

Gendered Participation in Resilience Building: Situating the Role of Women Leaders in Disaster-prone Communities

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Abstract

As an archipelagic nation in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the Philippines is highly prone to natural disasters such as tropical storms, typhoons, and earthquakes. A significant segment of the Philippine population who are vulnerable to these disasters are women, particularly those in disaster-prone communities. However, their integration towards disaster risk reduction and management remains a gap. This study sought to describe the role of women leaders in resilience-building efforts in the disaster-prone communities of Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City, Philippines. Key informant interviews were conducted using a case study approach to gather essential information from selected women leaders. The collected data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify themes. Results indicate that traditional gender norms continue influencing community resilience-building efforts, shaping women's roles in disaster risk reduction and management. Despite these norms, women leaders often take on supportive roles in disaster management. It was also found that women have the potential to influence disaster-resilience initiatives. However, power structures and systemic constraints continue to limit women's participation.

Keywords: *gender, participation, women, resilience, disaster risk reduction management*

Introduction

The Philippines is in the typhoon belt and Pacific Ring of Fire, making it vulnerable to severe environmental hazards and climate change impacts. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (2018), the Philippines ranked third among countries with the highest risks. In 2022, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023), meteorological disasters such as typhoons, tropical cyclones, and the southwest monsoon recorded the highest number of occurrences of natural extreme events and disasters.

A significant segment of the Philippine population that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters are women, particularly those in disaster-prone communities. However, their integration in disaster management in the Philippines remains a gap (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2009). Aboobacker and Nackray (2011) and Collins et al. (2015) explained that these gendered disparities during disasters are mainly unfavorable to women and can be attributed to patriarchal beliefs (Bradshaw & Fordham, 2015) and multiple burdens faced by women (Reyes & Lu, 2016).

The marginalization of women in

disaster-prone communities calls for integrating gender dimension in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). Globally, DRR frameworks such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (United Nations' International Strategy for Disaster Reduction [UNISDR], 2005), the Sendai Framework for DRR (UNISDR, 2015), and the United Nations' Gender Action Plan (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2019) emphasize the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into disaster management. In the Philippines, the Magna Carta of Women, as Section 10 of Republic Act No. 9710 outlines, promotes women's participation in DRRM and assures relief, recovery, and rehabilitation during disasters.

However, the UN Women's Organization asserts that despite legal provisions for gender equality, tangible progress is lacking, and the participation of women in disaster-prone communities remains marginalized. In the context of the Philippines, as per the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2020), Filipino women encounter hurdles in various institutional roles, such as in DRMM, which underscores the need for continued efforts.

Despite these constraints, women are

crucial in shaping policies related to climate change prevention, adaptation, and mitigation (Bousquet et al., 2015). Women extend from family units to the community level, contributing to the community's disaster interventions (Muthoni & Wangui, 2013). Moreover, women remain essential in amplifying climate change adaptation (Patt et al., 2009; Muthoni & Wangui, 2013) by developing innovative and localized solutions to help establish resilient communities (Alam et al., 2015) and contributing to a more active adaptation response (Bousquet et al., 2015).

The vulnerability of the Philippine archipelago and its local communities and the recognition of the crucial role of women in DRRM are compelling reasons to comprehend women's role in disaster-prone communities. Despite growing recognition of the importance of women's participation (UNDRR, 2015; UN Women, 2021; and Lee, et al., 2022), more needs to be done to understand women's participation in disaster-prone communities in the Philippines (UN, 2009; UNDP, 2022).

This study is a humble contribution to understanding women's involvement in disaster management and attempts to situate the role of women leaders towards DRRM in disaster-prone communities in Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City. Barangay Calumpang is one of the disaster-prone areas in General Santos City, Philippines. According to the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (n.d.), Calumpang is prone to storm surges as it is one of the coastal barangays in General Santos City. Moreover, according to the city's hazard matrix (CDRRMP, 2019), the barangay is prone to earthquakes, soil liquefaction, impacts of volcanic eruptions, and the rise of sea level. The barangay is also prone to floods and overflowing canals and creeks since it is near tributaries.

