

5-11-2012

Families in Distress

Gloria Luz Nelson

Rechel G. Guino

Follow this and additional works at: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/phstudies>

Recommended Citation

Nelson, Gloria Luz and Guino, Rechel G. (2012) "Families in Distress," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*: Vol. 49: No. 4, Article 4.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13185/2244-1638.4301>

Available at: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/phstudies/vol49/iss4/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Ateneo Journals at Archium Ateneo. It has been accepted for inclusion in Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints by an authorized editor of Archium Ateneo.

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Families in Distress

Gloria Luz M. Nelson
Rechel G. Guino

Philippine Studies vol. 49, no. 4 (2001): 540–559

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Families in Distress

Gloria Luz M. Nelson
Rechel G. Guino

Since the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991, more than half of a million families (520,813) in the province of Pampanga alone have been affected by lahar (DSWD Region III Report 1995). About 5 percent or 21,930 of them are now residing in the Pampanga resettlement sites. These are the families that experienced unforgettable traumatic events, and who have been in a state of shock. Stress normally follows, as families are rendered homeless, jobless and left with few resources.

The road to recovery from such stressful situations is not quick and easy, as they move on with their lives and have no recourse but to deal with the many changes brought about by an unexpected calamity such as natural disaster. Different coping mechanisms are employed in order to avoid or minimize the stressful situation. Sociological studies on coping mechanisms deal with many levels of stress, self-efficacy, social support, health and recovery (Murphy 1986; Stallings 1965; Drabeck 1983).

One such study that looked into the relationship of the structure of the farm families and their coping mechanism is by Tanzo (1996). She found that the increase in household size is related to the increase in coping mechanisms to solve or deal with problems brought about by the Mount Pinatubo eruption. It can be gleaned from this study that family structure is indicative of coping behavior to an unexpected and stressful event. Numerous studies deal mainly with the variation in levels and trends in households and families in the Philippines. Most of these family changes are associated with changes in fertility and mortality (De Guzman 1985), with urbanization (Morado and Gregorio 1983), and with modernization (Medina 1996). Studies of family characteristics of disaster victims are virtually non-existent in the Philippine Family literature.

In this respect, the study is unique since the family here is not only defined as two or more persons living together within one roof but who share a common past, with a present similar situation and perhaps the same desperation of a bleak future.

Moreover, the family and the household structure in this study are social units. A household may be either nuclear or extended. Spouses and their children comprise a nuclear household, while extended refers to a family system in which several generations live in one household (Marshall 1996). Household structure is an important determinant of changes that may occur in the interpersonal relations among the members of these families with special concern to survive in an extreme abnormal situation. More importantly, the family households in this study are involuntary migrants who were forced out of their places of origin because of circumstances beyond their control, so that they are families in distress.

Trends in Household Characteristics in the Philippines

Studies on household and family in the Philippines started in the sixties, when anthropology and sociology became well-developed fields of research in the Philippines. Most of these earlier studies are descriptive in nature, and largely deal with comparisons (cross-cultural and cross-sectional). In most of these earlier studies, the Filipino family system was described as considerably large based on the standards of most countries (Concepcion and Landa-Jocano 1975). Moreover, its large size was attributed to its bilaterally extended type of system (Fox 1963, 1961; Carroll 1969; Mendez and Jocano 1964; Castillo 1970). These classic extended families had typically rural-based characteristics rather than urban. The extended family included a wide range of relations and various sets of in-laws that were either vertically or horizontally extended. Findings of the United Nations in 1983 lend support to the rural extended type of household.

