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The Unpaid Labor of Women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Policy Reforms

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Abstract

Globally, women have been a critical part of every household and agricultural operation. Despite their major contributions in the care economy in maintaining a healthy and sustainable food system, they remain largely invisible because, for a long time, economists depart from valuing unpaid work because of its non-economic value and social constructs. Barangay San Juan is one of the 26 barangays representing 7.47% of the total population of the municipality categorized by PhilAtlas (n.d.) as landlocked, referring to an area that is entirely surrounded by land. Before the agricultural mechanization, farmwomen in the barangay devoted 35 hours a week of unpaid care and 49 hours a week of unpaid farm work assisting the family in farm activities. The mechanization displaced farmwomen and deprived them of income opportunity while continuously providing domestic care to the family. This research aims to investigate the impact of unpaid labor for women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, and Nueva Ecija are adhering to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG-5) by recognizing the value of unpaid work. A triangulation approach was employed through a qualitative and descriptive design to assess the effects of unpaid work on gender equality, which revealed a significant amount of

time devoted by women in the care economy, hence dismissing their economic opportunity in the labor market. The observed absence led to the proposal of operational gender education, governance in resource mobilization, and inclusion of gender perspectives in ordinances that are critical in achieving equality to increase value recognition of women's labor.

Keywords: SDG5, Gender Equality, Unpaid Work, and Women in Agriculture

Background of the Study

Work, according to the International Labour Organization (n.d.), is central to people's well-being because it allows the individual for income and provides support for social and economic advancement and the improvement of families and communities. Such function of work as a structural component of society plays an important role in the situation of women, particularly in considering their paid and unpaid work.

Unpaid work refers to the housework that includes the caregiving of the young and old people, house cleaning, cooking of dishes, washing of clothes (Dacuycuy, 2020), collecting water, fetching firewood (Hutchinson, 2023), and those work associated with farm work or family farm enterprise (Meiners and Olson, 1987). These works are typically associated with women's tasks and are observed not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well. Oftentimes, unpaid care is perceived as low value and is invisible in mainstream economics, underpinned by entrenched patriarchal institutions and national accounting that fail to factor women's contribution (Seedat and Rondon, 2021). In citing the International Labour Organization, Hernando (2022) opines that the value of unpaid care and domestic work is as much as 9 percent, or 11 trillion USD of global GDP, of which 6.6 percent of unpaid work comes from women. This ratifies the valuation of care, and domestic tasks could be an important factor in economic development.

Sustainable Development Goals 5 or Gender Equality 5.4 target aims to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work while promoting shared responsibility within the household. Since unpaid work is considered a woman's job, it therefore failed to acquire a space in any economic analysis, measurement of labor force (Mondal, 2020), and policy formulation (Piovani and Aydiner-Avsar, 2021), which leads to discrimination and inequality. The missed opportunities of women in education, skill acquisition or improvement, and public participation, as stated in the book review of Mondal (2020), highlighted the impediments of entry into the labor market and restricted women's income-earning potential (p. 181).

The agricultural industry accounts for 4% of economic growth in global domestic product (GDP) and more than 25% of GDP growth in some developing countries (The World Bank, 2023). The unpaid work of women in agriculture is not solely associated with the housework being performed by women but also with the services they provide to the family farm as well. Oftentimes, women have to juggle between domestic and farm work, hence creating a barrier to women building meaningful careers, especially in agriculture (Hutchinson, 2023).

Some scholars have viewed unpaid work as typically decided within the household in considering the non-market contribution of the unpaid worker. This

observation oftentimes neglected the value of shared responsibility in doing housework, especially the implications of unpaid work for labor market outcomes, an individual's social well-being, and economic development. Asadullah (2020) connects the growing participation of women in agriculture to several indicators of poverty, and despite such entry into the farm-paid work, there is no accompanying reduction in their already heavy burden of unpaid labor. The existence of women's time on unpaid care and farm work in meeting the expectations of their domestic roles could be the reason behind the significant number of women who are missing work opportunities or even totally not participating in the labor market because of the reproductive roles that they provide within the household, according to Seedat and Rondon (2021). This has made women and girls assume domestic work and become a determining factor whether women will enter and stay in paid employment. The oddity of having such a lingering perspective is viewed as non-contributory to any future opportunities every woman may enjoy since cultural and societal barriers may affect the social and economic being of an individual.

In the article of Habito (2023), he emphasized the narrowing gender gap in the Philippines with 21.5% as of January 2023 as compared to a global rate of 25% in 2022, with male and female Philippine labor force participation rates at 75.2 and 53.7, respectively. The report further explained that despite improving the work participation rate of women as compared to their male counterparts, more men are still in the labor force and are recognized as contributors to economic growth because women have to conform to their traditional gender roles, which the social and economic construct prohibits. This only proves that unpaid work is obviously outside of the purview of policymaking bodies since the intellectual, physical, and emotional contribution of women failed to enter the national income.