Finally, this study aims to describe the role of women in resilience-building efforts in disaster-prone communities. This study has three-fold objectives: first, it aims to describe the resilience-building efforts in the selected communities; second, it seeks to understand the gender dimensions in resilience-building; and lastly, it attempts to situate the influence of women leaders towards disaster management.

Theoretical Framework

The researchers applied feminist theory and Arnstein's ladder of participation to complete the investigation on the role of women leaders in disaster-prone communities in Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City.

M. Kay Harris argues that feminism

encompasses a set of values, beliefs, and experiences. The core of feminist ideology is the pursuit of equality among all genders rather than merely a prescription for granting women rights. Therefore, feminism is inherently inclusive, addressing the needs and experiences of all people. To realize this vision, Davoudi et al. (2012) advocate for creating opportunities that enhance political voice, promote resistance, and challenge established power structures and prevailing ways of thinking.

Liberal feminist theory is a key framework in disaster studies. According to Enarson (2012), it is an ideal framework for analyzing gendered experiences as it concerns the barriers that prevent women's inclusion and the stereotypical notions of femininity in disaster risk reduction. Moreover, gender is closely tied with social vulnerability and climate change (Enarson & Philips, 2008). By utilizing feminist theory, the everyday realities confronted by women in disaster-prone communities can be better understood.

This research also employed Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969) to determine the influence of women leaders on disaster management. The ladder, as depicted in Figure 1, provides an insightful understanding of the gradations of citizen participation—women leaders in disaster-prone communities, as in this study. The eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern for illustration purposes.

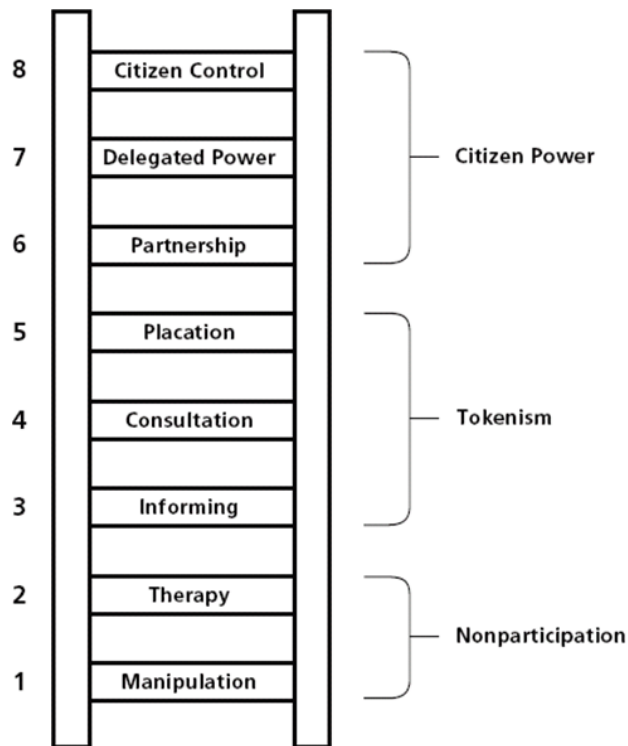
Manipulation, the first level, involves deceptive practices by public institutions and officials that create an illusion of power for citizens while denying them real influence. This study may include appointing women to advisory committees related to DRRM without decision-making authority just to ensure compliance. This approach undermines meaningful participation, relegating women to a subordinate position.

Moreover, (2) Therapy refers to a situation where public officials and administrators design programs that masquerade as participatory. This aims to convince women that they are responsible for the issues they face while disregarding the role of DRRM institutions and policies in creating those problems.

Rungs 3 and 4 lead to "tokenism" (3). Informing emphasizes the need to provide citizens with information about their rights. However, it often involves one-way communication from officials, lacking feedback channels. In this study, this may manifest as superficial meetings that discourage questions and provide irrelevant answers. Consequently, women leaders may feel intimidated by complex legal language and officials' authority, leading them to accept the information as truth or endorse proposals from

Figure 1

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation



those in power.

Consultation at the fourth level involves seeking citizens' opinions and can appear as a legitimate step toward participation. However, without accompanying forms of engagement, this stage remains superficial and fails to genuinely consider citizen concerns. In this study, this is evident in surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings. When women's input is limited to this level, participation in DRRM becomes symbolic, reducing them to mere statistics, with their involvement measured by attendance, brochures, or completed questionnaires.

