.1
Separated	107	21.9
Blank/ unfilled data	67	13.7
Age		
19-28	92	18.80
29-38	150	30.70
39-48	114	23.30
49-58	100	20.40
59-68	12	2.50
Blank/ unfilled data	21	4.30
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	34	6.90
High School	148	29.60
College	261	53.40
Vocational	14	2.90
Post graduate	7	1.40
Blank data	28	5.70

The category of the solo parents revealed that there are more widowed followed by the unmarried, separated, and abandoned. There are solo parents who did not categorize themselves.

As for the age of the registered solo parents, Table 1 shows that 29-38 years old comprises the most of total registered solo parents.. The average age of solo parents is between 38 to 39 years old.

The educational attainment of solo parents is also presented in Table 1. Majority made it to college level and reached high school. A few are post-graduate at 1.4% (7), reached elementary at 6.9% (34), and earned vocational degree at 2.9% (14). The total percentage from high school down to elementary comprises 36.5% of the solo parents.

It can be noted that there are blank data as to the category of a solo parent, age, and educational attainment. The study of Iovan and Oprea (n. d.) mentioned that preventing growth of solo parent families must rely on complete knowledge of this phenomenon with the need to establish databases and map the dispersion of solo parent families. Blank data implies incomplete information from MSWDO in some of the towns in Catanduanes. It is imperative that complete information must be filled out by the registering solo parent which will be the basis in addressing their needs. As such, MSWDO must be

keen in accepting requirements, if not, guide the solo parents in accomplishing the registration form.

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic profile of the solo parents in Catanduanes in terms of number of dependents, and needs and problems. Majority (47%) of the solo parents have one dependent. As the number of dependents increases from two to eight, the percentage of solo parents decreases from 19.8% to 1%, respectively. The average dependents of solo parents is 2.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of Solo Parents in Catanduanes in terms of number of dependents and needs/problems.

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Number of dependents		
1	234	47.8
2	97	19.8
3	80	16.4
4	32	6.5
5	19	3.9
6	5	1
Blank/Unfilled data	21	4.3
Needs/Problems		
Financial	258	52.6
Time for child/baby	12	2.6
Conflict of time for child & work	2	0.4
Leave credits to attend for child	3	0.6
A need for stable job/ difficulty in finding job	5	1
Medical assistance	6	1.2
Psychosocial support	2	0.4
Blank/unfilled data	201	41

The needs and problems encountered by the solo parents are also summarized in Table 2. Most of the solo parents (52%) are experiencing financial problem/needs. This findings conform to that of Burgund et al. (2013) wherein low economic status is considered as the most important problem. There is also a small percentage of solo parents who need medical assistance/maintenance, a need for stable job or having difficulty in finding a job. Those that mentioned they need leave credits, psychosocial support, and conflict of their time for child and work are the minority. Forty-one percent accounts for solo parents who did not identify their needs and problems.

With regards to solo parents income, Figure 2 shows that

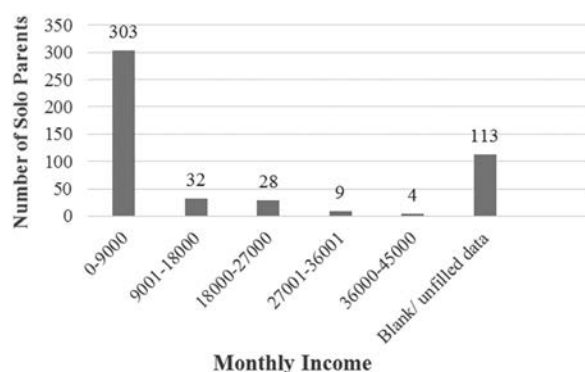


Fig. 2. Monthly Income of Solo Parents (Peso/month).

majority of the solo parents earn an income up to Php 9, 000/month. In 2018, 1 US dollar is equivalent to 52 Philippine peso. The number of solo parents decreases as the income increases.

