



## HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING PATTERNS AMONG KALINGAS IN TABUK CITY

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**Abstract:** *This paper looked into the dynamics of household decision-making and into the changing allocations of tasks, responsibilities and authority within Kalinga households in Tabuk City. It aims to provide additional information on the perceptions of respondents with regard to reasons or factors underlying joint husband-wife decision-making patterns and those behind the autonomous or independent decisions of either husband or wife, and whether respondent's characteristics such as sex, education of husbands and wives as well as employment of wives influence decision-making patterns within Kalinga households. Frequency counts and percentages were used to determine the patterns of decision-making. The study concludes that husbands abrogate decision in economic and socio-economic problems. On the other hand decisions regarding children are seen as shared responsibilities of husbands and wives. It is recommended that gender and development programs should be strengthened and implemented in all government agencies and should be brought to the barangay levels to ensure gender mainstreaming.*

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## **RATIONALE:**

In most countries of the world, it is a social and cultural reality that men play a dominant role in any aspect of society. Nobody knows exactly when or how men's dominance over women began. However, history reveals that as soon as land ceased to be communal and the improved plow gave way to industry and surplus products, men stepped in to organize and appropriate natural wealth. Today, although many women have gained prominence in various fields, the men still predominate.

Yet studies show that female involvement is highly relevant in any society.

In the Philippines, relations are relatively egalitarian. Previous studies however, indicate that male Filipinos are accorded a disproportionate share of power in conjugal decision-making. Other diagnostic studies have also established that in most Filipino households paid work is the husband's responsibility while the task of running the home is the wife's responsibility.

It is important to reexamine the results of earlier studies because these have immense impact on the ongoing efforts of many concerned sectors to promote equity in Filipino households and to support programs that lead to greater participation of women in decision-making.

Although numerous studies on power relations have been done in various parts of the Philippines, none have yet been done specifically in Tabuk City, Kalinga, hence this study.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Torrevillas-Suarez, polarization begins at home. Socially and culturally acceptable norms are introduced in the homes, and characteristically, reinforced by the educational system and other institutions like the church.

An Australian Agency for Development ( AusAID), established that most societies allocate different roles, responsibilities, and activities to women and men. Although the nature of the work varies greatly between and within countries, there are some general patterns in the social and economic roles of men and women. Both men and women are involved in productive, reproductive, household, community service, community management and political activities.

On a similar note, the gender studies claim that gender division of labor is created when society assigns or allocates different tasks, roles responsibilities and activities to women and



men according to what is considered socially and culturally appropriate (NCRFW 1993, Molyneux, 1985).

Various studies found that the role of women in decision-making as well as their social status is greatly affected by access to productive resources. Resources may include land, forests, waterways, equipment, labor, capital/credit, and education/training. Control over these resources empowers one to decide who benefits from the use of the resources ( Ferree 1991, Rathgeber 1990, UNFW 1993).

Cultural values and attitudes towards women pervade not only the home but also society. Two of the most important socializing agents in society are the school and mass media. Traditional schooling confirms and continues the stereotyping of roles begun in the home. Media help perpetuate the ideas and attitudes inculcated by schools, reinforcing sexism and domination by patriarchal values.

These patriarchal values limit the entry of women in production work. Production work is defined as work that produces services and commodities with exchange value. Culture assigns this kind of work to men who are the recognized bread winners and therefore heads of the family. This puts the men in a position of power since they control the family income (Moser and Levy, 1986).

Women, on the other hand, are expected to perform the tasks allocated by social norms on the basis of their biological make-up. Because it is women who have wombs, they are the ones who give birth to children. Consequently, they perform reproductive activities involving the care of the household. Important as domestic work is in the birth and growth of a nation, it is work generally taken for granted and not considered as financially and historically significant. This is the issue of non-valuation of women's work in the political economy. It is high time that society realizes that domestic work takes its toll on women – it prevents the realization of a career and disables them from performing 'historical', 'heroic' and economically gainful deeds

( Miles 1988, Barrett 1980, James and Dalla Costa 1972 ).

