

# Economic Security Assessment in Catubig Northern Samar Philippines

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**Abstract:-** This study conducted to assess the economic security of Catubig in terms of food production, food consumption, livelihood, income and living condition of the municipality of Catubig, Northern Samar, Philippines. Analyze the extent of disaster response provided by the government, Non-Government Organizations (NGO), International Non-Government Organizations (INGO), and concerned groups and individuals to the affected population and how people cope to crises using their local assets or resources after the disaster. Successive and severe typhoons in the past 2 years had majorly affected coconut production, it was mentioned that the main income source was dependent on copra. Poor households becoming poorer as income from said livelihood was affected. Additionally, remoteness of these areas makes it difficult to access basic government services adding further to its economic insecurities.

There were families who are member of Cash transfer (a government program) who receive cash grants to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children. This will also augment the expenses of the family for the food, health and education of their children. The family cope with the food shortage of food by reducing number of meal per day, replacement of rice by root crops and vegetables. Borrowing of money from small sari-sari shops in supporting their house hold (HH). Taking children out of school and rather obliged or forced to help the family to earn income in the form of labor. Selling of productive assets like land or livestock in case of emergencies related to health, education and death.

**Keywords:-** Assessment, Crises, Disaster, Economic, Catubig Northern Samar, Security.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Catubig is a third class municipality in the province of Northern Samar located on the east part of Las Navas with a total land area of 21, 500 hectares. It has a total population of 31, 723 people, politically subdivided into 47 barangays mostly situated in the outlying areas. An area affected both by armed conflict and typhoon to mark typhoon Yolanda and several typhoons like Glenda, Amang and Ruby.

On-going military operations in the area and reported security incidents within the neighboring municipality had caused an indirect effect on the livelihood of small village farmers. Moreover, the effects of yearly typhoons which hindered the full recovery of coconuts had caused a decrease in income from said livelihood source.

On the livelihood aspect, most of the land area of Catubig is devoted on agricultural production of coconut, abaca, rice, cash crops and vegetables. The leading source of cash income is coconut followed by abaca. Upland and some lowland rice are mainly for food consumption. Eighty percent (80%) of the total population are coconut farmers and landless laborers dependent mainly on labour works such hauling of farm products (e.g. copra and abaca) and labor from government projects. Other sources of income are small business enterprise, motorboat and motorcycle operator and irregular remittance from household (HH) members working in the NCR as domestic, construction and factory workers.

Eighty percent (80%) of coconut farmers and abaca producers suffered the effects of yearly typhoons to mark year 2013 up to the present year which had caused up to an estimated 80% drop of their produce and income from said livelihood source. Pre-shock harvest of copra normally would be 3,000 nuts of coconut per 1 hectare of land with a net income of 6,750 peso per quarter. After the typhoon plus effects of armed conflict, they could only gather at least 600 nuts of coconut with a corresponding drop of net income to 2,250 peso per quarter. Additionally, for every 200 square meter of rain fed rice, pre-shock harvest totals to 16 sacks but production has greatly dropped down to at least 2-3 sacks of rice. This recent scenario makes income and production economically insecure as a consequence of armed conflict and typhoon in the assessed villages.



Fig 1:- A map of the Catubig, Northern Samar, Philippines

**II. OBJECTIVES**

- find out the status of food production, livelihood, income and living condition of the selected barangays in municipality of Catubig, Northern Samar
- analyze the extent of disaster response provided by the government, NGOs, INGOs, and concerned groups and individuals to the affected population
- find out how the people cope to crisis using their local assets or resources after the typhoon hit the area

**III. METHODOLOGY**

The assessment focus primarily on the economic security situation of the municipality of Catubig as pre-identified and recommended municipal office as areas for interventions due to delay or lack of government services delivered due to the remoteness of villages or barangays,

effects of low intensity conflict and natural calamities in the area which is of high interest to conduct the assessment. Key informant interviews both at the barangay and municipal level, random household interviews, direct observations and focus group discussions among farmers, laborers, women and senior citizen’s sector were conducted to gather information related to pre-shock and after shock conditions resulting further to economic insecurity of the affected population including their livelihood coping strategies and programs by the government to address these economic issues. Collection and review of Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) provided at the municipal and electronic data from net were also made to come up with an analysis of the economic situation in the area and formulation of appropriate interventions in the future to respond to acute humanitarian needs.