More recent literature, however, noted a trend toward nuclearization accompanied by a fast decline in household size (De Guzman 1990). Contrary to previous findings, nuclearization is more typical in the urban than in the rural areas. Stinner's 1977 study found that the average household size in Manila was 6.15 as compared to 5.84 persons in the rural areas of the country. The explanation of the changes of larger household size in urban than in rural is hinged on the transition theory. The initial response of transitional societies, those experiencing modernization for the first time, is to have large house-

hold size (U.N. 1973; Burt 1967; Morado and Gregorio 1983). This is surprising but true, in spite of the lower fertility in urban than in rural areas (Concepcion and Landa-Jocano 1974; Castillo 1979). Later studies by the U.N. also provided evidence that the image of the rural household as an extended family household is not typical, but that the nuclear family (husband-wife-children) is "a predominant living arrangement almost everywhere in the world." According to Bogue (1969), "a truly extended family unit may be expected to have a minimum of about 7 persons and under the ideal prototype, would have ten to twenty persons."

Data from censuses 1903–1995 conducted by the NCSO showed a steady increase in household size until 1975. The decline in household size began in 1980 where an average size of 5.6 persons per household was reported. In 1990 it was reported to be 5.3 persons, but in the latest census it is 5.1 persons. The decline in average household size implies that for every 100 households, the reported number decreased by 20 persons.

In spite of the rural-urban variation and shrinking size of households in the Philippines, Filipino families remain family-centered and clannish. It is important for Filipino families to maintain good interpersonal relationships with kinfolk (Ventura 1991). Filipino life is not meaningful without family, and couples without children are considered a tragedy. Parents find satisfaction in taking the role of good providers of the needs of their children by giving them a good education. In turn, their children are expected to obey their parents and to study hard (Medina 1994). Castillo (1979), on the other hand, maintains that although the Filipino family is "nuclearly residential, it is very functionally extended." This is demonstrated especially during crises or emergencies. Assistance is expected from relations outside the family household. This assistance takes on various forms like material, financial and services (Medina 1996). The solidarity of the family during times of crisis adheres to the stereotyped definition of Filipino as family-centered.

Family Stress Variations

Families are under stress when their established routines have been disrupted (Burr 1978). Disruptions can be either desirable or undesirable. Undesirable ones such as calamities destroy everything a family stands for—house, job, property, social power or authority and even social network. Adams (1995) classified types of stress into normative

(expected, scheduled) and non-normative (unexpected). Normative stresses are those that happen inevitably to everyone with a family, such as the transition of parenthood, experiencing motherhood for the first time, retirement, widowhood, residential movement and occupational change. Many good accounts of normative stress are appearing in the literature but there is a dearth of studies on the non-normative stress.

Non-normative stress includes unemployment, violence, alcoholism and various types of disaster. Such events are unexpected and are considered more stress-producing than others. Much of the stress stems from coping with the losses from the disaster and then coping with changes in residence, occupation, etc. How does one cope with this crisis? Studies have shown that recovery from disaster always involves the family unit. From the experiential view of western culture, extra relations outside the family called social network or "closeness of bonding" are a positive factor in dealing with stress. Kin who are ready and on calls for assistance in times of external threat may not directly reduce the stress itself, but may provide better recovery from crisis (Reiss 1981, 16; McCubbin 1980; Stallings 1976; Neal 1976; Clason, 1983). In a U.N. report, the family is considered the most significant element in enabling disaster victims to cope with the situation (U.N. 1986, 17). These literatures support the fact that whenever there is a disaster, it is not the individual but the family that becomes the most important responding unit.

Poverty Among Filipino Families

Poverty in the Philippines is essentially a structural phenomenon. Incidence of poverty varies widely throughout the uplands, lowlands and coastal zones. It is, however, in the uplands and the coastal zones that poverty is particularly severe.

As of 1994, at least 35.3 percent of Filipino families are living below poverty level. It means that the minimum average monthly income of these families is below PhP3, 675.00 (Facts Phil, 1993). But being poor does not only mean low income. It consequently leads to lack of opportunities, both economic and social. It is common among the poor to have low education and low skills, being under-employed or chronically unemployed.

Most victims of disaster who seek external assistance are commonly poor. Rahman (1995) classified types of poverty in the Philippines into four, namely the interstitial, peripheral, overcrowding and traumatic. The latter type of poverty is the classification of the poor families in

the resettlement sites. These families sought to be resettled because of lack of options—no material resources, no relatives or friends that can accommodate them on a more permanent basis (Anderson 1989). While it is true that there are relatives who can offer shelter, this is often only temporary. It is also possible that the relatives and close kin are not capable of giving assistance simply because they are also victims or poor themselves.