On a positive note, women's and men's roles and responsibilities in a society or culture are dynamic and can change over time (Hunt 1997). Changing attitudes, economic circumstances and other trends provide opportunities for improving women's social, economic and legal status. Analyzing these factors may assist planners to identify areas



where development activities can address both women's practical needs and strategic interests to redress current inequalities in the gender division of labor, in women's access to and ownership of productive resources and decision-making (Hunt, 2007).

Gender and particularly the role of women is widely recognized as vitally important to development issues. This often means a focus on gender- equality, ensuring participation, but includes an understanding of the different roles and expectation of the genders within the community. As well as directly addressing inequality, attention to gender issues is regarded as important to the success of development field have incorporated advocacy and women empowerment into their work(AusAID,1995).

Gender analysis focuses on understanding and documenting the differences in the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in a given context. Gender analysis involves the disaggregation of quantitative data by gender. It highlights the different roles and learned behavior of men and women based on gender attributes (H. Feldstein and J. Jiggins, 1994).

## **OBJECTIVES**

It is the objective of this study to (1) provide additional information on the perceptions of respondents with regard to reasons or factors underlying joint husband-wife decision-making patterns; and (2) to determine whether sex, the education of husbands and wives, and the employment of wives influence the decision-making patterns within Kalinga households.

## **PROCEDURES/METHODOLOGY**

### Research Design

This descriptive study examines the roles of husbands and wives in different areas of household decision-making. It was conducted from June 2012 to April 2013 in Tabuk City, Kalinga.

### Participants

The study's survey component included 815 married women and men from Kalinga households in Tabuk City. Only Respondents from households where both husband and wife belong to any Kalinga sub-tribe were selected. The same selection process was observed for the interviews and focus group discussions. Of the 815 respondents 51.53% were male while 48.47% were female. Majority of the husband respondents were high school-educated



with 26.99% while 22.82% of the wives were also high school-educated. There are 206 or 52.15% among the wives who are not employed.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	420	51.53
Female	395	48.47
<b>Educational Level of Husband</b>		
College	94	11.53
High School	220	26.99
Elementary	106	13.01
<b>Educational Level of Wife</b>		
College	111	13.62
High School	186	22.82
Elementary	98	12.03
<b>Employment of Wife</b>		
Employed	189	47.85
Not Employed	206	52.15

#### Data Resources and Analysis

The study made use of a questionnaire from a research project that was undertaken in 1996 by the Research Institute for Mindanao Culture and for the Women Studies Project of Family Health International. Some indicators were adapted from the Family Planning Intervention Study to enrich the questionnaire.

Its qualitative information was collected through a series of key-informant interviews and focus group discussions similarly held with groups of married men and women and other community leaders and members.

Frequency counts and percentages were used to determine the patterns of decision-making. The survey questions on household decision-making include questions on who among household members make the decision in some areas of family life:

- A. Decision related to children, specifically on the number of children to have, family planning method to use discipline with children, what to do when children are sick, school that children will study in, what course children will take; choosing children's spouses and friends of children.



- B. Economic decisions, specifically, what food item to buy and cook, buying appliances and expensive household items, buying personal items for grooming, selling/buying family possessions, saving and investments, and giving assistance to relatives.
- C. Socio-Cultural decisions, specially, who initiates reconciliation after quarrel, whose religion to prevail, visit to relations and friends and whom to vote for.

#### Significance of the Study

A better understanding of power relations in Kalinga households that will help in the formulation of Gender and Development programs in agencies operating in the province of Kalinga in general and in Tabuk City in particular.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 2: Decision-making Patterns by Area of Decision-making (N=815)

AREAS	Patterns (Percent)		
	Wife	Husband	Both
<b>A. Decisions Related to Children</b>			
Number of children to have	54.0	15.0	31.0
Family planning method to use	56.0	14.0	30.0
How to discipline children	28.0	34.8	37.2
What to do when children are sick	24.9	26.4	48.7
Course to take	31.8	29.0	39.2
School to study	26.2	33.2	40.6
Total	37.0	25.0	38.0
<b>B. Economic Decision Making</b>			
What food item to buy and cook	73.2	10.4	16.4
Buying appliances and household items	17.6	44.8	37.6
Buying personal items/grooming	53.7	31.2	15.1
Selling/ buying family possessions	12.4	72.4	15.2
saving and investments	24.5	65.2	10.3
Giving assistance/ support to relatives	30.3	31.3	38.4
Total	35	43	22
<b>C. Socio-cultural and family relations decision-making</b>			
Initiates reconciliation after quarrel	25.2	54.2	20.6
Whose religion to prevail	51.2	26.8	22.0
Visit relations and friends	29.2	33.2	37.6
Whom to vote for	18.6	74.9	6.50
Total	31.0	47.0	22.0