Placation, the fifth level of participation, refers to a situation where citizens are given a limited level of influence primarily to create an illusion of their involvement. Women's participation in disaster-prone communities at this level is mainly symbolic and tokenistic, demonstrating that they were just included rather than genuinely empowered.

Higher on the ladder are levels of citizen power that involve more significant decision-making influence. At level (6), Partnership allows citizens to negotiate and engage with traditional powerholders. In this study, meaningful participation occurs when public institutions create opportunities for women to

negotiate and collaborate. Women gain the ability to negotiate better outcomes, veto decisions, access shared funding, and have their requests partially fulfilled.

At the highest level, (7) Delegated Power occurs when public institutions relinquish control and decision-making authority to citizens. In this form of participation, women oversee community programs instead of just participating in government-managed ones. Women have significant influence at this stage, ensuring the program remains accountable to them.

(8) Citizen Control involves full authority to govern a program or institution, including responsibility for policymaking and management. In this model, women can negotiate the terms for changes to the program. For example, when public funding is directly allocated to a community organization, it grants them complete autonomy over fund allocation and use. This allows women to exercise full control, ensuring the program aligns with the community's needs and aspirations.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed qualitative research, specifically a case study approach, to describe the

role of women leaders in resilience-building efforts in disaster-prone communities. According to Cresswell (2018), a case study entails a detailed description and analysis of a specific case, examining an event, program, activity, or multiple individuals. This approach is ideal for comprehending and examining the significance that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human issue. It seeks to answer questions related to understanding the meaning of humans' lives and social worlds, with the context of this study focusing on the role of women leaders in disaster-prone communities.

Research Locale

This research is situated in the disaster-prone communities of Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City, as shown in Figure 2. Specifically, this study was deployed in Lower Puting Bato, a flood-prone community, and Saeg, a coastal community.

According to the General Santos City Hazard Matrix cited in CDRRMP (2019), Barangay Calumpang is prone to storm surges, earthquakes, soil liquefaction, ashfall from volcanic eruptions, and rising sea levels. In the flood susceptibility map of General Santos City prepared by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Barangay Calumpang has a high level of susceptibility to floods due to the Makar River, where floods frequently occur.

Moreover, Mount Parker and Mount Matutum pose a threat in the barangay even if they are found in the adjacent municipalities of the provinces of South Cotabato and Sarangani. Should

eruptions occur, lahar is also expected to follow the paths of natural channels directly connecting to the slopes of these volcanoes, including Makar River.

Participants of the Study

Ten (10) participants were selected according to these criteria: First, the participants were residents of the disaster-prone communities of Lower Puting Bato and Saeg of Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City. Second, the research participants were women leaders, including community leaders, district leaders, and association leaders. These women were chosen for their record of leadership and involvement in serving others, their organization, and their community.