In the Philippines, one of the many challenges that farm women encountered involves age-old traditions that assign specific roles to gender, including some of the major agricultural policies (Agriculture and Fisheries Mechanization Law) in the country that failed to recognize gender perspectives, hence weakening women's command over their economic being and have affected women's bargaining position in the household (Dacuycuy, 2018). Because of the limited economic contribution in agriculture, farm women prefer growing crops that use low external input techniques, which further discourages women from using certain machinery in doing farm work (p. 4). In addition, climate change, according to Dacuycuy (2018), also poses a significant threat to women in agriculture, specifically in their livelihood, being in a rural area where the majority of people are engaged in backyard production and enterprises reliant on natural resources. The location of the Philippines is another barrier to economic growth since the country is prone to frequent typhoons being located in the typhoon belt of the Pacific, which oftentimes devastating farms and crops.

Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, a second-class municipality in Region III in Central Luzon, has a total population of 70,363 (PhilAtlas, n.d.). The total population of Barangay San Juan is equivalent to 4,474. that is composed of 2,169 males and 2,305 females. The majority age of the population belongs to 18 to 35 years old and is equivalent to 1,376 or 31% of the total population. Before farming mechanization was introduced in the barangay, women were devoting 35 hours a week to care work in cooking the food, taking care of the children and grandchildren, washing clothes, cleaning the house, doing the market, and delivering food on the farm or *bukid*. The additional 49 hours a week are spent assisting their husband in doing family farm work such as *pagtatanim* or planting crops, attending to farm animals, weeding, tilling, and cultivating soil. Both are unpaid services rendered for the family. After the farming mechanization, the women farmers in the barangay were faced with hardship brought about by the advancement in technology, which resulted in displacement in farm work and the reclassification of workers based on their given abilities and competencies. Most farmwomen in the community of San Juan were only called to work during "anihan," or harvest season, but some men are still employed on a regular basis to cultivate the soil, apply fertilizer, attend to farm animals, and stay up to the harvest season despite the use of machine harvesters to carry sacks of rice grains. While innovations greatly improved methods in farming (National Geographic, n.d., "The Art and Science of Agriculture"), the old means of cultivating the soil, growing crops, and raising livestock toppled with innovative measures, causing the loss of farm work opportunities, most especially to women. Hutchinson (2023) in this case emphasized the importance of community conversation to help change the social norm where people in the community are brought together to discuss and address the underlying causes of developmental problems.

Asadullah (2020) accentuated the existence of women in agriculture, particularly in South Asia, who are working on family farms without earning an independent income or, in many cases, no income at all due to poverty. The lack of recognition of farm work clearly depicts the inexistence of community-based solutions to reduce the drudgery of care work (Hutchinson, 2023) as well as inequality. Despite the observed narrowing of the gender gap, as stated in the second global report on *Women in Business and Management* by the International Labor Organization (2019), men are still likely to participate more in the labor market than women. While there is an observed substantial increase in women's labor force participation, there is very little increase in men's housework over the years, giving support to the view of most, if not all, that unpaid work is a life's task assigned by gender roles. The persistence of such bias contributes to the growing inequalities not only in mainstream gender but in other economic frameworks as well. Encouragement of female education and employment was suggested by Bhuta et al. (2020) as a means to address the crisis in this so-called invisible job.

While there is a growing interest in the emerging role of unpaid work in the agricultural economy on a national and global scale, there is limited consideration and study available to determine the visibility, and valuation of

productive work that farm women contribute to economic development in a local barangay.

Statement of Research Problem

With the significant impact of unpaid work coupled with obvious discrimination resulting from this non-market job, this study aims to investigate the impact of women's unpaid work to provide a sound policy in achieving women's participation in the education, labor market, decision-making processes, and gender equality in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, in adhering to the SDG 5 Gender Quality Target in recognizing the value of unpaid work, this research is carried out to answer this specific question:

What is the impact of unpaid work of women in Barangay San Juan and its effect on gender equality in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, towards a sustainable gender equality policy reform?

