

# Gender Mapping of Abaca Farmers in Baganga, Davao Oriental, Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the socio-economic profiles of respondents, determine the participation of husband, wife and children in abaca production activities and determine the working conditions of wives and children relative to abaca production. The study was conducted in Barangay Campawan and Barangay Mikit, Baganga, Davao Oriental. Using a descriptive method of research, a rapid research design was employed wherein demographic and economic characteristic of all respondents in the two barangays were gathered. Analysis of data was also applied the frequency distribution and percentages. Results of the study showed that majority of respondents were males and between 34-41 years old. Most of them attained only elementary education and were married, professed Roman Catholic and spoke Mandaya. Majority owned 3- 4 hectares and only 1-2 hectares were planted with abaca. In terms of income, Abaca dominated among the crop production in the farm area. In Abaca production activities, husband had the most contribution from planting to marketing. Wives and children also assisted in the abaca production. The farm area was very far from the house of respondents. Most of the respondents went to the farm area from 4 am to 8 am and returned around 5 pm. The abaca farmers worked more than 8 hours a day. Husbands did not allow their wives to go to the farm area if not feeling well. Children stayed home to do household chores if their parents were working in the farm area.

Keywords: Abaca production, gender mapping, marketing, planting, production

## INTRODUCTION

Women play an important role in shaping the rural economy in developing countries. It is perceived that agriculture is mainly a man's world. But there are also women who participate as either laborers or farmers but not yet recognize in the society. For Etenesh (2005), this manifestation of women in any agriculture activities has a disparity that a woman has a great contribution that does not matter towards gender. This shows that women are engaged in agriculture but not empowered and that the community does not understand that women participated and exerted effort in agricultural activities especially in abaca production which is still relatively unknown to everyone.

Hence, the study of gender mapping can help analyze the different roles performed by the members of the family in abaca farming. The participation of husbands, wives and children can help to understand in the relation of their daily livelihood. On the other hand, both men and women varied on their roles depending on their activities. According to Gloop (1990) it is where they function according to the division of labor they executed. Men and women performed roles that generate living and meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, education and others and this may be true in Baganga.

Baganga as an agricultural municipality produces various crops which are the main source of income of the residents because of its location in upland areas and good topography. Among these crops produced, abaca is considered as the number one crop because of providers stable livelihood & income. Besides, this is one crop where a lot of men are very much engaged. However, it was learned that there are women and children who are also in this activity but are less recognized in terms of their participation. Women in abaca farming have not been researched and how this activity affects their everyday lives. Account of this, the involvement of husbands, wives and children in this study will help analyze the impact of this activity in shaping their lives. Thus, the activities performed by wives and children will help analyze what are their contribution in the economy of the family. This would show what activities are being participated by various household members. In general, this study examined the gender roles performed by each household member in abaca farming. Specifically, it seeks to determine the socio-economic profile of the respondents, analyze how their participation contributes to the family's economy, and examined the working conditions of wives and children involved in abaca production. The main objective of this study was to map and analyze the gender roles performed by family members in abaca farming. Specifically, it aimed to determine the socio-economic profile of the respondents, identify how their participation contributes to the family's economy, and examine the working conditions of wives and children involved in abaca production.

Moreover, by the study of gender mapping presents the framework of the situation and analyzes the gender participation of abaca farming in Baganga, Davao Oriental. Studying the gender roles in abaca farming provides information and knowledge about the different activities performed by husbands, wives, and children in the farming process. Their participation and contributions are valuable to several sectors. For women advocates, the findings can serve as a foundation for promoting policy changes that empower women in generating income from agricultural activities and help challenge societal perceptions that women are less capable than men. For the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA), the study provides insights into the role of women in abaca production, encouraging the promotion of women's participation in agricultural activities and development projects. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) may also use the study as a source of information about the roles and responsibilities of each family member, which can guide the implementation of policies and programs related to family welfare and

appropriate role distribution among children. Furthermore, for the academe, particularly the Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCAST), the study can serve as baseline data for future research on gender role mapping and for the development of extension activities that highlight and strengthen women's participation in school and community initiatives.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Locale of the study

The study was conducted in Baganga, Davao Oriental in Barangay Mikit and Barangay Campawan. These were identified as upland areas of abaca farming. Identification of the chosen barangays was based on the data of the municipal agriculture office in Baganga. These barangays were considered to have a geographical location where a bigger number of abaca farmers are residing. The chosen locations of the study were situated in the upland part of the barangays. These were those who were engaged in abaca farming as their main source of income as these are the only activity suited for their skills necessary to earn a living.