Research Instrument

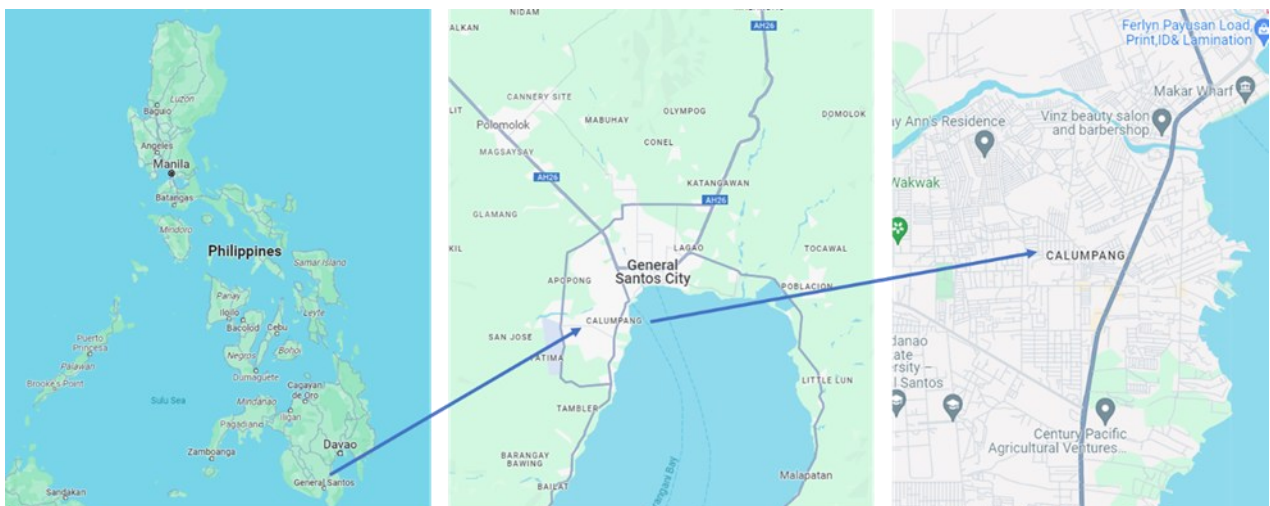
A semi-structured interview guide was utilized for this study's Key Informant Interview (KII). It was expressed in English and translated into vernacular for the community's women leaders. The interview guide was validated by experts before the study to ensure that the questions were appropriate according to the nature and objectives of the research. Specifically, the semi-structured interview guide focused on resilience-building efforts, their gender dimensions, and the influence of women leaders on DRRM.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers conducted Key Informant interviews (KII) to gather more insights and to gain in-depth knowledge through the experiences of

Figure 2

Research Locale (Source: Google Maps)



women leaders in disaster-prone communities in Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City.

In the data gathering, the researchers sent a letter to the barangay. These letters communicated the purpose of the research, provided details about scheduling interviews, and offered relevant information about the subject matter being investigated. The interviews used a semi-structured questionnaire to encourage participants to share their perspectives and insights. The researchers made recordings throughout the interviews to ensure accurate documentation of the entire conversation.

Furthermore, the researchers prioritized establishing rapport with the participants during the interviews by fostering a comfortable and supportive environment. This allowed for a dynamic and engaging conversation in which the researchers could ask follow-up questions, seek clarification, and explore relevant topics in greater depth.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the key informant interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. This analytical method involves identifying and organizing recurring patterns and themes within the data. The thematic analysis serves as a framework for analysis, enabling the researchers to derive meaningful interpretations and findings from the collected data. Using thematic analysis, the researchers identified and categorized vital themes and patterns emerging from the participants' responses.

Ethical Considerations

Particular attention was given to obtaining informed consent from participants. Informed consent involves providing participants with comprehensive details about the study, such as its objectives, methods, potential risks or benefits and the participants' right to withdraw without penalty. The researchers guaranteed that participants had the opportunity to ask questions and fully understand the implications of their voluntary involvement before giving consent.

All data gathered throughout the study were handled with utmost confidentiality to safeguard the privacy of the participants. This means that only authorized individuals involved in the research have access to the data, and steps were taken to ensure that participants cannot be identified directly or indirectly through the reporting or dissemination of the findings.

Additionally, steps were taken to ensure data security and protection. This includes secure data storage and handling, anonymization techniques, and adhering to data protection

regulations or institutional guidelines to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure of sensitive information.

By adhering to these ethical considerations, the researchers aim to uphold the rights and well-being of the participants, maintain the trust and integrity of the research process, and ensure that the study is conducted in an ethically responsible manner.

Results and Discussion

This section of the paper discusses the study's results, specifically the disaster resilience efforts, their gender dimension, and the influence of women leaders in disaster-prone communities.

The Nature of Disaster Resilience Efforts

Understanding the nature of resilience-building efforts in disaster-prone communities is necessary to examine the role of women leaders in disaster resilience. This study's findings suggest a need for sustainable resilience-building strategies in the disaster-prone communities of Barangay Calumpang. The locale's coastal clean-ups and community drives often serve as temporary solutions to the community's vulnerability.

As shown in Table 1, the need for sustainable resilience-building strategies was rooted in the presence of short-term solutions in the community, such as coastal clean-ups. This entails not only immediate actions but also education and awareness initiatives to mitigate the community's vulnerability.