It is generally observed that poverty and large family size go together, forming a vicious cycle. The poor do not see the benefit of having smaller families. The advantage of a large family is that there are more hands to help generate more income. Demographers explain such behavior in this context: a poor family will naturally want to have more children to make up for those who might die of natural diseases. Family size differs across socioeconomic status. Medina (1996) found that poor households have an average nuclear family of 4.9 compared to only 4.0 among the middle and the upper class. She also found out that poor families have low levels of education. Variations among poor families are also present. The poor sector ranges from poor to very poor and to very, very poor. A large proportion of families with six or more members are found among the poor, but are less extended compared to the rich.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to describe the household characteristics of the resettled families in Pampanga. The household and family characteristics indicate the ability of families to cope with the crisis brought about by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo seven years ago. More specifically, the objectives of the study are: (1) to determine the average size and composition of the household; (2) to determine whether characteristics of the household head vary in proportion to household size, and (3) to determine the possible implications of household characteristics on the alleviation of the poverty of the families in the study.

The family data from this study is taken from a large data set on "Resettlements in Pampanga" that is based on an actual field survey done in May 1996 on the nineteen resettlements located in the province of Pampanga. The seventeen-page questionnaire is the result of several revisions based on validation by professional experts and on the feedback gathered from various pilot-testing sites.

The Mount Pinatubo Commission (MPC) built the resettlement sites of the Philippine Government and by private agencies and organiza-

tions known as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). There were separate resettlement sites for the victims mostly from towns affected by the Mount Pinatubo eruption and the lahar flow. Lowland resettlement sites were for victims from Bacolor (34 percent), Angeles City (13 percent), Florida Blanca (14.2 percent), Mabalacat (22.1 percent) and Porac (11.4 percent). The upland resettlement sites housed the Aetas, minorities that resided in the upland areas of the towns of Mabalacat, Angeles City and Porac. The resettlement sites were established on a staggered basis in the last five years categorized into Lahar I established in 1992, to Lahar V established in 1996. Thus the lowland and upland categories used in this study do not only refer to the physical location of the sites, but are also social and cultural categories.

A complete list of households residing in these resettlement sites was obtained from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Region III and served as the sampling frame. Out of the total 21,930 households in the 19 resettlement sites, 2 percent or 439 households were selected using stratified random sampling. These 439 households were proportionately allocated to the different resettlement categories. For each resettlement category, a map was obtained and the serpentine method was used to choose every 50th household.

To complement the sound sampling design used in the study, adjustments on estimates were made to arrive at valid inferences. Weighted means and proportions were computed for parameters of interest. Charts were also constructed.

The household is used as the unit of analysis for the study. Households have distinct advantages over individuals, for they serve as better indicators of adaptation to their new residence. Furthermore, households in developing countries are production and consumption units, such that it is at the household level that changes are manifested to meet both of these functions (Castillo 1993). Households, as basic consumption units, have members that continuously make joint decisions about day-to-day living. These decisions are usually made in relation to the composition of the household members. Households, viewed as production units, consider the composition of the household as members of the labor force.

Presentation of Findings

The findings consist of the following: 1) size and composition of households, which include a) age, sex and marital status b) educational attainment and occupational level c) the children in the household and

d) relatives and non-relatives and 2) the heads of the family and household size.

Size compared to composition is easily measured. It is indicative of the structure of the family. Large household size means that the household is likely to be extended. The composition, on the other hand, determines the nature of interpersonal relations among the members.

Furthermore, the relevance of size and composition for the resettled families is the fact that in the resettlement sites the families live in similar one-room houses built on a 94-square-meter lot with no piped-in water, but with the amenities of a toilet and electricity. The critical implication of limited space is limited privacy. Large families are likely to suffer from congestion that may lead to higher levels of stress. Social activities within the household are not very likely, and houses serve only as sleeping quarters.