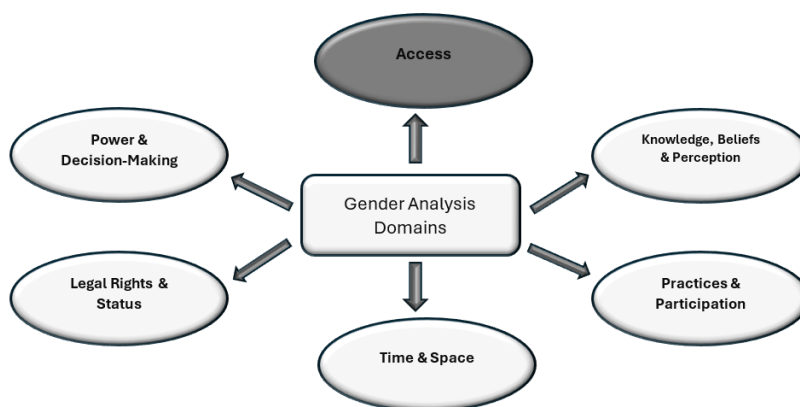
The research problem is carried out with the following objectives:

1. To determine the degree of time spent on unpaid work from among the men and women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija;
2. To identify the effects of unpaid work among women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija; and
3. To determine the relationship between time spent on unpaid work and equality of gender in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.0

Gender Analysis Domains

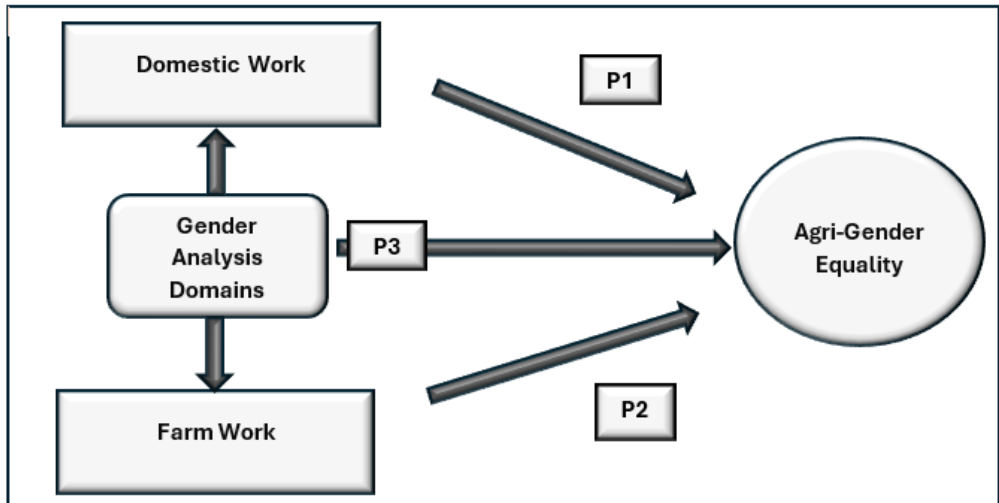


The Six Domains of Gender Analysis is a framework that USAID's Interagency Gender Working Group (2011) has developed to collect and organize information pertaining to gender differences that is found to be most applicable to various areas of study, including the agricultural landscape. The model aims to examine gender equality by translating the six conceptual domains in the context of a given design or study, including the agricultural landscape.

Operational Framework

Figure 2.0

Agri-Gender Equality Model



The Agri-Gender Equality model (Figure 2.0) illustrates the impact and relationship of unpaid work (domestic and farm work) to equality among genders in an agricultural landscape.

Of the many kinds of unpaid work, domestic or unpaid care and own-use production work have been the focus of research in the agricultural landscape. According to Reddy (2020), unpaid care work can be categorized into three sub-categories: A) direct care, such as caring for children, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly; B) indirect care, such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry; and C) supervisory care, which refers to care work often provided in conjunction with other forms of unpaid work. The “own-use production work,” on the other hand, was described as the activities performed to produce goods or provide services intended for final use by the producer, their household, and/or family. Participation in this form of work is central to survival in impoverished and remote areas, particularly through subsistence agriculture (p. 3). Reddy (2020) relates the unpaid care work and own-use production work to gender inequality, showing the disproportionate share of women than men. In examining the domestic and farm work being rendered by women, the proponents were able to analyze and determine the time spent and impact of domestic (H1) and farm (H2) to the gender equality in barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. While the gender analysis domain (H3) was used to examine gender equality by translating the six conceptual domains in the context of unpaid work. This connotes that in applying the gender analysis domains by the USAID Interagency Gender Working Group (2011), the

study was able to determine the relationship of unpaid work to gender equality to provide a recommendation for policy reform and integration in the community.

With the given framework, the researchers offered the following propositions:

1. The time spent on domestic work does not affect equality among genders.
2. The time spent on farm work does not affect equality among genders.
3. There is no relationship between time spent on domestic and farm work and gender equality in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

Methodology

Research Design

In the ranking made by the Cities and Municipalities Competitive Index (CMCI) in 2017 up to 2023, Aliaga is ranked 491st amongst 511 municipalities. These rankings provide a glimpse of reality pertaining to the economic condition and opportunities available given that the community is agriculturally dependent. Barangay San Juan was chosen by the researchers as one of the top 5 (as of 2020) most populated barangays in the said municipality. The percentage of women (52%) over men (48%) from the total population equivalent to 4,474 in San Juan indicates a wider opportunity for women to contribute to the employment generation and economic growth in the region.