Limitations of Short-term Disaster Resilience Efforts

In Lower Puting Bato and Saeg communities, implementing resilience-building activities such as coastal clean-ups and community drives, while undoubtedly commendable, appears to function as a band-aid solution. The immediate focus on cleaning up coastal areas and engaging in community-driven initiatives may temporarily alleviate visible environmental concerns. However, it must comprehensively tackle the root causes of vulnerability and lack of resilience.

One of the women leaders mentioned, "We are consistently doing community coastal clean-ups, where different groups like the GKK/Zone Leader conduct this to maintain the coastal area of this community." Another woman leader further confirmed this, stating, "We have clean-up drives and implemented a mini garden in our community."

A more progressive and proactive approach to risk reduction is necessary, with the risk

Table 1

Thematic Analysis for Resilience-Building Strategies

Major Theme	Description	Subthemes	Description
The nature of disaster resilience efforts strategies	Community initiatives are present; however, they are often sporadic, which calls for sustainable disaster-resilience initiatives.	Limitations of short-term disaster-resilience efforts	Coastal clean-ups and community drives address immediate concerns but fail to tackle deeper vulnerabilities.
		Importance of continuous education and awareness	There is a critical need for consistent community education programs that enhance disaster resilience.

paradigm shifting from focusing solely on mitigating vulnerability to emphasizing resilience-building (Williams & Shepherd, 2016). However, the results indicate a need to strengthen and enforce a strategic approach emphasizing the need for sustainable and comprehensive resilience-building strategies. A continuous and multifaceted approach is essential to empower communities to foster long-term resilience and ensure lasting positive impacts on their social, economic, and environmental well-being.

Fostering resilience requires a multidimensional approach that goes beyond sporadic clean-up activities. It involves community education on sustainable practices, establishing robust waste management infrastructure, and implementing policies that promote environmental conservation. Emphasizing these components is essential to ensure that the community copes with immediate challenges and develops the capacity to adapt and thrive in future calamities.

Importance of Continuous Education and Awareness

Sustainable resilience-building efforts, such as disaster seminars and training in flood-prone and coastal communities, are of paramount importance. The disaster-prone communities of Barangay Calumpang face inherent vulnerabilities; however, disaster management has focused only on coastal clean-ups and community drives rather than disaster education and awareness initiatives.

The study reveals a concerning trend where seminars are either held annually or as one-time events, leaving these communities inadequately equipped with disaster preparedness. Notably, female leaders in these areas underscore the rarity of such seminars and training, emphasizing that the existing programs are infrequent.

One of the participants mentioned, "We

have seminars on what to do in facing calamities; it is a one-time program on how we give awareness to people, especially in preparation in times of calamity." Thus, the need for consistent community awareness efforts becomes evident in the research locale, given the nature and characteristics of their resilience-building efforts.

According to Dung and Hai (2012), developing human and community capacity leads to reduced response times and enhanced proactive disaster mitigation measures. As per the National Council for Disaster Risk Reduction (NCDRR), this approach contributes to heightened risk awareness and proves cost-effective regarding response measures. The critical role of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) is underscored by the fact that many individuals in these communities remain unaware of the inherent threats in their society, necessitating a sustained and comprehensive approach to disaster preparedness. One of the women leaders highlighted, "There should be a consistent seminar for the community since we live in a coastal area."

Thus, the nature of coastal living requires continuous learning and preparedness efforts rather than short-term resilience-building strategies. A proposal has been made to establish a consistent seminar series tailored to residents' needs rather than sporadic coastal clean-ups. This community-driven approach suggests a desire to empower residents with knowledge and skills to contribute to their safety, well-being, and sustainability in the face of disaster in their communities.

Gender Dimension in Disaster Resilience Efforts

The study's results indicate that resilience-building strategies in Barangay Calumpang were still influenced by traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles compound

Table 2

Thematic Analysis on the Gender Dimension of Disaster Resilience Strategies

Major Theme	Description	Subthemes	Description
Gender dimension in disaster resilience efforts	Traditional gender roles still exist, which limit women's participation.	Women's participation in disaster resilience efforts	Women often engage in community communication, food preparation, and recovery efforts.
		Internalized gender norms among women leaders	Women leaders experience feelings of inferiority, which reflects internalized oppression that associates capability with gender.

the need for sustainable resilience-building efforts and affect women's participation in disaster-prone communities.