Family structure is based on two major types, the nuclear and the extended. Households are predominantly nuclear (eight out of ten families) for both families in the upland and lowland sites, a typical characteristic of Filipino households. Average household size is 5.54 and 4.18, respectively for lowland and upland sites. Compared to the reported average household size of 5.1 in the Philippines, the lowland families are larger. Surprisingly, results showed that households in upland sites have smaller sizes. The reason is that most of the members, especially the older ones, have moved back to their places of origin (at the foot of Mount Pinatubo) to continue a lifestyle they missed much since relocated. Being nomadic by nature, it is uncharacteristic for them to live in houses. Most of them find life in the resettlement very restricting, being deprived of their usual routines of farming and food gathering.

The description of the family composition like age, sex, education, income, and employment status establishes the identity of its members in terms of their social and economic potential and functions. The socio-economic characteristics of the members in turn become the bases of their social interaction in the resettlement community. In addition, the family composition determines at the same time the nature of interpersonal relationships of the members within a family household.

The mean age of household members is 24.51 and 21.20 for lowland and upland sites, respectively (table 1). This indicates a very young population. It means that there is a significant number below fifteen years old, indicating a high dependency population structure. Further-

more, there are almost equal numbers of males and females. With the household largely composed of children, most members are unattached.

Table 1. Distribution of Total Household Members of Resettled Mount Pinatubo Victims by Selected Characteristics (in percent), 1996.

	Lowland	Upland
<i>Age</i>		
4 & below	13.34	23.22
3-14	21.72	15.92
15-25	20.73	17.39
25-34	11.45	13.05
35-35	10.25	20.89
45-54	6.96	5.15
55-64	11.94	3.49
65 & above	2.72	-
DK / N.I.	0.83	0.9
<i>Mean Age</i>	24.51	21.2
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	42.32	40.85
Female	42.34	49.21
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	64.63	45.68
Married	33.36	43.08
Living in	0.2	
Separated	0.16	
Widowed	1.6	1.29
<i>Employed</i>		
Total	27.28	22.84
Household heads	65.94	87.92
Mt. Pinatubo Victims		
Mean Age of Household Heads		42.60
% Male Among Household Heads		83.1
% Married Among Household Heads		92.0

Household heads, on the other hand, are mostly middle-aged males who are employed. Thus, husbands are officially considered as heads of the households. Female-headed households are not evident among these families. This is partly because almost no marriage has been dissolved as reflected by the very few widowed family members.

Educational attainment of household members conditions many other aspects of family life. Table 2 presents the educational status of all household members and household heads by type of location. The general tendency for the household head to have higher educational attainment than the rest of the household members is observed. For instance, 38 percent of the household heads as compared to only 28 percent of the members of the household are high school graduates. College graduates among the household heads are significantly more numerous than the total number of households. Members of families in lowland sites have at least an elementary education with a greater

Table 2. Educational Distribution of Total Household Members and Household Heads of Resettled Mount Pinatubo Victims (in percent), 1996.

Educational Level	Lowland		Upland	
	Total Household Members	Head of Households	Total Household Members	Head of Households
No Education	6.96	2.99	39.69	36.9
Below Grade 6	28.01	17.05	27.64	29.25
Grades 6 & 7	16.25	21.7	3.17	7.7
Total Elem Educ	44.26	38.75	30.81	36.95
High School	12.09	13.06	1.87	
H.S. Grad.	14.2	25.25		
Total HS Educ	28.29	38.31		
With Vocational	2.31	5.5		
Voc Grad.	2.65	4.6		
Total Voc. Educ.	4.96	10.1		
College Level	5	6.95		
College Grad.	40245	6.55		
Total College	9.24	13.5		
Not Included	0.86		27.63	36.15

number of them also finishing high school. However, family members in the upland sites have very low educational attainments. In fact, most of them have no formal education.

Related to the level of education is occupation. Family members in lowland sites with at least an elementary education are either employed as service workers or as production workers (see table 3). The upland families having almost no formal education get their means of livelihood from farming.