The research study utilized the qualitative descriptive design to empirically test the researcher's proposed model and analyze the data to determine the impact of women's unpaid work on gender equality in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

The proponents of this research employed a triangulation approach in gathering and analyzing the data. A semi-structured, in-depth survey interview with key informants (local legislative staff of LGU Aliaga and vice mayor) was conducted to determine the present condition of women and agricultural conditions in the community, while a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to solicit the unpaid domestic and farm work lived experiences of the respondents. Furthermore, the existing data records from the office of the barangay chairwoman, and archival data were utilized to solidify the respondent's narratives and data analysis.

The researchers were guided by the following research questions: *1) Anu-ano ang mga pambahay at sakahan hanapbuhay experiences mo? 2) Patungkol sa iyong pambahay at sakahan hanapbuhay aktibidad, ano ang iyong papel o gawain? 3) Ilang oras and iyong inilalaan sa gawing pambahay at sakahan hanapbuhay aktibidad?* The validated data from the respondents were translated into a lucidly written form that was used for content thematic analysis. The researchers contextualized the respondent's shared experiences and perceived impact of unpaid work by anchoring on the six domains in gender analysis and providing answers to the research questions.

Participants

The criteria set by the researchers in selecting the respondents are the following: 1) a woman farmer, 2) is married/partner to a farmer, 3) has at least 10 years of farming experience, and 4) performs domestic care or work. A request for 15 to 20 farm women participants following the criteria was given to the office of the barangay and local government unit, and with the assistance from the office of the barangay chairwoman, local legislative staff, and office of the vice mayor, sixteen (16) women farmers with at least 10 years of farming experiences, performing unpaid house and farm work, and residing with a male counterpart volunteered to participate in the study. The respondent's demographic information was collected to better understand the present status of the participants. The use of purposive sampling was applied to ensure that only the necessary data from the target group were analyzed. Those who failed to meet the criteria were excluded from participating in the study.

Procedures

The researchers requested a courtesy meeting with the city vice mayor and resident of Barangay San Juan to present the intent to conduct the study held on September 23, 2023. Ethical approval was secured from the university's Research Ethics Board before the conduct of the study. The data collection was held on March 16, 2024, employing an in-depth key informant interview of the local legislative staff of LGU Aliaga and Vice Mayor as well as the use of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method to better comprehend the unpaid work perceptions of the respondents. The participants were presented with the Informed Consent Form in Filipino, which details the purpose of the study and consent to voluntary participation, procedures for gathering data, risks (if there are any), and benefits to women in the community. The written consent form was obtained from all participants before the focus group discussion and interview. The researchers ensure that there is no conflict of interest in doing the study aside from securing the consent of the participants. The respondents were informed of their right to privacy and were given an avenue to raise questions in case they find the interview and FGD sensitive or unacceptable. Both procedures were delivered in Filipino. In addition, the participants were informed of the benefits of sharing their agricultural and domestic lived experiences to better understand the dilemma and challenges encountered by women in the barangay with the aim of proposing a sound policy that will recognize and value women's unpaid work.

Measures

Thematic content analysis was employed to form a more conclusive result of the transcribed data from the respondents. In determining the effects of unpaid work on gender equality, USAID (2011) Six Gender Analysis Domains in conducting gender analysis at the activity or project level were used to contextualize the perception of women.

Results and Discussion

An individual exists in two distinct forms, thereby acting or deciding as an economic or social being. These capacities are integral in a person and are idiosyncratic from one another, where economic being allows the creation of decisions within the spheres of economic concerns like income, wealth, and consumption of goods and services as part of a productive unit in the locality. The social aspect, on the other hand, lies in nurturing family relationships and abiding by the traditional practices that are dominant in the community.

Various literature sources have emphasized the importance of analyzing inequality among genders using a multitude of variables. The researchers endeavored to find the kind of unpaid work and the amount of time spent by most women, especially in the agricultural sector, to make sense of the gender equality in the said barangay.

Pertinent demographic information (Table 1) was collected from the participants. The study identified the unpaid domestic and farm work of women viz-a-viz their perceived unpaid domestic and farm work of the men in their household as presented in Table 2. The researchers were confronted with profound results. The shared knowledge of the respondents was translated into meaningful units by employing thematic content analysis.

With the help of the triangulation approach in gathering and analyzing the data employed in the focus group discussion, key informant interview method, and archival data sources, the researchers contextualized the respondent’s shared experiences, anchoring on the six domains in gender analysis to answer the research question as shown in Table 3.

Descriptive Profile Summary of the Respondents

Table 1.