Women leaders play a critical role in planning and coordinating responses, often focusing on tasks that involve communication, support, and practical assistance, such as food preparation. However, as depicted in Table 2, women's participation is still compartmentalized to traditional gender roles, perpetuating internalized gender norms among women leaders that affect their participation in disaster management.

Women's Participation in Disaster Resilience Efforts

The gendered aspect of disasters highlights gender disparities in society in which women are the more vulnerable population (Collins et al., 2015). This research manifested this with the compartmentalization of women's participation in disaster resilience efforts that do not require so much physical strength, as women are perceived as physically inferior compared to men. One study participant articulates this distinction, acknowledging the inherent limitations in engaging in physically demanding tasks traditionally assigned to men, such as the manual labor involved in setting up temporary dikes.

Despite these constraints, women, including the participant, play a pivotal role in orchestrating and executing the planning stages of resilience-building efforts. The findings of this study indicate the crucial and proactive role women leaders assume when spearheading resilience-building efforts, specifically on community communication and food preparation. She stated that:

"We women usually announce and update the people on where and what to do. During the calamity or disaster, we women prepare food and assist the people. In recovery, we still assist those affected and help with the needs of the people.

Aside from initiating training, as a woman, I need to focus on initiating a tree planting activity, especially in our riverside, so that if there is a disaster, we have the tree to prevent us from having so much destruction here in our community. "

Women's participation transcends beyond their families and contributes to disaster interventions in the community (Muthoni & Wangui, 2013). The participant's perspective provides valuable insight into the multifaceted contributions of women in disaster management. While unable to perform heavy-duty tasks, women excel in disseminating crucial information to the community, ensuring preparedness and coordination. Moreover, their role extends to providing practical assistance during calamities, including food preparation and aid distribution.

In the recovery phase, women continue to play a hands-on role, addressing the specific needs of affected individuals. Beyond immediate response efforts, the participants emphasize the importance of proactive measures, proposing a tree-planting initiative in riverside areas. This approach aims to lessen the impact of disasters by leveraging nature-based solutions, demonstrating women leaders' foresight and commitment to long-term resilience in their communities. One of the participants stated:

"We are assigned to announce that we already have a device that would help people also during the calamity to let them know that an earthquake is happening just like a trumpet. Our community is here, which does not mean I am the only one working if others are working. During the calamity, women are assigned to assist those who need food to eat and manage their situation, while men are assigned to carry and lift those things they have. We cleaned the canal during the recovery because the garbage was stuck after the flood."

Women's participation in disaster management contributes to a more active

adaptation response (Bousquet et al., 2015). The statement recognized that women are designated roles focused on providing immediate assistance and managing situations, particularly addressing the crucial need for food distribution.

On the other hand, men are assigned to tasks that involve physical strength, such as lifting and carrying essential items. This division of labor acknowledges the diverse skills and strengths within the community and ensures that everyone contributes effectively to disaster response efforts.

This delineation of roles during a calamity further reflects a gender-aware approach to tasks. According to Yumarni et al. (2014), the conventional structure of gender roles determines how disasters affect men and women. The gender roles during different phases of disaster response demonstrate a comprehensive and community-driven approach to resilience-building. It reflects a proactive stance in leveraging resources, skills, and workforce within the community to address the various aspects of disaster management, from early warning to immediate response and subsequent recovery efforts.

Moreover, this study offers a compelling narrative that aligns with the principles of liberal feminism, emphasizing the crucial and proactive role of women leaders in resilience-building efforts within their communities. Liberal feminism advocates for women's opportunities through women's active participation in planning stages, as reflected in the case of the women leaders of Barangay Calumpang.

However, the participant's acknowledgment of inherent limitations in physically demanding tasks traditionally assigned to men, such as manual labor, underscores the prevailing internalized gender norms perpetuating a feeling of inferiority among women leaders.