Decision problems are grouped here into three major categories: decisions related to children, economic decision-making and socio-cultural and family relations decision-making. On decisions related to children, the result shows that although not reaching a majority, a clear two-thirds of the respondents commonly arrive at joint decision making on 4 problems namely how to discipline children, course that children will take, what to do when children are sick and school to study. However, the wife is the decision-maker on number of children to have and what family planning method to use as indicated by majority of the respondents.

Information obtained from key informants and FGD sessions reveal that matters concerning children's education and family health are perceived as shared responsibility of husbands and wives. It was also mentioned that the wife ultimately decides on reproductive issues because she is the one who suffers from the burden of childbirth. The informants agreed that the wives are most directly affected by decisions pertaining to reproduction because it is they who bear children and who are tasked with the major responsibility of childrearing. However, it was reiterated that although the wife decides on the number of children, the family should have at least one male child.

In economic decision-making it is shown that the husband's influence predominates as shown by the average percentage of 42.5. There is a clear majority of the husband's influence in three decision-making items namely: buying appliances and household items (44.8%), selling/buying family possessions (72.4) and family saving and investments (65.2). Over two-thirds of the respondents deemed that food and personal or grooming items are the main concern of wives and women. Male informants in fact agree that they only handle these matters when their wives are sick or are not around, with some adding that their older daughter assumes this responsibility when their wives are unable to do so. Both husband and wife decide on matters regarding assistance to relatives.

Finally, the data shows that respondents recognize husband's decision in socio-cultural problems especially on whom to vote for (74.9). It is interesting to note that 54.2% of the respondents claim that husbands should initiate reconciliation after a quarrel. Surprisingly 51.2% of the respondents agree that the wife's decision influences whose religion prevails.



Table 3. Decision-making Patterns by Area of Decision-making and the Sex of Respondents

AREAS	Male (%)	Female (%)	Average
<b>A. Decisions Related to Children</b>			
Wife only	23.8	36.7	37
Husband Only	22.6	25.5	25
Both	53.6	37.8	38
<b>B. Economic Decision Making</b>			
Wife only	32.0	28.0	35
Husband Only	44.0	42.6	43
Both	24.0	29.4	22
<b>C. Socio-Cultural and Family Relations Decision-making</b>			
Wife only	14.5	28.6	31
Husband Only	48.7	44.5	47
Both	36.8	26.9	22

It is shown on table 3 that both male and female respondents (45.7) deem that problems related to children is a joint responsibility between husband and wife. Interestingly more males (53.6%) consider decisions related children as a joint responsibility and only 37.8 % female respondents agree with them.

Economic and socio-cultural decision-making are more clearly a male activity in Kalinga households. This is recognized by both the male and female respondents as shown by the average percentage of 43 and 47 respectively.

Table 4. Decision-making Patterns by Area of Decision-making and the education of husband

AREAS	College	High School	Elementary
<b>A. Decisions Related to Children</b>			
Wife only	15.3	41.4	55.3
Husband Only	27.3	23.7	24.3
Both	57.4	34.9	20.4
<b>B. Economic Decision Making</b>			
Wife only	30.3	41.9	32.7
Husband Only	30.3	43.1	55.3
Both	39.4	15	12
<b>C. Socio-cultural &amp; family relations decision-making</b>			
Wife only	22.4	34	35.5
Husband Only	36.6	50	52.7
Both	41	16	11.8





The education of husbands affects household decision-making. It's most noticeable effect is seen on the trend towards egalitarian decision-making for college graduates. Compared with husbands with lower education, a substantial percentage of college educated husbands report equally participating in decisions related to children, economic decision-making and socio-cultural decision-making with their wives. It can be said therefore that college-educated men are more likely to consult with their wives over family finances. The impact of husband's education is also seen among the elementary-educated men where 55.3% deem that decisions surrounding children are the wife's responsibility, 55.3% deem economic decision as the husband's domain and 52.7% control socio-cultural decision-making. In this case, the elementary-educated husbands are clearly traditionally patriarchal. The findings affirm the result of similar studies stating that educational achievement and degree attainment have come to dominate processes of social stratification and social mobility, replacing , delegitimizing traditional forms of status attainment (Leon, Benavides, & Baker2005) and better decision making skills (Baker, 2009).