Descriptive Profile Summary

Characteristics	Percent Distribution (Mean) N = 16	Characteristics	Percent Distribution (Mean) N = 16	Characteristics	Percent Distribution (Mean) N = 16
<i>Marital Status</i>		<i>Years in Agriculture</i>		<i>Age Group</i>	
Single/Partner to a farmer	12.50	Years 10-29	56.25	Years 25 to 49	37.5
Married	68.75	Years 30 and above	12.5	Years 50 and above	62.5
Widow	18.75	Since childhood/got married	31.25		
Total	100.0	Total	100.0	Total	100.0

Out of the 16 voluntary participants in the study as shown in Table 1, 2 or 12.5% are single/partners to a farmer, 11 or 68.75 are married, and 3 or 18.75% are widows. The majority belong to the age group 50 and above, or 62.5%, and the mean age of the surveyed respondents is 54.5 years. In terms of years in the agricultural sector, the majority of respondents, 9 or 56.25%, have been in farming activity for 10 to 29 years now, 2 or 12.5% from 30 years and above, while those respondents who claimed they have been in farming activities since childhood/got married are equivalent to 5 or 31.25%.

Table 2.

Perceived Unpaid and Paid Work and the Time Spent by Women and Men in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija

Meaning Units/Codes from the respondents	Women	Hours Per Week	Men	Hours Per Week	Categories	Themes
Cook food for the family.	✓	35	✓	2	Domestic Work	Unpaid Work
Wash the dirty clothes.	✓		✓			
Clean the house	✓		✓			
Prepare the children to school	✓					
Do the household chores	✓					
Giving of care to children and grandchildren	✓					
Buy family supplies from the local market or “ <i>ma-malengke</i> ”	✓					
Plant different crops after the harvest season or “ <i>magtanim</i> ”	✓	49			Farm Work	
Attend to farm animals	✓					
Weeding/mowing and harvesting the family’s own farmland - “ <i>paggapas, pag alis ng damo at pag-aani</i> ”	✓					
Washing of other people’s clothes or “ <i>labandera</i> ”	✓	2			Domestic Work	Paid Work
Mow, Plant, Harvest, Re-packing of landlord’s rice fields and production	✓	49	✓	49	Farm Work	

Source: Key Informant Interview of Respondents and Focus Group Discussion

Proposition 1 (P1): The time spent on domestic work does not affect equality among genders.

The respondent's narratives in Table 2 show significant unpaid time spent by women in providing domestic care to the family as compared to men. On a weekly basis, women in Barangay San Juan devoted 35 hours a week of care work in cooking, cleaning, attending to the needs of the children, and doing other household chores, while men devoted only 2 hours a week of unpaid care in assisting women. The said long hours of care work, as perceived by the respondents, have caused loss of income opportunity or paid employment to women. Therefore, the disproportionate time spent by women in domestic care has affected gender equality in the community.

Proposition 2 (P2): The time spent on farm work does not affect equality among genders.

The unpaid time (49 hours a week) spent by women in assisting their husband/head of the family in weeding, harvesting, and planting vegetable crops was viewed as unfavorable and damaging to women not only because of the additional hours they rendered but, more importantly, because of the reality that they are not compensated for the work performed in the family farm enterprise.

The data further indicate the unrecognized care work within the community since the reflected domestic and family farm work is not compensated in a form of income. This type of gender norm often prevented women from entering into productive careers in agriculture, which is associated with the existence of a social norm dictating what men and women shouldn't be doing (Hutchinson, 2023), the same is found to contribute to the undervaluing effect of women's contribution to the economy of Aliaga. The unpaid farm work performed by women, as reflected in the table according to the respondents, pertains to the family farm activities, where the hours spent by them are the results of their nurturing role as women showing support to the heads of their family. Only one respondent claimed to receive domestic paid work as "*labandera*" to her neighbor because it is uncommon in the barangay being a rural area. Considering the paid farm work generated by the researchers, both men and women spent 49 hours a week doing "*bake or pakiki-saka*" because most of them do not own a land and they were compensated on a daily basis by the landowners.

Significantly, there is an observed inequality in terms of farm work opportunity for women who are usually called to work only during the "*anihan*" or harvest season to weed out grass and plant vegetable crops as compared to men who perform a backbreaking job of manually cultivating the soil on a regular basis. Hutchinson (2023) explicitly referred to this situation as a gender norm, and such a social norm must shift positively by identifying the underlying attributes of behaviors to remove the barriers to women building meaningful careers in agriculture. Such a gap likely reflects the difference in the type of agricultural work the women and men do and, thus, also reflects the situation of women in the agricultural sector in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

As farming improved over the years, the agricultural revolution was viewed as pivotal in increasing food production. In an informal talk with Aliaga, Nueva Ecija Vice Mayor Erwin Javaluyas, landowners acquired machines called "halimaw," or rice harvesters, and replaced human harvesters in most, if not all, barangays, including San Juan, back in 2017 to improve food production and reduce the cost of operation. Various farming activities were translated into mechanized processes since a used to be month-long harvesting of crops made in the past is readily available in less than a week, therefore contributing to Aliaga's growth in food supply production.