**Figure 1.** The map of Barangay Mikit and Barangay Campawan, Baganga, Davao Oriental

### Research design

The study used descriptive method of research that involved recording, analyzing and interpreting socio demographic and socio-economic profile of respondents. The study used a one-shot survey research design wherein the demographic and economic characteristic of every household of abaca farmers in Baganga, Davao Oriental was adopted. Key Informant Interview (KII) was also used in the study to know the in-depth information and background on gender mapping.

### Respondents

There was n=42 respondents of abaca farmers: twenty-four from Barangay Campawan and eighteen (18) from Barangay Mikit. They were chosen based on livelihood and on the number of populations of Abaca farmers as identified by PhilFIDA. Respondents were chosen through purposive sampling. In which whoever the researcher encountered in the area unless an Abaca farmer will be a respondent in the study.

**Research instrument**

A survey questionnaire was used in gathering the data. The questionnaire was translated to vernacular language for easy comprehension of the respondents. The questionnaire was based from the three objectives of the study. These were the socio-economic profile, participation and contribution to the economy of the family and the working condition of wives and children relative to abaca production.

**Data analysis**

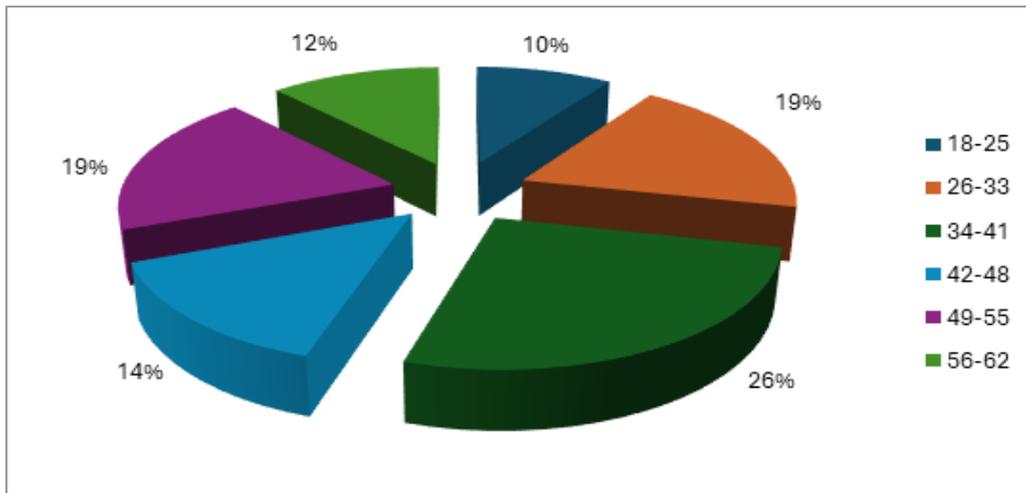
The data collected in this study were analyzed using the statistical tool such as frequency distribution and percentages in consolidating the collected data for the socio demographic profile, socio economic profile and the working conditions that were encountered by the respondents.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Socioeconomic profile of respondents**

**Age**

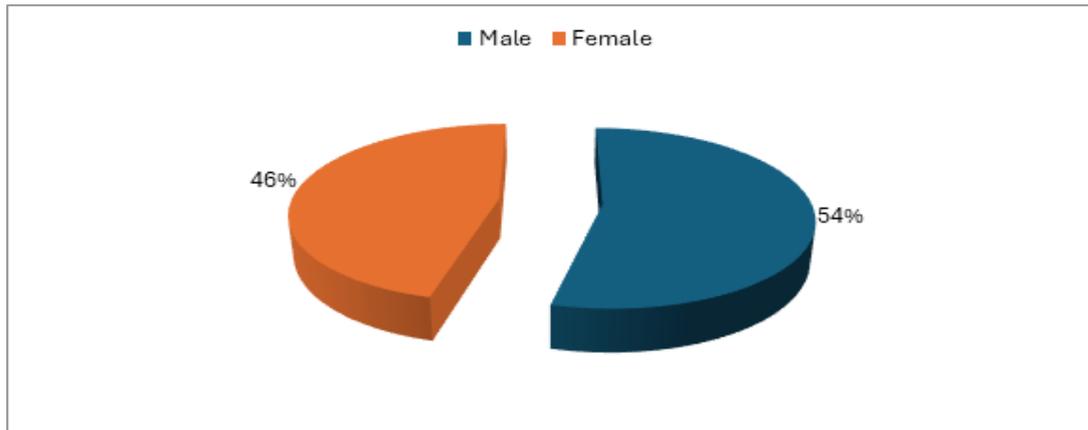
The result showed that respondents have varied distribution of age ranging from 18-62 years old. About 10% of the respondents belonged to the bracket age of 18-25; 19% are between age 26-33; about 26% are 34-41 years old; 14% are aged 42-48; 19% are 49-55 years old; and 12% are 56-62 years old. The result showed that majority of the respondents belonged to the age bracket of 34-41 that comprised 26%. It is because they are old enough to work in farm area and they have enough strength to support the needs of the family as abaca farming. This supports the findings of Giannini Foundation of Agriculture Economics (1992) that middle age or older workers are more likely to have families which may affect their attitude in working. On the other hand, the least number of 10 % belonged to the age bracket of 18-25.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of age