Internalized Gender Norms Among Women Leaders

In the face of calamities, the community has long adhered to the convention of assigning men to physically demanding tasks, like hauling and carrying, recognizing their perceived strength. One of the women leaders mentioned, *"Men are usually assigned heavy duties, especially hauling things or carrying things women cannot do."*

The statements reflect traditional gender norms, indicating that men are typically tasked with physically demanding responsibilities such as hauling and carrying. This aligns with established societal expectations that link specific duties to gender, particularly emphasizing the physical strength of men. One of the participants stated:

"The role of the men in this community, especially in the context of resilience-building

effort, is important. Men are strong, and their physical endurance can affect their role in these efforts. They are mostly the performers and reliable regarding the heavy duties."

The statement above emphasizes men's enduring significance in resilience-building efforts, attributing their pivotal role to physical strength and endurance. Men's characterization as "performers" and "reliable" underscores their perceived importance in tasks beyond mere physical labor.

The community recognizes the unique strengths of both men and women, acknowledging the changing roles of women while maintaining the importance of men in certain aspects of resilience building. This dynamic interplay underscores the complexity of gender dynamics within the community, reflecting an ongoing process of negotiation and adaptation as it seeks to optimize the contributions of all its members in the pursuit of robust resilience strategies.

Moreover, a traditional perspective links women's abilities to perceived physical limitations. Women are deemed incapable of specific tasks due to an assumed physical weakness, perpetuating a broader societal narrative that associates strength primarily with men. One of the participants explained, *"Usually, they said that women cannot do it because of the task's weight. That is the weakness of women."*

The given statement reflects a traditional view of women, suggesting they are incapable of specific tasks in resilience due to perceived physical weakness. The assertion that *"women cannot do it because of the weight of the task"* implies a generalization based on gender, overlooking the diversity of individual strengths and capabilities among women. By attributing the inability of women to handle specific tasks to a perceived weakness, the statement overlooks the multifaceted skills and capacities that individuals possess, irrespective of their gender.

"There are times that I feel weak, especially some work that mostly belongs to men and cannot be done by the power of women. Especially when carrying water jugs, I cannot do it, so we will call other people, mostly men, to help us."

The above discussion and statements reflect the experiences and perceptions regarding feelings of inferiority among women leaders in disaster-prone communities. This can be attributed to internalized gender norms and learned helplessness, which, according to Tappan (2005), refers to the internalization and acceptance of individuals in an oppressed group of the biases directed at them by the dominant society.

Women have accepted and learned from

these experiences and perceptions. David (2014) further explained that this internalized oppression happens when people from an oppressed group adopt the systems of oppression and act in ways that sustain these systems.

Power Dynamics and Women's Influence in Disaster Management

The resilience-building efforts reflect traditional gender roles, which continue to impact women's participation in disaster resilience efforts. Moreover, the power structure is compounded with systemic constraints, as the findings of this study suggest. Influence the disaster management initiatives of women leaders.

Table 3 indicates that women have the potential for influence. However, it is still prejudiced by traditional barriers exacerbated by factors such as limited financial resources and lack of support from key decision-makers. This scenario reflects a tokenistic form of participation under Arnstein's ladder of participation.

Potential for Influence of Women Amidst Systemic Constraints

The results of this study acknowledge the potential influence of women on resilience-building efforts in their disaster-prone communities. However, power structures and systemic constraints limit the participation of women in disaster management.

One participant mentioned, *"We can influence our chairperson to implement programs; however, due to limited funds, there are sometimes hindrances to a successful implementation."* Another participant stated, *"We can lobby policy to our community chairperson; however, due to budget constraints, some are not implemented."*

Acknowledging limited funds introduces a constraint that can hinder the successful implementation of disaster-resilience programs.

This highlights a broader societal challenge where even when women can influence decisions, systemic constraints like financial limitations can impede their efforts to effect positive change.

Despite the potential influence wielded by women in advocating for disaster-related policies, the limitations posed by budget constraints underscore the systemic challenges that may hinder the translation of their advocacy into tangible policy outcomes. One of the women leaders explained, *"While it is possible to initiate specific actions, some individuals may not offer support. Especially when there is no support for the policies and programs from the chairperson, the initiatives will not matter in the end."*

The statement highlights a crucial challenge – the potential lack of support from key individuals. This suggests that while women may have the initiative to drive change, the effectiveness of their efforts could be hindered by resistance or a lack of backing from some quarters. This resistance might be rooted in existing power structures, and the specific mention of the chairperson's support introduces a hierarchical dimension to the power dynamics.