Table 3 shows the socio-demographic profile of solo parents from the different municipalities in Catanduanes in terms of employment classified as unemployed/low-income and employed in government or private sectors. The top three municipalities with highest occurrence of unemployed/low-income solo parents are San Andres, Bagamanoc, and San Miguel. The percent by proportion of registered unemployed/low-income solo parents and those employed is also shown in Table 3. The municipalities of San Miguel (93%), Bagamanoc (89%), Bato (81%), and Virac (72%) have the highest percentages of unemployed solo parents. On the other hand, the municipalities of Pandan (79%) and Viga (76%) have the highest percentages of employed solo parents. This implies that the MSWDO in these municipalities encourage more those employed solo parents to register than those who are unemployed. The reason being, as stated by one of the heads of MSWD offices, is to avail of the leave benefits while there is yet no implemented program regarding livelihood for the unemployed solo parents. MSWDO plays a vital role in the implementation of RA 8972. Awareness regarding the law should emanate from their offices and the campaign to register should not be based on the economic status of the solo parents. The level of activity of MSWDO that is creating awareness about RA 8972 is reflected in the number of registered solo parents availing of the benefits stipulated in the republic act. As shown in Table 3, there are 115 or 23.5% of solo parents are employed in government or private sectors. This means that 23.5% of them may avail of the leave credit or flexi-time at work to provide time for their children. There are 62.5% of solo parents considered as low-income or unemployed who are to receive yet livelihood

development services as mentioned in the Republic Act.

Livelihood of selected unemployed/low-income solo parents

The data from the documentary analysis showed that the top three municipalities with the highest percentages of unemployed and low-income solo parents are from San Andres San Miguel, and Bagamanoc. From these three municipalities, the researchers picked the barangay with the highest number of unemployed solo parents. The highest number of unemployed and low-income solo parents are from barangays Catagbacan, San Andres; Bagatabao, Bagamanoc; and Sulong, San Miguel. Catagbacan, San Andres and Bagatabao, Bagamanoc are coastal communities while San Miguel is the only landlocked municipality in Catanduanes.

Financial problems

The FGD revealed that financial problem is the most important concern of solo parents in Catanduanes. A widowed mother in Catagbacan, San Andres, stated that her primary source of income, buying and selling shrimp caught in a mangrove area nearby, which if all were sold earns her around Php200 per day, will never be sufficient to meet their daily needs. They are able to get by through the financial help from relatives. In another case, a separated solo-parent narrated that her primary source of income is digging shells along the shores during low-tide and scraping shells, i.e., small oysters, stuck on mangrove roots. She earns Php60 and Php100 in a day, respectively. When the weather does not permit her to gather shells, she is into gardening. Another young mother narrated that apart from gathering and digging shells, she also looks for empty shells, particularly spider conch (*Lambis chiragra*), along the shores to produce powdered lime (calcium carbonate), an ingredient in betel quid. She stated

Table 3. Employment status of solo parents in Catanduanes per municipality.

Municipality	Unemployed/Low Income Job		Employed in Government / Private Sectors		Total
	N	%	N	%	
San Andres	74	80	18	20	92
Bagamanoc	70	89	9	11	79
San Miguel	53	93	4	7	57
Virac	42	72	16	28	58
Bato	21	81	5	19	26
Baras	15	47	17	53	32
Caramoran	14	56	11	44	25
Panganiban	9	53	8	47	17
Viga	5	24	16	76	21
Pandan	3	21	11	79	14
Blank/Unfilled data	68	13.9	-	-	68
Total	306	62.5	115	23.5	489

that the process of producing lime is risky and requires skill to come up with a fine, white powder, otherwise, the product will be rejected. The shells are piled with bamboo poles and burn them in an open field for several hours till they become powder. To put down the fire, she pours water onto the material causing it to spew extremely hot materials that may cause permanent blindness when the eyes are hit. This practice was inherited from her ancestors. Despite the tedious and risky process of lime-making, she earns meager income from it and produces only when there is a demand. She can produce 20 kilos of powdered lime out of five sacks of empty spider conch. She sells the powder Php40 per kilo. Most of the shell gatherers interviewed are beneficiaries of the conditional cash transfer program of the government. However, one widowed mother cited that her daughter was removed from the program because she stopped schooling and opted to join her in gathering shells.