**Sex**

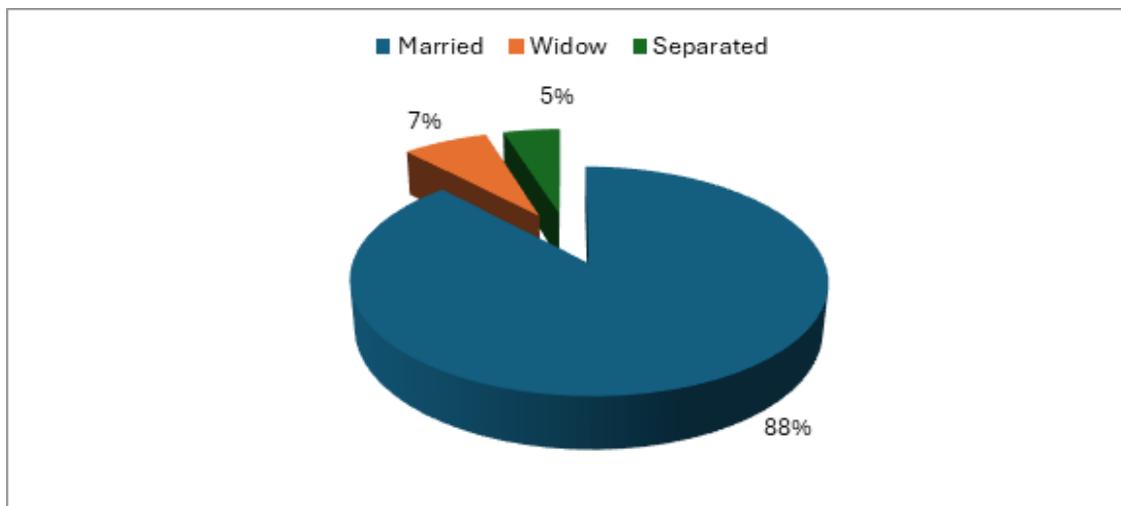
In terms of sex in the number of family member in the family, the figure revealed that males have bigger number comprised of 54% in the household than females comprised of 46%. This meant that males in the area are dominant than females. This supported the study of Hans (1977) that says males control females in most domains of social life.



**Figure 3.** Gender of respondents.

**Civil status**

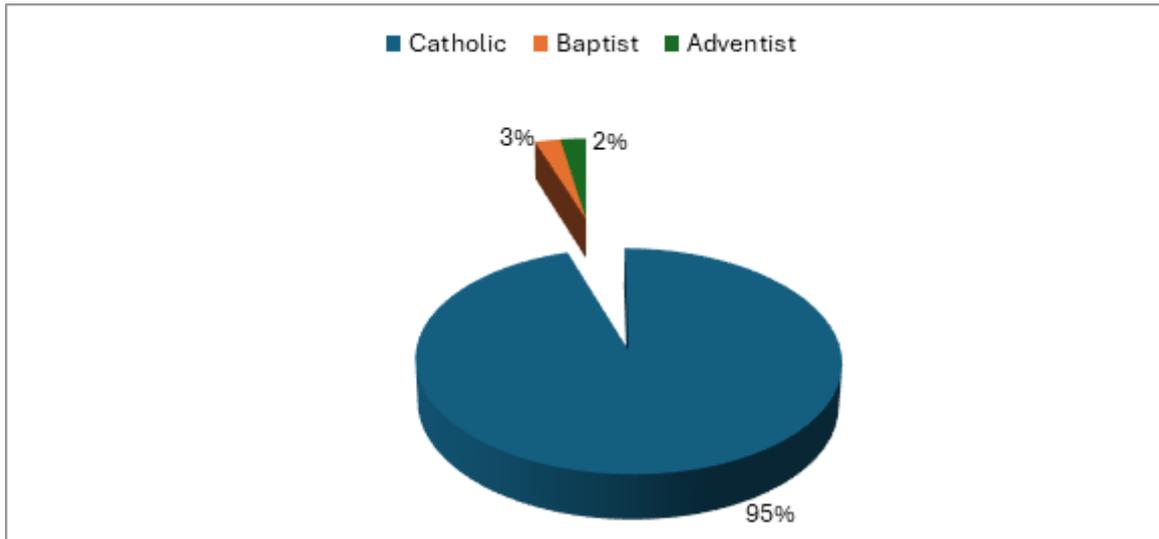
Based on the result, majority of the respondents or 88% are married. They are mainly engaged in abaca farming because they have children to feed. This supports the findings of Gallagher (2000) that married people always include better financial well-being, better health, longer life and higher achievement for their children. While, widowed and separated respondents have almost the same percentage comprised 7% and 5% respectively. They exerted most effort in abaca farming because they don't have partners in life to help raise children. Separated wives in this study are not legally separated with their partner. Thus, these separated respondents are mostly females.