With innovations continuously being injected into the farming system, some of the respondents take chances in paid repacking of rice grain activities. According to the respondents, most of them resorted to carrying out more house labor because of the displacement brought about by the mechanization, while their male counterpart was able to find income being a tricycle driver, construction worker and still manage to work in the farm when needed by landowners, especially after harvest season to plant mongo seeds. The lack of community conversation, as mentioned by Hutchinson (2023), in discussing and addressing the underlying causes of developmental problems is obviously lacking in this stage. The importance of community involvement and participation, especially the pertinent profiling information that community members can provide in assessing a given community program, according to Halcon and Viloría (2023) in citing Viloría et al. (2017), is vital in the growth of one's livelihood; hence, in the case of barangay San Juan, will be a valuable input in ensuring equality in income among men and women. Some of the women make use of their unschooled entrepreneurial skills in order to meet their ends. Used to be women farmers find means in selling "merienda" (cooked food in the streets), sewing school and sports uniform clothes, home-made product selling (longganisa, tinapa, kakanin, etc.). The expressed intent of women respondents to submit themselves to skills re-tooling in order to harness their entrepreneurial competencies, which they made in the focus group discussion, could be an opportunity for income generation, especially when most of them were displaced due to farming mechanization. In order to alleviate the unfortunate economic condition of women, the researchers find the study of Edralin and Pastrana (2023) in suggesting that a strong linkage with TVET centers (technical and vocational education and training) that offers relevant short courses as well as reinforced partnership with colleges and universities, especially those institutions that are catering to community needs in achieving human capital development and learning opportunities in a barangay like San Juan, is very relevant and timely.

The "Zumba" fitness program, on the other hand, as initiated by the barangay chairwoman, was commended by the respondents, and according to them, they find it helpful, especially after doing all the housework. Considering the inequality to the significant time spent by women as compared to their male counterpart in doing domestic work, the study proposition: "***The time spent on domestic work does not affect equality among genders, is NOT ACCEPTED.***"

Evidence from this study shows that the time spent on domestic work affects equality among genders.

With the significant time spent by women in domestic work along with the services they render in doing family farm work having caused substantial inequality in favor of their male counterpart, the study proposition on “*The time spent on farm work does not affect equality among genders, is NOT ACCEPTED.*” Evidence from this study shows that the time spent on farm work affects equality among genders.

Table 3.

The Perceived Effects of Unpaid Work among Women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija

Perceived Expression of Unpaid Work by Women	Domains of Gender Analysis	Contextualizing Gender Equality Domains
Provide the cooking, washing of clothes, cleaning the house, caring for the children and grandchildren, and acquiring supplies from the local market.	Time and Space	The division of labor between men and women in the areas of childcare and housework is performed mostly by women.
	Power and decision-making	Women do not have the power to make decisions about their own economic activity.
Plant crops only after the harvest season (family-owned farm).	Knowledge, beliefs, and perception	Women are deprived of income opportunity in farm work because of their nurturing role in showing support to the men in their household.
Irregular small-scale product selling and services (<i>selling of merienda, kakanin, cooked food, foot spa, and massage</i>)		The lack of access to money and displacement hinder women's opportunity to ramp up their entrepreneurial skills, especially after the mechanization processes were introduced.
Weeding and harvesting the landowner's farmland in exchange for food, or "ulam," and snacks, or "merienda." Re-packing of rice grains in exchange for food supply Engage in “bake” or “buwisan”—attending to landowners' farm work in exchange of rice cavans (sacks of rice).	Access	Women are not given equal access to money and ownership of property, resulting in exchanges of commodities as payment for the services provided by them.

Table 3.*Continued.*

Perceived Expression of Unpaid Work by Women	Domains of Gender Analysis	Contextualizing Gender Equality Domains
Participate in the livestock “broiler raising” program of the Department of Agriculture (DA).	Power and decision-making	Women have control over the benefit from the project of DA. Only a few women in Barangay San Juan were able to participate because of a lack of clear communication and monitoring mechanisms.
	Practices and Participation	Communication channels were unsuccessful in disseminating the information to a wider population.
	Legal Rights and Status	Only selected members of the barangay were informed about the livelihood project.

Source: Key Informant Interview of Respondents and Focus Group Discussion

Proposition 3 (P3): “There is no relationship between time spent on domestic and farm work and gender equality in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

In conceptualizing the domains of gender analysis model anchoring in the design based on the lived experiences of the respondents, Table 3 presents the perceived expressions of unpaid work of women in Barangay San Juan.

