

Economic Security Assessment of Ma-ayon, Capiz, Philippines during COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the economic security of the Municipality of Ma-ayon, Capiz, Philippines, in terms of livelihood, production, income, market accessibility, and health to determine the extent of the consequence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on the residents. The study evaluates the responses provided by the government, private nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). Residents' strategies to cope with the pandemic were also determined. Results showed that families received cash and food assistance from the local government and other concerned INGOs, which was given to augment the expenses for food, and health. The families also coped with the food shortage by minimizing the number of daily meals and by replacing rice in meals with vegetables and root crops.

Keywords- COVID-19 Pandemic; Economic security; Municipality of Ma-ayon, Capiz; Livelihoods; Nutrition.

Government Finance, Maayon obtained the annual regular revenue of ₱95,760,674.33 for the fiscal year 2016.

The municipality was also beaten by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a huge impact on lives and harm to the livelihoods of the community. Before this pandemic, there were already a lot of calamities that negatively affected the agricultural sector of this town. But, the most worst of them is the COVID-19. The main crops that are considered a source of livelihood and income in the area are corn and rice, but because of these calamities, farmers and laborers are experiencing hardships in raising crops thus affected their daily living difficult. (Dariagan, et al., 2020).

This study was conducted to assesses the economic security of the Municipality of Ma-ayon, Capiz, Philippines, in terms of livelihood, production, income, market accessibility, and health to determine the extent of the consequence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on the residents.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ma-ayon is the 3rd class municipality in the province of Capiz. It consists of 32 villages where the main livelihood of the community is farming. It has a land area of 142.32 square kilometers or 54.95 square miles. It constitutes 5.49% of Capiz's total area. PSA (2015) reported that this municipality has a population of 38,416 people. Based on the report of the Bureau of Local

II. METHODS

Secondary data were collected from the government offices and an ocular survey, direct observation, focus group discussion, and individual interviews with residents who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were conducted.



Figure 1: Map of the (a) Philippines and (b) Ma-ayo, Capiz

III. RESULTS

The community of Ma-ayon, Capiz were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic stopped their livelihoods thus affected their living conditions negatively. This confirmed the report of WHO (2020) that The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide. Harris et al. (2020) also reported the same case that the COVID-19 pandemic affected not only the livelihoods but also the dietary aspect of the people. The local government and concerned NGOs and INGOs provide the residents' food and financial assistance. However, it did not cope up totally to secure enough food in their daily living. Hence, some of the residents ate root crops and vegetables as an alternative to rice and viands as they experiencing food insecurity. Most of the households also received PHP 6,000.00 as cash grants from the government to compensate for food insecurity during the pandemic. Different reactions and emotions they felt when they received assistance from the government. The same results were reported by Bayod et. al. (2020). The LGU did not allow the residents to go out, even the farmers to monitor their farms during the pandemic. This resulted in the corn and rice farmers most affected during the pandemic.

The strategies used by the residents to overcome the difficulties during the pandemic were the following: (1) they practiced half of the food from the normal serving; (2) ate two times a day only; (3) planted vegetables, and root crops in their backyards for the replacement to rice; (4) sold vegetables and other agricultural products to their neighbors and markets by only 1 person from the family; (5) received support from the LGU. These strategies were also similar to the report of Lal (2020) on home gardening and urban agriculture for advancing food and nutritional security in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food Consumption

Ma-ayon experienced food insecurity especially those who are in the lowest class. This situation is an acute crisis (Wolfson and Leung, 2020). The mealtime is supposedly three times a day. However, it was reduced to two times a day especially by those families that have 7 members and above. Sometimes, they could eat canned goods, fishes, and meats if only there was a supply from the LGU. Most of the time, they ate vegetables, and root crops, or the combination of these with rice but with less amount. Results also revealed that adults consumed lesser than those children at 7 up to 18 of age.

Food Production

Ma-ayon farmers engaged with corn and rice farming. However, intensive cultivation was not attended to and conducted on the farm due to the health protocols implemented by the country. Root crops and vegetables are the main alternative crops during the pandemic.

Income

Normally, a corn farmer who owns 1 hectare of corn has an average income of PHP150,000.00/harvest. Unskilled laborers who work at least 15 days a month earn P4,750 a month and skilled workers earn PHP8,000- PHP10,000/month. The tenant shared 50% of the income with the owner, however, during this pandemic, they have been completely dependent on cash assistance.

Nutrition Situation

Results revealed that the lower the food production and income of the family the higher is the malnutrition prevalence rate among the community of Ma-ayon, Capiz during the pandemic. Affected families have difficulty in meeting the recommended 2400 kilocalories per capita per day.

Access to Functioning Markets and Institutional Services

The market is still accessible for a family's daily needs from the central market in the town through a representative from every village. There are rural banks in the area and other money-transfer services. Residents affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were immediately responded to by the government. The government depends on its calamity fund for assistance for the affected residents.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development immediately provided food and cash, whereas the Department of Agriculture distributed a few packs of vegetable seeds. Support from the government agencies addressed the nutrition crisis in vulnerable communities. Ong et. al., (2020) also believed that cash and food assistance from the government is a big help to compensate for the deterioration of the community's income and nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that there was no stable income from farming in the Municipality of Ma-ayon during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, families of Ma-ayon, Capiz limited their food consumption, thus resulted in malnutrition. To overcome the increase of malnutrition, eating vegetables and root crops as an alternative to rice and viands was the best strategy for the community.

Fortunately, residents received assistance from the government. They could also access the market with the help of a village representative. They also followed the health protocols implemented in the country.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the article.

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