

# COMPLETION REPORT

## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FISH/PEARL (WOMEN) DIVERS IN JAPAN AND IN THE PHILIPPINES

Aimed at putting a face on the marginalized women, this study attempted to compare the situations of women divers in the Philippines and Japan to foster a greater understanding of their situations given a different socio-economic, political and cultural context. Specifically, the study examined the women divers' access to and control over fishing resources, activities involved in, problems faced; and views of their work.

The study adopted a qualitative approach and employed focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KII) and participant observation (PO) and document reviews. The study was done in Manipulon of the Municipality of Estancia, Province of Iloilo, Sombrero of the municipality of Aborlan, Province of Palawan, and Nilusutan of Samal City, Province of Davao del Norte in the Philippines and Sugashima island of Toba City, Mie Prefecture and Iki island, Nagasaki Prefecture in Japan.

The study found that, despite the different level of economic development, situations of women divers appear to be similar yet unique in a number of aspects – diving gears, fishing tools, species of fish catch, social center, access to and control of fishery resources, activities, problems faced, dreams.

In Japan, the women divers contribute significantly to the fishing sector of their respective villages providing the most prized abalone and other valued species – sea urchin, turban shells, lobsters and seaweeds. Their image is a big contrast to the widely Japanese imagined feminine beauty and behavior – quiet, slim, shy, demure, self-effacing and pale. Similarly, in the Philippines, women divers contribute to the fishing sector, the well-being of the village and family but their contribution has never been recognized and accounted to. Both stories remain untold and interests not mainstreamed in the local development plans, thus, marginalized.

Both appear to be strong, independent, self-possessed and in-charge of their respective families and the sea when diving. Compelled by the need to augment their families' income, these women divers courageously engaged themselves in diving, despite the hardships and risks involved.

Both divers manifest the need to socialize with fellow divers through their “self-made” social center. While the Ama have their amagoya inside the boat in these days, the divers in the Philippines use the open space along the beach to rest and exchange stories while they grill and enjoy a portion of their catch after diving. For most of these women divers, this “socialization” with fellow divers is one of their exciting times.

While the women divers in the study sites in Japan are relatively older with age ranging from 40-74 years old, those in the Philippines are younger with age ranging from 25 to 53 years old. This picture appears to be a reflection of the demographic profile of the two countries with Japan characterized by an aging population and the Philippine, young population.

The different diving clothes and tools of the women divers in the two countries reflect the level of economic development of the study sites. The relatively higher socio-economic situation of the Ama divers enable them to purchase modern diving clothes and gears for protection and efficient diving. This is in stark contrast with the situation of the women divers in the Philippines who, because of their limited financial capacity, find themselves making the most of what is available.

The women divers' also have different access to fishing grounds and fishery resources which is also a reflection of the different fishery management system adopted by the countries.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)
Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)
Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.) <b><u>This is tentative</u></b> Publisher : LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co.KG (German-Based) Data : No Data of the Book yet Title : Woman Divers of Asia (Tentative) Author : Cristina P. Lim, Yasuhiro Ito and Yoshiaki Matsuda