The researchers were presented with the following significant results:

The time and space domains denote strong evidence of inequality pertaining to the division of labor, especially in the areas of childcare and housework, which are mostly performed by the respondents. The social being of the participants permits the unfortunate economic inequality since the opportunity to generate income was set aside to give way to the giving of care and become tied-up with household and family farm activities. In a similar view, the impact brought about by the unpaid work of caring for children was largely recognized in the study of Lewis (2006) that affects the capacity of parents to seek work and/or training and education. The care for children in this case is mostly attributable to the women in the household. There is less sufficient evidence of equality pertaining to women’s social life and their ability to decide, to influence, to control, and to freely enforce economic decision-making within the household. The lack of power among the respondents to make decisions about their own economic activity was correlated to gender inequality since it does not conform to the structure of **the power and decision-making** domain. The same observation is evident in the study of Verma (2014), where she describes the reason why a significant number of women are missing work opportunities in the labor market is because of their domestic duties. Interesting to note is the associated relationship of time and space

to power and the decision-making domain since the time poverty in women due to housework resulted in the inability of women to make decisions pertaining to their own economic opportunity. While the lack of recognition to address the imbalances to inexistence in these domains was associated by the researchers with the lack of decision-making power among women.

The mechanization clearly deprived women of income opportunities in farm work because of their nurturing role of supporting their male counterpart. Women were also faced with disparity in finding entrepreneurial opportunities despite their great interest due to a lack of training and resources. Such inadequacy in skills disproved the equality in **knowledge, beliefs, and perception** domains.

The further introduction of other agri-technologies presented deeper evidence of inequality in Barangay San Juan. The women were displaced from doing paid agricultural work since the backbreaking farm work was given to men and machines. This denotes the absence of **access** domains that highlight the capacity of women to acquire income, employment, services, information, and benefits like owning land. The respondents in this case engaged in “buwisan,” or the exchange of rice cavans, for the services rendered instead of receiving monetary compensation for the work rendered by them. Thus, gender inequality exists as evident in (1) the deprivation of women to earn and augment the household income due to lost opportunity and (2) women displacement from farm work without skills intervention to find suitable employment over a period of time.

Only one among the respondents has attested to the project initiated by the Department of Agriculture—“broiler “raising” by attending meetings, training courses, accepting, or seeking out services from the Department of Agriculture. With this, there is insufficient evidence that more women were engaged in the said developmental activity than men. Most of the respondents were not aware of the program. Others said they have heard about it but are not fortunate to be given the necessary tools to do so. Such a deficit failed to emulate that women and men are equal in legislation related to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (**Legal Rights Status** domain). Also, the discrepancy in the active participation of women than men in the same program denies the participants the beneficial developmental activities as presumed in **the Practices & Participation** domain. This analysis proves the occurrences of misallocation stated by Alonso et al. (2019) because of the inexistence of unpaid work-friendly policies.

The relationship between time spent on domestic and farm work and gender equality in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

Considering the expressed time devoted by women in attending to their unpaid domestic and farm work, the study presents a strong connection between the significant amount of time dedicated by women to housework along with the time spent on farm work, resulting in gender inequality in the barangay. The increase in time spent doing the housework because of the farm mechanization further widens the disparity between women and men. The unfavorable effect of

invisible labor on women impedes the chances of having a time that they can devote to their personal and professional development as well as to their wellbeing. Such an extent of time, poverty hampers their ability to pursue other productive opportunities such as education, skills enhancement, and employment in the labor market, proving the negative effect of inequality. As Ferrat et al. (2014) posit, the gender inequality in unpaid work is considered a form of discrimination because women are deprived of their abilities to actively take part in the labor market.

With the given premise, the study proposition (P), to wit: ***“There is no relationship between time spent on domestic and farm work to gender equality in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, is NOT ACCEPTED.”*** Evidence from this study shows that the time spent on domestic and farm work has a relationship with gender equality in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

Conclusion

Ascribing to the SDG 5 Gender Quality target in recognizing the value of unpaid care and work, the findings in the study provide significant evidence of the adverse effects of unpaid work among women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

The time and space spent by women in carrying out unpaid services in the care economy as compared to men were distinct, resulting in time poverty in paid farm work. This unfortunate situation of women has affected their social being because of being tied to the various care work and was further exacerbated by the mechanization and continuous advancement in technology as aid in farming activities since farm women were displaced by machines. Such innovation in farming technology did not translate into gender-perspective policies that are geared towards protecting farmers, especially women.