**Figure 4.** Civil status of respondents.

**Religion**

In terms of religion, the figure revealed that most of the respondents or 95% were Catholic. This showed that they are united in worshipping God as they have the biggest number of respondents. Adventist had the lesser respondents which comprised 3% and the least number of respondents 2% are Baptist. This implied that church play an important role in the creation of community as a major source of social and economic assistance for those in need. The idea of community of shared values and enduring association are often sufficient to motivate persons to trust and help one another even in the absence of long personal relationships (Hirshman, 2003).



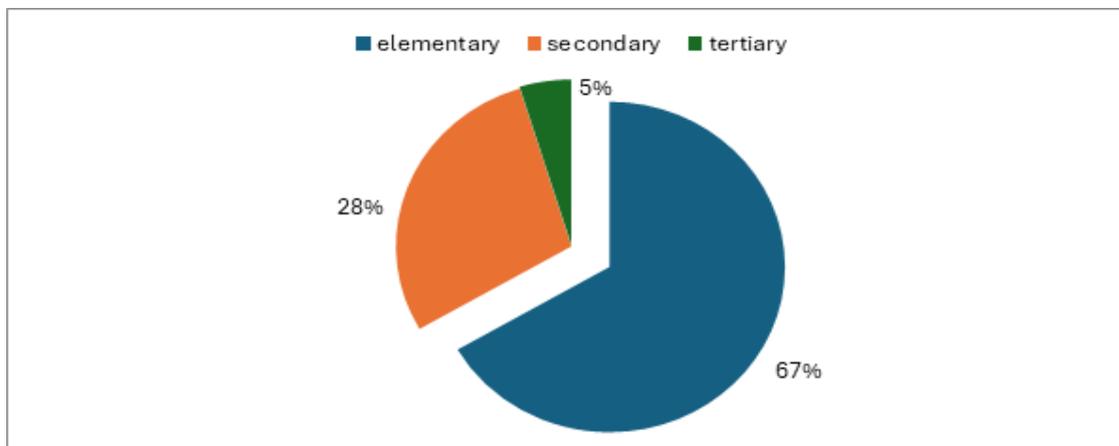
**Figure 5.** Religious status of respondents.

**Language**

The language datum was not presented here because 100% of respondents were all Mandaya. This revealed that the highest number of abaca farmers in the area belonged to the Mandaya group. They were early settlers whose primary livelihood was abaca farming. Thus, most of the Mandaya reside in the upland area where their source of living is located. This supports the findings of Morales (2002) that a group of indigenous people who has the key concept of self-identification, linguistic identity, cultural, economic and political system and unique ties to ancestral territories.