Table 3. Occupational Distribution of Total Employed Household Members and Household Heads of Resettled Mt. Pinatubo Victims, 1996 (in percent)

Occupations	Lowland		Upland	
	Total Household Members	Head of Households	Total Household Members	Head of Households
Prof./Technical/Related Work	5.82	4.85		
Admin./Exec./Managerial	1.85	1.2	4.14	
Clerical & Related Work	3.45	1.6		
Sales Manager	0.79	1.6		
Service Workers/Craft Workers	30.48	22.7	4.14	
Agri./Livestock/Fishing/Forestry	3.62	5.2	80.43	100
Production workers w/ no classifiable work	35.8	46.55	5.67	
Workers with no classifiable occupation	1.1	2.7		
Enlisted Personnel (PNP)	0.47	1.2		
Sales / Personnel	14.72	17.75	5.67	
Middleman agent	0.15	0.4		
OCW	0.15	0.4		
Don't know	0.62			
Not included	1.08			

The nuclear family in developing countries differs from that in developed countries. The difference lies largely in the number of family members. An average-sized nuclear family in the Philippines, for instance has five persons per household, while in developed countries it is either two or three members. One major factor for this difference is the significantly larger proportion of children in the total population,

and most of these children are members of the family household (Kuznet, 1978). This study affirms the above observation. More than half of the total household population are children of the household head, with 31 to 40 percent below fifteen years old. The stereotypical idea that the Filipino family is composed largely of children is evident in this study. Table 4 shows that aside from the large proportion of employed household head there are the employed children under fifteen years old. Under our revised family code, a child below fifteen years old who is working is defined as "child labor" and child labor is "exploitative labor." These children who are forced to join the labor force at a young age are likely to be school drop-outs, or they forego schooling to augment the family income. This is a classic case when education is a luxury for the poor young children. With 40 percent of the children working and another 30 percent of the spouses reported to have jobs, this indicates that the lowland families are multiple earners rather than dual earners. The latter is typical among urban areas, particularly in the more developed countries.

The presence of relatives and non-relatives in a family household is what makes a family extended. As described earlier, the family households in the study are largely nuclear. A comparison before relocation and after relocation (see table 5) shows that the families in the lowland and upland were characteristically nuclear even before resettlement, owing to the small proportion of relatives living with them in the same household. However, the comparison also reveals that there is a decrease of relatives living in the same household in the resettlement sites.

Table 4. Employment Status of Each Household Member of the Resettled Mt. Pinatubo Victims, 1996 (in Percent).

Relationship to the Household Head	Lowland	Upland
Head	65.94	87.96
Spouse	30.81	12.8
Children	15.91	2.92
Children under 15	39.59	
Grandchildren	4.59	
Parent	8.33	
Brother / Sister	39.61	
Cousins	33.33	
Not relatives	62.5	

This supports previous studies that migrant families become more nuclear and that the Filipino families are increasingly becoming nuclear. It can also be noted from the data reported in table 5 that there is a slight increase in the proportion of distant relatives moving in the household as compared to their previous households. Table 6 reports data on the composition of relatives living "nearby" or near the household before and after relocation. Similar findings of decreasing relatives living nearby are observed. There is, however, a greater proportion of relatives living nearby as compared to relatives living in the same household. These resettled families, especially among the lowlanders, manifest the closely-knit and clannish characteristics of the Filipino families. The resettled families who are not likely to be able to accommodate relatives in the household due to space limitation, saw to

Table 5. Composition of Relatives Living in the Same Household Before and After Mt. Pinatubo Eruption, 1996 (in percent).

Relationship to the Household Head	Lowland		Upland	
	Before	After	Before	After
Parents	11.89	3.8	12.77	12.03
Grandparents		0.23		
Sister / Brother	11.11	2.84	5.89	4.35
Cousins	1.65	0.47	4.35	4.35
Not relatives	9.44	11.48	4.35	4.35

Table 6. Composition of Relatives Living Nearby Before and After Mt. Pinatubo Eruption, 1996 (in percent).