The lack of access to resources deprived women of income-related opportunities in the labor market, relying mainly on the exchanging of goods for the services being rendered. The absence of entrepreneurial training worsens the gap. Women failed to pursue other careers as a countermeasure for technological advancement because they lack the necessary skills and are oftentimes branded as low-skilled labor, if there is any. While women were severely affected by farming technologies, men were able to find jobs in construction projects, transportation, and maintaining seasonal farming paid work, hence increasing the gap because of the difference in agricultural activities being performed by women and men.

One social issue that advancement in technology was able to address in the barangay is the reduction of child labor in agriculture since the application of machines dismissed the opportunity among the youth in "pamumulot," weeding palay, or "unhusked rice or paddy.

The Department of Agriculture's program on "*broiler raising*," while considered well-meaning towards livelihood, failed to address women's command over income because of inefficient means of communication.

The unpaid women in barangay San Juan act in their social being by embracing unselfishly domestic and partial farm work with no monetary equivalence or payment. The social act of providing services without remuneration towards a member in the household are values of nurturing and caring; hence, in the situation of women in the barangay being unpaid for the provision of work is construed as gender equality. If the work spent in the emotionally driven occupation will be compensated and utilized for productive and income opportunities, such will contribute to the basic aspiration of every woman, that is to exercise her economic being. The valuation of unpaid work will also reflect the abilities and capacities of women in contributing to the nation's economy, thus magnifying her social being. It was also the women's social and economic being that pushed them to resort to selling *kakanin* and *merienda*, *pananahi*, doing laundry to neighbors, and being a *yaya* or housemaid to other families in order to augment the expenses of their family.

The economic production for domestic consumption or services has been neglected due to the lack of measures to include the devoted hours of domestic care to the economic analysis in a community, thereby imprinting the non-monetary perception of unpaid work among women. It is in this context that the study aimed to focus on the concept of unpaid work with the desire for its inclusion in the national accounts.

The disparity and the inexistence of the six gender equality domains relating to the unpaid work conclude the effect not only to the social but also to the economic being of women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga. Nueva Ecija.

With the given results gathered, there is a need to uphold the dignity of women by providing the women farmers necessary skills and knowledge to better prepare them for competencies that the labor market requires. The appropriate training (entrepreneurship and skills-based) and education for displaced women farmers will assist them in obtaining employment opportunities while they acknowledge their basic rights, safety, and protection in the community.

Recommendation

Following the conclusive findings on the negative effect of unpaid work on the social and economic being of women in the study, the researchers make the following recommendations to address the disparity and absence of the following gender analysis domains: *time and space, power and decision-making, knowledge, beliefs, and legal rights and status* to guarantee equality and empowerment to the women in Barangay San Juan, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija.

1) Gender Education (national and local)

Utilize education as a platform to address equality in the housework. The knowledge about equal treatment in the care economy will challenge gender stereotypes and develop meaningful insights and probable change in perspective for women and men, especially on critical issues such as discrimination, empowerment, and gender bias for the adults in Barangay San Juan.

For the Department of Education (DepEd), to revisit its curriculum and integrate a concrete and relevant elective subject about women empowerment and equality in the household, particularly in rural or landlocked provinces like Aliaga.

2) Governance in Resource Mobilization (National and Local)

To revisit the programs of the Department of Agriculture and propose a concrete guideline for effective communication relevant to the campaign, evaluation, and monitoring purposes of its program, particularly the "broiler raising." The program aims to assist members of the community to raise livestock as a means of income opportunity. With a clear guideline, the adaptation of livelihood and social enterprise, or agri-entrepreneurship, will encompass the genuine leadership and good governance of the said agency.

For the local government unit (LGU) of Barangay San Juan, to design a financial literacy program for capacity building and provide necessary resources for the said program. Such access to space and time can help augment women's household expenses, improve their consumption requirements, and generate income opportunities that are meaningful to their wellbeing.

For the barangay of San Juan, to consider in their long-term development program the inclusion of strong entrepreneurial skills training of women, especially those who were displaced by the mechanization, by establishing partnerships with TVET centers and/or educational institutions for lifelong learning. The possible linkage to non-government or academic institutions to assist in building capacities of women in the barangay is viewed as necessary in augmenting the loss of income among women farmers.

3) Gender Perspective in Legislative Policies

For the local government unit (LGU) to design a program that will steer the women of San Juan to gain access to employment opportunities by identifying industries operating in the city as part of the private company's social responsibility. Such an initiative can be in the form of LGU and private industry partnerships.

To revisit and reinforce existing law pertinent to upholding gender equality in agriculture, particularly the Magna Carta for Women (RA No. 9710) and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 (RA No. 9262). This is to ensure that women's rights are upheld and eradicate child labor in the agriculture industry.

- 4)** A future study involving the 26 barangays in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, may provide additional concluding perceptions on the gender equality condition in the region.

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