**Education level**

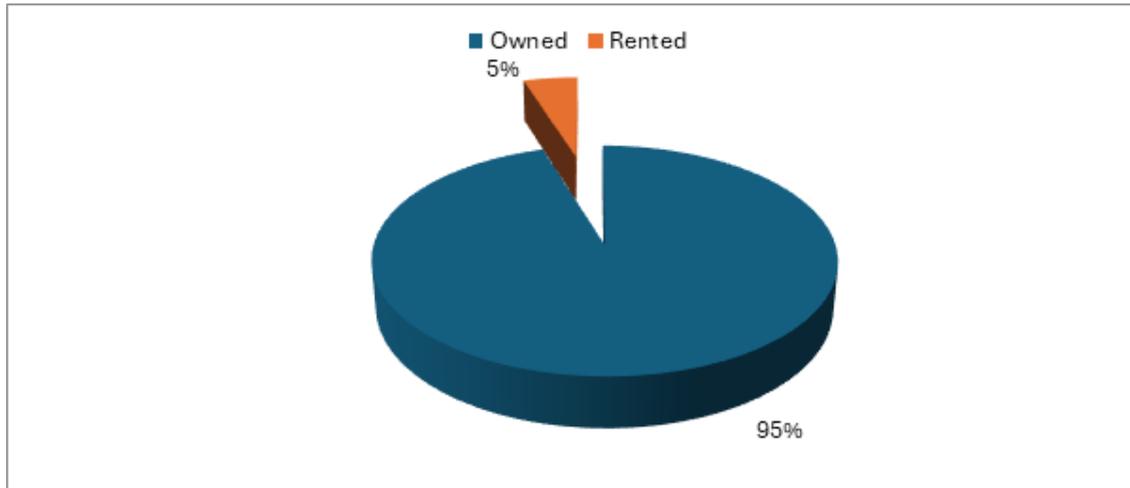
According to human capital models, education is an important dimension of non-homogeneity of labor. High educational attainment may imply a greater set of employment opportunities and specifically in the rural context (Chaudhry, 2009). On the other hand, the result below showed that most respondents or 67% finished only elementary level. This implied that poverty is present in the area. Respondents have the scarcity in terms of finances to support the schooling. Secondary level has 28 % and college is distant from their home. On the other hand, only 5% of the respondents had gone to college. These respondents are lucky enough to continue their schooling despite financial scarcity.



**Figure 6.** Educational level status of respondents

**House**

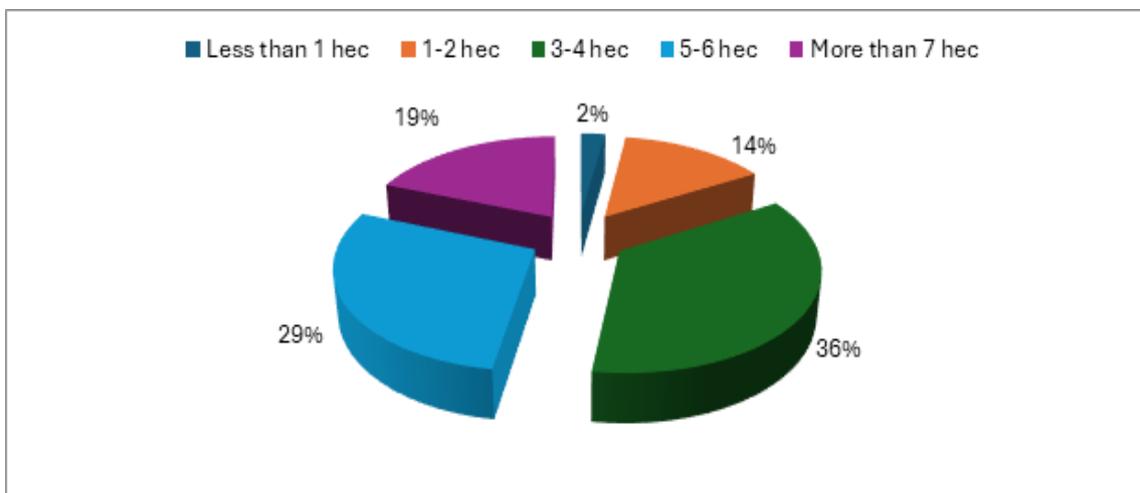
The result showed that respondents have their own house which comprised of 95% of respondents. They have enough support in building their own houses as part of their basic needs. Hence, the upland area in these two barangays is wide enough for construction of their houses. The area abounds with trees and sani used for roofing which are the raw materials in building their houses. Their income in abaca production has made possible in buying the materials in the construction. Thus, only 5% of the respondents were renting a house because they don't have enough finances of their own and they are only depending on their parents. These respondents were newly married.