Meanwhile, a separated father in Bagatabao, Bagamanoc, prioritizes his work as a construction laborer than fishing. He stated that net-fishing with a small, non-motorized boat gives him irregular catch, which is insufficient for the school needs of his son. He narrates, “When I caught two kilos of fish in a day, one kilo is for home consumption while the other kilo is sold for around Php140”. A case of a separated mother sources her income by being part of a group of people in fish landing sites who pull the net ashore from boats with catch fish. According to her, the catch were divided equally to all pulling the net and earns around Php50 for her share. The catch are sold fresh and no value-adding is conducted to augment income. When not pulling nets, she is into selling fresh fish or doing laundry for her neighbors to earn income to support her son. Most of the needs of her family was met due to family support.

Livelihood skills in the family

The MSWDO registration form for solo parents lack entry about the status of capabilities or skills of the registrant. It is stipulated in RA 8972 that a livelihood be accorded for low-income solo parents. Therefore, data that are substantial in improving the capabilities of the solo parents were overlooked and were not given emphasis.

Table 4 shows the results of interviews and FGD regarding the most common livelihood skills of the family,

present skills, and entrepreneurial skills to be developed. The most common livelihood skills of solo parents in San Andres are gathering shells and food vending. In San Miguel, family skills that are common are abaca stripping and farming while fishing in Bagamanoc. The solo parents’ family skills in respective municipality are relative to the resources present in the locality. San Miguel is mountainous and is abundant with abaca thus, it is common that the family skills is abaca stripping and gardening. Catagbacan, San Andres and Bagatabao, Bagamanoc are both coastal areas, thus fishing and shell gathering are the common family skills.

With regards to the present skills, majority of solo parents from San Andres are inclined to cooking, while those from San Miguel and Bagamanoc opted for hog-raising and sewing, respectively. This data confirms the study of Pomeroy et al. (2018) that while some of the fisherfolks consider fishing as their main source of income, many are also skilled in other sources of income. For the most common entrepreneurial skills, solo parents from San Andres and San Miguel stated that marketing strategy is the skill that they need to develop. On the other hand, the solo parents from Bagamanoc are interested to enhance their knowledge on their respective present skills. This data shows that the different localities have the potential for extension activities that could increase their capability and development for livelihood by increasing their intangible assets. Intangible assets are claims and access (Chambers and Conway, 1991). Claims are usually present in stress and shocks. In the case of the solo parents, their claims are the livelihood development benefits as a solo parent stipulated in the republic act. One of the intangible access according to Chamber and Conway (1991) is an extension activity.

Livelihood Aspirations of Solo Parents

When solo parents were asked about what will be the possible effect to them of a sustainable livelihood, many have expressed positive responses. One of the solo parents narrated, “As of now, me and my child are dependents of my parents. I am disappointed because I feel that I am useless. But with a livelihood, I will be able to support my child, will mature mentally and financially, and will be of help to my parents, as well.” This statement reflects empowerment on the part of a solo parent. Other responses also indicate future aspiration of

Table 4. Most common family livelihood skills and present skills.

Municipality	Family Skills	Present Skills
San Andres	Shell gathering and food vending	Cooking
San Miguel Bagamanoc	Abaca and Farming Fishing	Hog Raising Sewing

providing the needs of the community after having a stable livelihood. As mentioned by one solo parent, “Here in Catagbacan, our problem is availability of food in the market, especially rice. It is not financial problem alone. If there will be a business or a livelihood that will sustain in the future, we could also be grains retailer in the community since there are times that we lack supply of rice.”

Action plan for extension

The responses and perceptions of solo parents on livelihood are essential in making the action plan. The solo parents from Sulong, San Miguel were once active in livelihood projects such as making abaca handicraft. However, lack of market support discouraged them to continue with the project. As narrated by one of the solo parents, “We were trained for abaca twine and bag-making before. We produced a lot but were not sold because of lack of buyers.” According to Pomeroy et al. (2017), support should be maintained throughout all phases of implementation including marketing of the product after the production.

In Catagbacan, San Andres, ideas for an individual business development but integrated as a group was suggested. A solo parent commented, “It is better if we can practice our own skills such as sewing and cooking. We can learn about management and entrepreneurship afterwards.” This conforms to the idea of Pomeroy et al. (2017) in one of the livelihood intervention design factors. It states that beneficiaries should be consulted about their current and desired livelihood strategies. They furthered that more than one livelihood, which requires low capital and low maintenance, is better. The private sector should also be consulted and involved.