| Municipality | Informant Interviews  | Group Discussions   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Catubig      | Municipal Councilor, Municipal Development Officer, Local Government Officials and other respected leaders in the community | Involving farmers, fisherfolks, laborers, women, children and senior citizen sector |

Table 1:- Shows the number of KII, FGDs and HH Visits made during the assessment

| Office/Villages visited                           | Location/description   |
|---|--|
| Maragano village Cluster<br>Binay village Cluster | Upland villages (cluster of 3 villages) 30 min by land cruiser (LC)<br>Coastal Village (cluster of 3 villages) 30 min by LC, and 20 minutes by walk            |
| MSWD, MDRRMO, Agriculture, Office of Vice Mayor   | Town Center  |
| Napo  | Riverside, and flat to hilly village; 30 min. by LC  |
| Talalora<br>Capacujan<br>Bagacay                  | Coastal Village (cluster of 3 villages) 15 min by LC<br>Near the river, plane to hilly-upland village 30 min by LC<br>Near the river, Hilly to upland village, |
| Sta. Fe   | Near the river, plane to hilly-upland area, 20 min by LC, 5 minutes by river boat and 8 minutes by motorcycle  |
| San Vicente                                       | Near the river, plane to hilly-upland area, 20 minutes by LC   |
| Roxas   | Plane to upland area, woodland area, 30 minutes by LC  |

Table 2:- Villages were assessment conducted

#### IV. RESULTS

All the villages covered by the assessment were interior and slightly upland and forested barangays which can only be accessed by foot, motorcycle and motorboat via municipalities of Jipapad and Las Navas. Majority of the population in these areas were farmers mainly dependent on copra, abaca, rice and labor works as their main income source. Availability of labor works and income may depend primarily on the season and quantity of farm products produced. Aside from farming, some households have livestock (e.g. water buffalo, swine, chicken), others were also engaged in small business enterprise, motorboat and motorcycle operation, local migrants working as domestic, construction and factory workers.

The total number of women was a bit higher compared to men with an average household size of 4-5 members. Typically, the male stands as head of households with cases of women/senior citizen headed households. Average income per household was 50 peso per day or 1,500 peso per month as majority of them depends mainly on labor and its availability.

##### ❖ *Economic Security*

###### *A. Food Consumption*

Rice was the main staple food in these areas with only one cropping season per year. Harvest season falls on the months of March and April for lowland rice while September to October for upland rice. It is only during these months that rice is not bought and income generated from labor works can budgeted for buying fish or meat even once a month and other HH expenditures. While the remaining months were considered lean season. During lean season, people starts to buy rice, may decrease the number and quantity of food served per meal, resort to eating crops and vegetables available in the community in replacement of rice. Very poor households often opted to skip meal during breakfast prioritizing the children and take coffee, instead.

###### *B. Food Production*

Rice, root crops and vegetables were mostly produced for food consumption. Copra and abaca was normally produced for income source while livestock such as carabaos were commonly used in the farm, poultry for food consumption and cock fighting as a means of recreation and pigs for consumption during fiesta and income source during emergencies or unexpected expenditures related to health, education and death. Upland and lowland rice farming was limited to food consumption as there was only 1 cropping per year, dependent on rain as there was no irrigation canals in the area. Common farm tools were limited to plough, small sickle and tractors from private owners and some donated by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) to organized farmers' associations in the area. Tractors donated by NIA can only be utilized by its members while tractors privately owned can be rented with payment arrangement of 1 sack out of 10 sacks harvest.

###### *C. Income*

Income from copra and abaca were the main source of cash. Only a limited number of HHs has access to land or particularly owns it thus, majority depends on labor works. While others were engaged in small business enterprise, remittance from relatives in the NCR and operators of motorcycle and motorboat. Labor works offered by government projects through KALAHI CIDSS NCDDP (government program) and NIA were also available. Eighty percent of the income source comes from agricultural sources and was spent mostly in the purchase of food.