**Figure 7.** Proportion of house ownership

**Farm land**

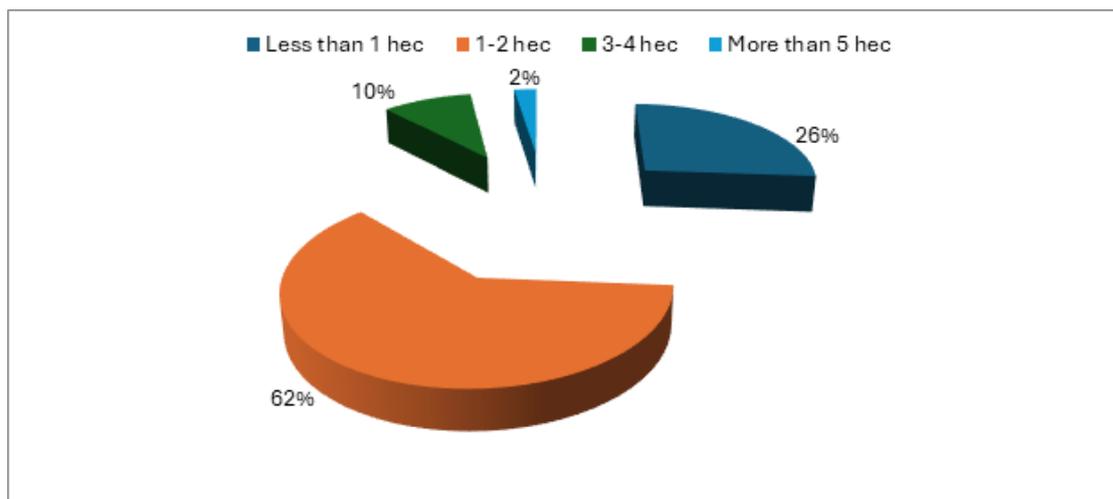
The study revealed that 29% of respondents have 5-6 hectares of land. Some of these lands were inherited from their parents. This supports the findings of Clayton (2006) that land was inherited and subdivided according to the numbers of member in the family. On the other hand, only 2% of respondents have less than one (1) hectare of land. The results above showed that they were mainly engage in farming that is planted with different staple crops for production.



**Figure 8.** Farm land owned by the respondents.

**Area planted with abaca production**

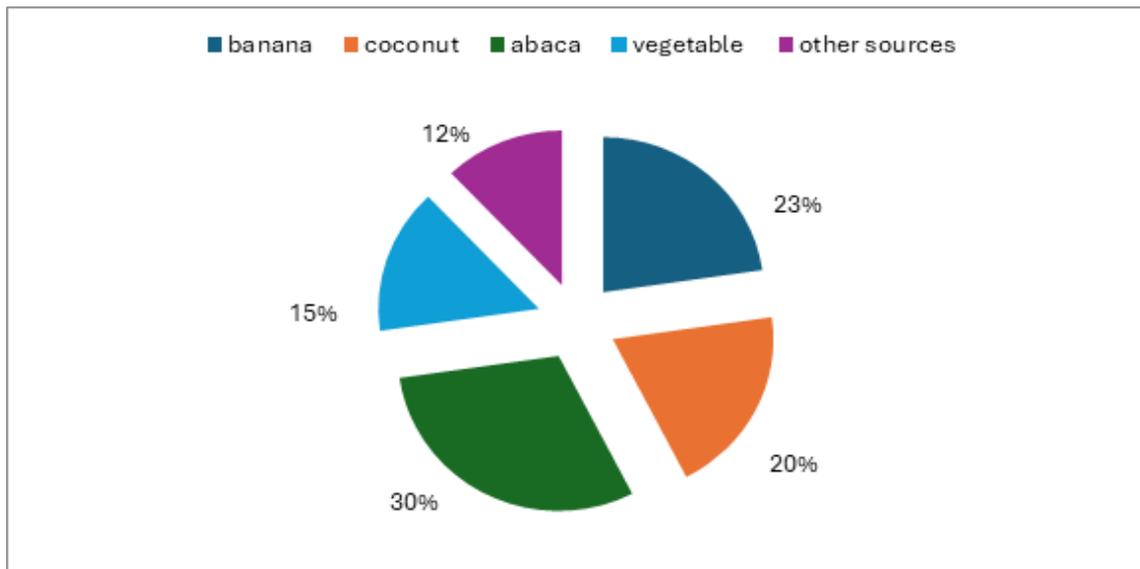
In terms of number of hectares planted for a abaca production, there are 1-2 hectares which have the biggest area planted with abaca in the area. It is because the other lands are planted with other crops such as rice, maize, rubber, banana and etc. Thus, this revealed that abaca production has the biggest contribution to their needs as it is the source of income of the family. According to Lacuna (2002) that abaca is frequently the source of cash income for poorer household. They chose abaca farming because it has a wider area and offers a bigger income among the other crops planted in the area. Although pricing of Abaca per kilo is variable, they still preferred to plant abaca in a large portion of the land because the price of Abaca now is P 62.00 per kilo.



**Figure 9.** Proportion of land (ha) denoted to abaca production.

**Income**

According to Chaudry (2009) income represents a very important area of consideration when characterizing the poor. The level of income is important not only for the households, but its distribution among household members and various socio economic groups. The figure revealed the sources of monthly income of the respondents. Based on the data presented, the abaca farmers have adopted multi cropping in the farm area and majority of the respondents have 30% income in abaca. This is followed by 23% in banana. The income of coconut also comprised 20% and vegetable comprised 15%. Other sources had the least percentage which is 12 % of their income. These other resources came from small venture and labor.