Relationship to the Household Head	Lowland		Upland	
	Before	After	Before	After
Parents	51.48	39.81	61.2	56.55
Grandparents	25.76	11.45	6.01	
Sister / Brother	76.69	69.78	89.62	79.25
Cousins	74.98	66.93	95.64	89.62
Not relatives	80.67	77.81	95.64	95.64

it that relatives are given accommodation within the vicinity. The organizers of the resettlement sites supported the clustering of kin living in the same area.

The Mount Pinatubo Commission (MPC), for example, believes in grouping together people who come from the same area (people seemingly related to one another as shown from the data) where "as much practicable, the beneficiaries shall be resettled in a manner that will retain the neighborhood patterns of their community of origin" (MPC, 1995). In so doing, the support system needed by the victims could be well provided. Relatives in the Philippine context (1) help house members with their chores, (2) help them earn a living and (3) take care of the young ones and the aged. The very idea that the relatives are living nearby or in the neighborhood makes the families less vulnerable to socio-cultural disorientation and makes their recovery from disaster easier. The contention is that the continuation of ties with family members and relatives is an important source of support and provides a strong psychological anchor for people in distress. These also somehow tie the findings to other studies in the field of migration. Migrants more often seek their kinsmen in the areas of destination, thus lead to clustering of relatives within the area.

Among these families the husband is the official head and breadwinner. Table 7 shows that it is more likely for a highly educated household head to have a smaller family size, a trend shown among three- to five-member family households. In a three-member household, the head can be a college graduate (11 percent). Furthermore it was observed that the number of household heads who are elementary graduates also increases as household size increases.

The differences in the sizes of households are not related to the income of the household head. No variability was observed on the income of the household heads in the different household size. The inverse relationship of family size and income is not supported in this study. Table 8 shows almost equal income level for all household sizes. However, the smaller households tend to show higher levels of income per person or per consumer unit. Nevertheless, they are still living below the poverty level with larger household sizes poorer than the households that are relatively smaller.

The occupations of the heads of households prior to resettlement are of three types. They were predominantly engaged in agriculture or farm-related work, in production as transport operators and laborers, and in service/craft type of jobs. At present, among the 66 percent

employed, the head of the household is either a production or a service worker. These are the occupations found for the household heads in all the varying household sizes. Among the 30 percent unemployed household heads, the same distribution in household size was observed (see table 9), contrary to the findings of previous studies on Filipino families in which working heads have slightly bigger nuclear units than the non-working heads (De Guzman 1985). This is partly the reason why other members of the family household have to work, especially the children below 15 years old.

Table 7. Educational Attainment of Household Heads by Household Size, 1996 (in percent).

Household Size	Lowland	%	Upland	%
2	Grade 6	20.9	Grade 3	100
	H.S. Grad	29.3		
3	Grade 6	17.8	No Educ.	80.3
	HS Grad	25.4	Grade 6	19.7
	College Grad	11.7		
4	Grade 6	19.7	No Educ.	60.2
	HS Grad	22.4	Grade 2	16.1
			First Year HS	23.7
5	Grade 6	25.4	Grade 1	63.4
	HS Grad	21.5	Grade 3	36.6
6	Grade 6	31.5		
	HS Grad	21.9		
7	Grade 6	25.1		
	HS Grad	23		
8	Grade 6	25.6		
	HS Grad	16		
9	Grade 6	46.2		
	HS Grad	15.4		
10	Grade 6	26		
11	Grade 6	20.3		
	HS Grad	39.1		
12	Grade 6	80		

Table 8. Mean Monthly Income Distribution of Household Heads by Household Size, 1996 (in Pesos).