This implies that the endorsement of key figures, particularly those in positions of authority like the chairperson, is crucial for the success of initiatives. This acknowledges the broader societal challenge where existing power structures may influence the impact and acceptance of women-led initiatives.

Additionally, while women can initiate actions, their ability to create meaningful change may be contingent on navigating and challenging established power dynamics, gaining crucial support, and overcoming resistance from individuals. It emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and supportive environment that recognizes and values women's influence on disaster initiatives.

Table 3

Thematic Analysis for the Influence of Women Leaders in Disaster Management

Major Theme	Description	Subthemes	Description
Power dynamics and women's influence in disaster management	Women's participation is influenced by power structures and systemic constraints perpetuating a tokenistic form of participation.	Potential for influence of women amidst systemic constraints	Women demonstrate the ability to influence. However, financial limitations and lack of support often hinder their efforts.
		Navigating power structures as barriers to participation	Women face significant barriers in policymaking due to power structures, which reflect a form of tokenism in decision-making processes.

Navigating Power Structures as Barriers to Women Participation

Women continue to participate in disaster management despite being excluded and having unequal representation (Alam et al., 2015). Higher-ups often influence the fate of policies and programs in many societal structures, including disaster-prone communities.

For women in Barangay Calumpang, this can be a formidable barrier. The mention of struggles and the potential non-implementation of disaster resilience initiatives suggests that women may encounter resistance when seeking to influence policy decisions that may be rooted in established power structures.

One of the women leaders explained, "When it comes to policy making, we have difficulties when the higher-ups or the community officials do not support the initiatives we want to implement; then there is always struggle, and the worst is that the initiatives will not be implemented."

The struggles mentioned imply a power imbalance in which specific individuals or groups disproportionately influence policymaking. The success of initiatives is contingent on the support of those in positions of authority. This shed light on the challenges faced by individuals, particularly women, in exerting influence in disaster-prone communities. The explicit mention of encountering difficulties when higher-ups or officials withhold support implies a distinct lack of genuine participation and influence in disaster management.

This aligns closely with the lower rungs of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969). The reference to difficulties and lack of support suggests a scenario that resonates with a degree of tokenism under placation. According to Arnstein, placation is a form of engagement in which citizens are provided with limited chances to contribute, but their ideas or feedback should be considered more seriously and integrated into the decision-making process, where individuals may be included symbolically or superficially but do not possess substantive decision-making power. In such instances, their involvement may be more symbolic than impactful, reflecting a form of participation that needs more genuine influence.

The disaster management in this study is influenced by internalized gender norms, power structure, and systemic constraints that limit the ability of women leaders to contribute to and shape disaster resilience initiatives effectively. For more meaningful progress, there is a need for more inclusive and participatory approaches in decision-making to foster environments where women have real opportunities to influence policies.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to describe the role of women leaders in resilience-building efforts in the disaster-prone communities in Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City, Philippines. The findings indicate that coastal clean-ups and community drives, the common initiatives in the research area, provide only temporary solutions that call for a more sustainable resilience-building effort. To address this concern, integrating grassroots disaster governance, particularly Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CBDRRM) was deemed crucial to foster local ownership and to encourage active community participation. Through CBDRRM, disaster management originates from and is organized by local communities through utilizing local resources and capacities in the design, implementation, and monitoring making disaster resilience initiatives more sustainable.

Moreover, the findings of this study show that the crucial role of women was only highlighted during the planning stages of resilience initiatives, which resonates with liberal feminism's recognition of women's capabilities. However, the results further suggest that resilience-building efforts manifest traditional gender roles, and power structure and systemic constraints limit women's influence in disaster resilience efforts. These results suggest tokenism under the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, indicating a need to integrate the gender dimension into DRRM for a more inclusive and participatory disaster management. This can be achieved by capacitating women-led disaster resilience initiatives and by integrating resilience-building efforts in the Gender and Development (GAD) programs to legitimize and support women's contribution to DRRM. Moreover, gender-inclusive needs assessments to understand the vulnerabilities and capacities of women to facilitate gender-responsive training programs such as risk assessment and early warning systems emerge as essential components in this study.

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