**Figure 10.** Proportion of income based on agricultural commodities of respondents.

### Land tenurial status

Land tenurial datum is not presented here because all the respondents are 100% farm owners. The respondents have their own farm area. This suggested that they work in their own area and manage their own land. Farmers had a full responsibility of the farm area and the income in farm production.

### A. Participation and activities performed by husband, wives and children in abaca production

The participation of husband, wife and children are categorized according to its activities namely: planting, maintaining, harvesting and marketing. The planting involved the preparation of land to be planted, bringing of seedlings to planting area and planting of abaca seedlings. In maintenance, it involved cleaning of area, cutting possible weeds along the abaca area. Harvesting is the process where abaca farmers gathered the leafstalk into a fiber. This is through manual stripping or the use of stripping machine, when available. These stripped fibers are left to dry under the sun. As soon as fibers are totally dried, this product is now ready for marketing - the selling of finished strips of abaca. These production activities are made by farmers as a set of interdependent decision. Thus, farmers decide what production methods are best suited for the system of farming (Troost, 1980). Moreover, most wives in the planting area had prepared food for the laborers. The preparation of food is not part of the abaca production but is a performance of a wifely duty in the family.

### Planting

Husband has the biggest contribution in planting abaca. This represented that wife also has participation for their living. Hence, the wife helped in preparing the land by weeding, at time she brought the seedlings to the area for planting. This is in support of the study of Smith (1992) that women participated in all aspects in rural life like raising crops and animals. Moreover, there are children who also participated in the production process. Like their mother, they also brought seedlings to the planting area and they also helped in the land preparation.

**Maintaining**

In maintaining the area, there are wives who helped their husbands in keeping their planting area free from possible destructive weeds. They cleaned the area of weeds that grew along the leafstalk of abaca. Children also helped their parents in cleaning the newly planted area. Both wife and children participated in maintaining the weed-free planting area.

**Harvesting**

Majority of the husbands do the harvesting activities. This meant that husband is strong enough to harvest the leafstalk of abaca. Thus, husband performed the hand stripping that requires more of physical strength in pulling the leafstalk. On the other hand, there are wives who also participated in harvesting. Some wives assisted their husbands in pulling leafstalk. Then, they helped in drying the finished strips of abaca and hauled it depending on their carrying-load capacity. But there are wives who are widowed and separated do have to do the strenuous activities as they have no husband to rely. Sometimes, they hire laborers to harvest the abaca in order to shorten and lessen the work in production. This practice is paid through “tresiohan” (two for owner and one for laborer).

**Marketing**

In terms of marketing, wife and children had the least contribution in this activity. Thus, most husbands performed this activity. This supported the findings of Eastel (1994) in Middle East that men are responsible for marketing agriculture produce. On the other hand, husband put the finished strips abaca in a “katig” (motorcycle that is balanced with a flattened lumber in both sides) and bring the finished product to the market.

**B. Contribution to the economy of the family**

Furthermore, the participation of wife and children in the activities of abaca production has a big contribution in the economy of the family. In which, wife also does what her husband is doing. This participation of wife and children is an addition to the income of the family. This supports the study of Singh (1992) that economic practice to the employment of children in a gainful occupation with the intention of boosting up the income in their family. Besides, this helps to lessen the activities in abaca production because most members in the family participated in the abaca production. Hence, there are wives who are not dependent to their husband because they also work for the family. Moreover, children in the family already help their family. They already learned the work in abaca farming at an early age. They perform what the adults are usually doing. Hence, wives do not only perform reproductive duty only but also productive duty as well; a role that contributes to the economy of the family. On the other hand, Abaca farming is a man’s work but there are wives and children who help and exert their effort in farming as shown in this data.