###### *D. Basic Living Condition*

Built shelters were concentrated in the village proper. Majority of the total population have shelters made of nipa shingle, bamboo, amacan (tree bark) and salvaged materials with furniture limited to wooden table and chairs. Food preparation was made by the use of fuel, firewood and charcoal gathered from the forest. Basic utensils found or observed were cooking pots, plates, glass, spoon and fork. There was no room or division of the house and HHs typically sleeps on the floor using mats.

Two Villages don't have connections from electricity instead they used generators as electric source but limited only to households who can purchase such. Forty percent (40%) have no access to sanitary toilets and eliminate their fecal waste directly to the creek. Recent cases of skin

allergies and bloody diarrhea in these areas have recently been reported due to unsafe drinking water and contamination of water source from debris, human and animal waste.

| Name of Villages | #HH | #Farmers | #Farm Laborers | # Fishermen | 4Ps beneficiaries |
|------------------|-----|----------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Osang            | 110 | 52       | 22             | 1           | 135               |
| Osmeña           | 148 | 6        | 91             | 87          | 146               |
| P. Rebadulla     | 130 | 76       | 120            | 0           | 61                |
| Roxas            | 349 | 57       | 90             | 127         | 170               |
| Sagudsuron       | 387 | 108      | 52             | 0           | 160               |
| San Antonio      | 336 | 89       | 192            | 3           | 97                |
| San Francisco    | 107 | 39       | 95             | 0           | 86                |
| San Jose         | 324 | 218      | 175            | 0           | 129               |
| San Vicente      | 80  | 20       | 55             | 0           | 16                |
| Santa Fe         | 210 | 96       | 111            | 0           | 87                |

Table 3:- Livelihood/Income activities in assessed villages

| Barangay      | Total HH | Totally damaged houses | Moderately to heavily damaged houses | No. of HH with no or unsanitary toilet | Water Source         |         |         |        |
|---------------|----------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------|---------|--------|
|               |          |                        |                                      |  | Level 1 River/spring | Level 2 | Level 3 | Others |
| Osang         | 110      | 35                     | 75                                   | 59                                     | 33                   | 71      | 0       | 6      |
| Osmeña        | 148      | 78                     | 44                                   | 69                                     | 114                  | 31      | 0       | 3      |
| P. Rebadulla  | 130      | 40                     | 63                                   | 40                                     | 95                   | 28      | 0       | 7      |
| Roxas         | 349      | 71                     | 211                                  | 118                                    | 217                  | 116     | 0       | 16     |
| Sagudsuron    | 387      | 35                     | 352                                  | 100                                    | 387                  | 0       | 0       | 0      |
| San Antonio   | 336      | 31                     | 186                                  | 103                                    | 86                   | 193     | 0       | 57     |
| San Francisco | 107      | 22                     | 80                                   | 34                                     | 70                   | 10      | 0       | 27     |
| San Jose      | 324      | 24                     | 251                                  | 138                                    | 102                  | 158     | 0       | 64     |
| San Vicente   | 80       | 22                     | 53                                   | 50                                     | 24                   | 39      | 0       | 18     |
| Santa Fe      | 210      | 15                     | 158                                  | 107                                    | 72                   | 118     | 0       | 20     |

Table 4:- Basic Living Condition, Sanitation &amp; water

### E. Nutrition Situation

Data on malnutrition of the areas visited were not available and actual nutrition survey was not conducted thus, severity of malnutrition cannot be determined. It cannot also be concluded that malnutrition number have increased after the successive typhoons. However, it was consistent during Focus Group Discussions that coconut production has significantly dropped and income situations has not improve yet.

Health service offered was limited to vaccinations and pre-natal check-up for pregnant women through quarterly and irregular visits of the municipal health personnel.

### F. Who are the Most Affected and Why

The most affected are the landless laborers mainly dependent on the availability of labor works whose average monthly income is 3,000 down to 1,500 php compared to the actual expenses required or incurred by the HHs thereby unable to meet the HHs essential needs making them more economically insecure.