Table 5. Decision-making Patterns by Area of Decision-making and the Education of wife

AREAS	College	High School	Elementary
<b>A. Decisions Related to Children</b>			
Wife only	10	14.9	10
Husband Only	23.3	26	38.9
Both	66.7	59.1	51.1
<b>B. Economic Decision Making</b>			
Wife only	7.1	19.6	14.9
Husband Only	42.9	32.1	25.5
Both	50	48.3	59.6
<b>C. Socio-cultural &amp; family relations decision-making</b>			
Wife only	12.9	16.4	10.3
Husband Only	20	29.4	38.3
Both	67.1	54.2	51.4

More consistent trends are noted as regards to the impact of wife's education on family decision-making processes. The increasing education of wives is shown to promote shared decision-makings of most areas of family life. One notes in table 5 that households where the wife is college-educated exhibits the highest proportion of jointly-made decisions bearing on these issues. Egalitarian decision making is recorded in all levels of education among wives from a low of 48. 3% to a high of 67.1%.



Table 6. Decision-making Patterns by Area of Decision-making and the employment of wife

AREAS	Employed	Not Employed
<b>A. Decisions Related to Children</b>		
Wife only	25.0	22.3
Husband Only	21.3	48.3
Both	53.6	29.3
<b>B. Economic Decision Making</b>		
Wife only	25	16.3
Husband Only	16.7	46
Both	58.3	37.7
<b>C. Socio-cultural &amp; family relations decision-making</b>		
Wife only	22.2	25.8
Husband Only	22.2	28.6
Both	55.6	45.6

The table reveals that the employment of wives counterbalances the control of husbands over family financial decisions. Whereas the majority of financial decisions where the wife is not employed is made by husbands alone (46%), more than one half or 58.3% of such decisions are jointly made by spouses in households where the wife is employed. The findings imply that equitable sharing of family responsibilities can be realized if wives are given the opportunity to earn their own income. Yet the excessive burden of family and household tasks still borne by women workers constituted one of the most important reasons for the continuing inequality in employment and occupation (ILO 2000). The lack of contribution in the family income leaves wives and women in general less confident in household decision-making processes

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the Kalinga household is generally patriarchal since the father usually dominates decision-making in the home. The authority of husbands is most pronounced in decision-making areas such as family finances and on whom to vote for. Although the mother also exercises authority at home, her participation is seen more along decisions related to children.

The qualitative data gathered on household decision-making patterns, however provide a different scenario. The data indicate that spouses often acknowledge the wisdom of shared



responsibility on family issues. Interestingly, the statement that the father's decision carry a 'greater weight' or has the 'final say' consistently emerged during the discussions.

The study also reveals that various socio-economic factors foster joint household decision-making processes. Increasing education among husbands and wives promote joint decision-making patterns in most areas of household decision-making. None of the socio-economic factors examined in this paper, is shown to consistently to influence decision-making processes in all key areas of decision-making of household decision-making.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the great number of women who continue to experience the disempowering effect of gender inequalities in the home, all efforts to achieve gender equality for women and men would be rendered ineffective, unless legislative and other measures are undertaken to address these equally pressing issues. Surely, legislation has its constraints, but it is still an essential ingredient toward the goal of achieving gender equality. Along this line, gender and development programs should be strengthened and implemented in all government agencies and should be brought to the barangay levels to ensure gender mainstreaming.

The realization of gender equality requires more than just legal reforms. It requires, most of all, the transformation of society—that is, to redistribute power and change the political, economic, and social structures or institutions that maintain and reinforce gender inequality.

This necessarily includes the need to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men with a view to eliminate prejudices and practices that are based on the idea of men's supremacy and women's subordination. It is essential that a sustained and systematic educational campaign toward this end be undertaken. Ultimately, gender equality will only come about under an enabling institutional and social environment that ensures equality between husbands and wives or women and men.

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