**Table 1.** The participation of husbands, wives and children in abaca production.

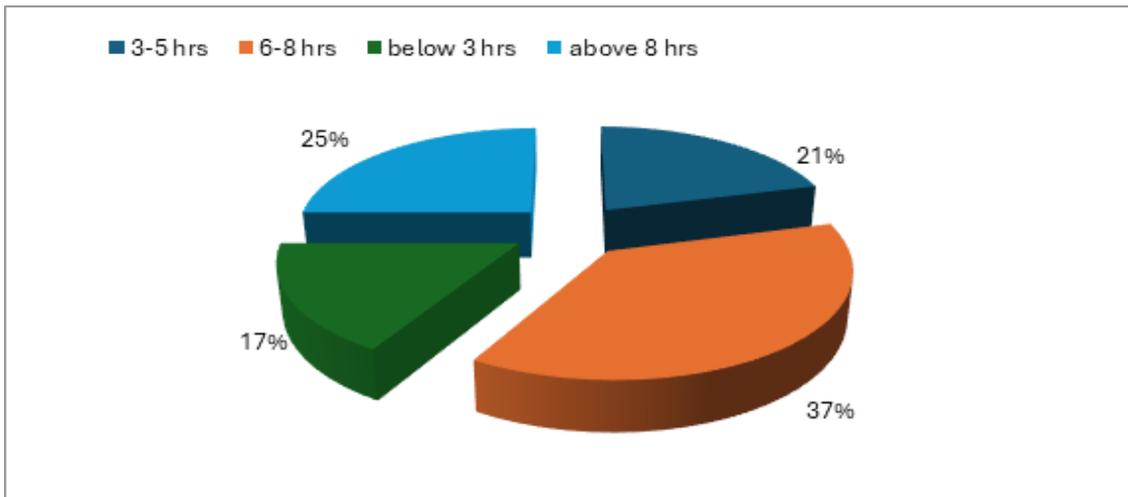
<b>Abaca Production Activities</b>	<b>Husband</b>	<b>Wives</b>	<b>Children</b>
Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing land for plantation</li> <li>• Brings seedlings to the planting area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing land for plantation</li> <li>• Brings seedlings to the planting area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing land for plantation</li> <li>• Brings seedlings to the planting area</li> </ul>

Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing land for plantation</li> <li>• Brings seedlings to the planting area</li> <li>• Planting abaca seedlings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing land for plantation</li> <li>• Brings seedlings to the planting area</li> <li>• Planting abaca seedlings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing land for plantation</li> <li>• Brings seedlings to the planting area</li> <li>• Planting abaca seedlings</li> </ul>
Maintaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning the area</li> <li>• Cutting of weeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning the area</li> </ul>
Harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulling of leafstalk of abaca</li> <li>• Loading of abaca</li> <li>• Drying of abaca fiber under the sun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loading of abaca</li> <li>• Drying of abaca fiber under the sun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loading of abaca</li> <li>• Drying of abaca fiber under the sun</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling of finished abaca</li> </ul>		

**Working condition of wives and children in abaca production**

Based on the figure below, majority or 37% of wives and children work six to eight hours, 21% worked from three to five hours, 17% worked below 3 hours and about 25% or above work 8 hours in the farm area. Those who work more than 8 hours are mostly separated and widow. They go to farm area at four to eight o'clock in the morning. This supported the standard working hours of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, (2018) that working beyond eight hours is considered as an abuse because commonly a person should work from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon. In addition, the house of the farmers is situated far from the abaca farm. The farmers have to leave early so that they have ample time to work in their own farm. They walked for more than an hour to reach their destination. They started to walk at four o'clock in the morning and arrive in the farm almost 6:00 AM depending on the distance of the farm area from their home. The widowed and separated respondents have to double their effort for the sake of their children. This supported the study of Gloop (2008) that woman does not only perform reproductive role but also productive role in generating income of the family. Besides, there are widowed abaca farmers who brought her children early in the morning. At age 14, boys helped in preparing foods in the area. These children are in school but have to be absent sometimes if needed in the farm. This is against the child labor laws that minors age or 16 below cannot be employed.

During the interview, the husband would not allow their wives to go to the farm if the weather is bad and their partners were not feeling well. Husbands in farming area were more concerned for the welfare of their wives. But those wives who are separated and widowed, they sometimes are forced to go to farm area because they do not have their husband to assist them in their livelihood. Thus, after they are done with the household chores, they went to the farm area with their children who can help assist the production activities. On the other hand, if somebody in the family is sick like the children. Only the husband go to the farm area. The wife stayed home and took care of their sick child. When the husband came home from the farm, he assisted her wife in taking care of their child and does rest of the household chores. But those widowed and separated ones, they solely take care of their child and do the household chores.



**Figure 11.** Working hours performed by family member.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, abaca production has different activities in which farmers such as the husband, wife and children participated. The participation of wives and children is a big assistance in the contribution of finances for the family. This helped to lighten the burden and lessen the responsibilities in working area because of the assistance of wives and children. This division of work within the members of the family helped to sustain their needs. Wives helped their husband to augment the income of the family. Widowed and separated wives worked harder to support their family. They exerted most effort as they are the sole breadwinner in the family. Some respondents (wives) work in the farm area as early as 4 am and went home beyond 5:00 pm, they work for more than 8 hours.

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