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Coping Strategies

- Reduced quantity of food served per meal
- Reduced number of meal per day, a normal 3x a day meal drop to 2x a day meal)
- Replacement of rice by root crops and vegetables or taking coffee during breakfast
- Less protein diet
- Borrowing of money to small sari-sari shops in supporting the HH needs whenever there was no generated income during the waiting period before the cropping season
- Support from cash transfer program as conditional cash grant.
- An average of 4 times yearly copra production may exceed to 5 times, even the not fully matured nuts were harvested in order to have income to support HH needs.
- Taking children out of school and rather obliged or forced to help the family to earn income in the form of labor.
- Selling of productive assets like land or livestock in case of emergencies related to health, education and death.
- Migration by both men (mostly skilled workers) and women (mother or a daughter capable of working) to the NCR applying as domestic, construction and factory worker.

### B. Access to and Functioning of Markets

All of the assessed remote barangays have rough road access connecting to markets mostly accessible by means of foot, motorcycles and motorboats. Most of the community residents buy their essential households in the small shops in the barangay or either in municipalities of

Jipapad and Las Navas when budget permits or during cash transfer release. Other villages delivered their farm products in Las Navas while some in Jipapad. Small shop sell goods on credit (maximum of 500 peso credit) at the community level and collect dues during cash transfer payout or when cropping and labor already starts. There were no lending institutions or companies present in the area.

Locally produced goods are copra, abaca, rice, root crops then local vegetables like bitter guard, eggplant, string beans and squash. Selling price of rice was 85 peso per 2.5 kg., copra was sold at 15peso/kg., abaca at 55peso/kg. Chicken meat was worth 150peso/kg and fish were being delivered by fish vendors coming from municipality of Pambujan with prices ranging from 150-60peso/kg depending on fish size. Cash was the basic payment for goods or labor though there were certain cases where food can also be used as mode of payment in exchange for labor.

### C. Access to and Functioning of Other Institutions, Services and Processes<sup>1</sup>

- Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) who was apparently responsible in making ordinances and policies in the maintenance of peace and order and waste management in the barangay. Additionally, they were responsible also in the implementation of various programs and services related to agriculture, livelihood, infrastructures, flow of basic services on health and nutrition, education and day care services. However, access to these services depend also on the capacity of BLGU to organize an active committee who will be in-charge in the implementation considering also the availability of barangay fund to support these endeavors. It was noted that these villages don't have organized committee for Solid Waste Management System on the problem of waste in the barangay nor an ordinance prohibiting fecal elimination both by animals and humans directly to the creek. Identified Barangay Health Workers (BHW) provide primary health care service limited only to weighing of children.
- Parent Teachers Association (PTA) in coordination with cash transfer member ensure that families sending their children to school comply with the conditions set by the program though there were still cases of non-compliance.
- Barangay Agriculture Worker (BAW) identified by the Department of Agriculture (DA) were present per village but commitment may depend on the person's drive to report and seek agriculture-related assistance directly to the DA to provide quality service towards the community in terms of food production.
- Farmers Association in some villages organized by NIA inactive since the project irrigation canal was not yet completed at the same time utilization of provided tractors were limited only for the use of its members.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

These areas has long been poverty-stricken. Successive and severe typhoons in the past 2 years had majorly affected coconut production and reason why coconut production may not completely recovered. There were no reported displacements despite the clashes of government troops and rebel troops as these has been irregular in nature though fear among the community in proceeding with livelihood activities, being caught in crossfire and be investigated by the government troops had caused disruption to their regular visits in the farm.

It was mentioned that the main income source was dependent on copra thus effect on its production does not only imply a direct effect to households who particularly own coconut farmlands but also to households dependent on labor. Poor households becoming poorer as income from said livelihood was affected. The capacity to provide the basic household needs (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, hygiene kits, health and education) was gradually unmet. There were cases of average wealth group selling productive assets like land, pigs or carabaos to members of the community who has the purchasing power. Additionally, remoteness of these areas makes it difficult to access basic government services adding further to its economic insecurities. Thus, there was a need for intervention as coping strategies, may pose serious effects on health and nutrition if these economic insecurities were left unresolved.

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