Financial needs for start-up of capital is common among the solo parents. One of the solo parents wants to engage in a hog-raising livelihood and she states, “Piglets for fattening nowadays are relatively costly. Before, it was Php1,500. Now, the cheapest costs Php2, 800.” Capital needs for start-up business is also a consideration for a skilled sewer. One solo parent said, “I have a manual sewing machine. What I need is an edging machine and a capital for cloth. I can economize if I buy it by bulk than buying piece by piece of a cloth.”

Table 5 summarizes the short-term, medium-term, and

Table 5. Short-term, Medium-term, and Long-term Livelihood Development Action Plan.

Short-term Plan	Medium-term Plan	Long-term Plan
- Social preparation activities such community organizing of solo parents, empowerment, education, and awareness raising particularly the claims of low-income solo parents stipulated in the Solo Parent Act, and participatory action research	- Scaling up of enterprise and improving productivity	- Long-term livelihood demonstration center
- Governance component will include activities like co-management linkage with MSWDO and barangay unit, involvement of the Catanduanes State University (CSU) and community-based organizations such as cooperatives of Catagbacan and Comagaycay, San Andres	- Establishment of the Business Development Center in College of Business and Accountancy, CSU	- Replication of Livelihood Program in other Municipalities
-Livelihood intervention for solo parents will involve extension activities of the university that will provide training and support on how to plan, set-up, start and operate a livelihood as production skills, entrepreneurship, and business management - Provision of credit/microfinance - Support in marketing the product - Provision of working or start-up capital	- Value Chain Improvement - Cooperative formation and development in the locality - Constant Monitoring and Evaluation	- Establishment of continuing technical and business advisory services

long-term plan to develop a sustainable livelihood project for solo parents in Catanduanes. It tackles the inclusion of the different components of a livelihood project for solo parents such as social preparation, governance, livelihood, and social services as suggested by Pomeroy et al. (2017). The action plan is consist of short-term, medium-term, and long-term activities and development plan to ensure a viable and sustainable livelihood project. The short-term plan includes social preparation and empowerment of solo parents through trainings, governance and linkage formation with both government and private sectors, and livelihood intervention through provision of start-up capital by credit or micro-finance and support in marketing the product. Under the medium-term plan, the activities are scaling up the enterprise and improve productivity, establish business development center at College of Business and Accountancy of the Catanduanes State University, value chain improvement, and cooperative formation. The long-term plan includes long-term livelihood demonstration center, replication of the livelihood project in other municipalities of Catanduanes, and establishment of technical and business advisory services. Constant monitoring and evaluation should be conducted throughout the phases of the livelihood project.

CONCLUSIONS

There are 489 registered solo parents in Catanduanes, majority of which are widows. The average age of solo parents is 38.9, an age group with potential for entrepreneurial and livelihood activities. Most registered solo parents are college graduate and from the working group either in government or private sectors. They are the ones seeking the benefits of availing leave credits as stipulated in RA 8972 to address the conflict of time with work and raising a child. However, 62% of registered solo parents are from low-income group with an average monthly income of Php 7,500. In terms of employment, the municipalities of San Andres, San Miguel, and Bagamanoc are with the highest percentage of unemployed solo parents. Low-income or unemployed solo parents were purposively selected from these three municipalities. All the respondents are struggling financially. However, they possess livelihood skills that are potential sources of additional income. In San Andres, San Miguel, and Bagamanoc, the common skills are gathering shells and food vending, abaca stripping, and fish gathering, respectively. The identified solo parents' present skills are cooking, hog-raising, and sewing. The opportunity for intervention is enhancement of their present skills and the entrepreneurial skill needed is marketing strategy. Majority of solo parents have been trained to produce goods, however did not prosper due to lack of buyers.

Another area for intervention is to focus on what is lacking but a need in the community which solo parents can use for business incubation. Solo parents feel empowered when they earn from what they do and enticed when working in a group. They favor diversifying their livelihood activities and integrate them to form a group. Thus, forming a cooperative may be a better help. Therefore, an action plan is necessary to create a livelihood project that will empower the solo parents.

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