Household Size	Lowland	Upland
2	1891.01	1200
3	2799.42	839
4	2960.54	767.9
5	2054.08	1839.51
6	2295.52	
7	1870.45	
8	2308.47	1000
9	1669.23	
10	2192.86	
11	487.8	
12	1060.1	
13	1800	

Table 9. Household Size of Employed and Unemployed Household Heads by Type of Location, 1996 (in percent)

Household Size	Lowland		Upland	
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
2	6.2	7.7	9.1	50
3	12.2	9.8	25	50
4	17.7	12.6	31.6	
5	18.5	21.6	15.8	
6	17.2	17.5		
7	11.7	11.2		
8	6.7	7.6	18.3	
9	3.2	2.8		
10	6.5	2.8		
11	11.2	2.8		
12	1.2	2.1		
13	0.5	0.7		
14	0.2	0.7		

Summary and Conclusions

Poverty is the biggest issue that the families in this study have to face. The study reveals that the resettler families were considered poor even prior to the crisis brought about by the Mount Pinatubo eruption, but their situation became worse after they became victims of the Mount Pinatubo eruption. In fact, 20 percent of them did not have toilets prior to resettlements. The monthly incomes of the resettlers have decreased markedly. Based on the 1990 income data, the same families were earning an average of Php 3,000.00. Also, 80 percent of lowland families are employed prior to eruption, in contrast to only 66 percent employed at present. There is a case of double jeopardy as they have been pushed down to a much lower rung of the social ladder by the disaster (Nelson et al. 1996).

The highlights of the findings of the study are as follows:

1. Resettled families are predominantly nuclear and are mostly family households. Eight out of ten families have husband-wife-children composition. This is true for lowland and upland resettlers. The upland families have, however, started to move up in order to relieve them of the stress of being confined in a house. Lowland families have less stress in their living conditions.

2. The resettler families have nuclear households. Nuclearity is a manifestation of the limited space or their being migrant families or an indication of their means of coping with the disaster. There is, however, some indication that distant relatives staying in the nuclear household have increased. If this trend continues, transformation of household structure is very likely. Why is this so? No new resettlements are being built. Many victims are still in the evacuation centers waiting to be resettled. Chances of their being resettled are remote at present. First, the government is broke. Second, no new lahar flows have occurred since 1995. Third, government is counting on the mega dike. And fourth, the reluctance of the resettlers to pay their house rights is not good motivation for the government to built new resettlement sites. The most likely outcome is for those in the resettlements to accommodate those whom they know in the evacuation centers.

3. The families in the study are nuclear in residence but are functionally extended (Castillo 1979). There are relatives living adjacent to the nuclear residence. Comparison of the composition of family mem-

bers before and after the eruption shows a slight increase of relatives living nearby.

4. The composition of the total members in the household shows a very young population with males and females proportionately equal. About 55 percent of the family households are children. Thirty-nine percent (39 percent) of the children under fifteen years old is already part of the labor forcing in a family that is poor, it is the children who are the "helpless victims." The presence of children may contribute to the increase in poverty rate since the large proportion of children in the family denotes high dependency ratio (Eggeben and Litcher 1993).

5. The household heads have at least an elementary education with two-thirds of them in production, labor and service types of employment earning a mean monthly income of 2,000 pesos. The upland families, on the other hand, are poorer although they have a high employment rate; the majority earns only an average monthly income of 800 pesos from farming. Compared to the other members in the household, the head is better educated and more likely to be employed.

6. Comparison of the socioeconomic characteristics of the household head with household size reveals no significant pattern of relationship. This is likely because all the family households are categorically "poor" so that variation in household size based on income, education and occupation is not present. In other words the socio-economic characteristics of the household head are not viable in determining household size or vice versa. Likewise, the household size of the 30 percent of the unemployed household heads is not distinctly different from the household size of the employed household head.

7. Families in this study are described to be in distress, and seemingly do not differ from other poor families living elsewhere under different circumstances. The demographic profile described above attests that regardless of the circumstances of poverty; the poor are characteristically similar. There are some observations specific to this group of families. First, the official head is the male and married, which denotes that families in distress remain intact against all odds. This means that coping behavior is at work. It is generally known that female-headed households are poorer and are reflective of some kind of disruption either by separation or by death. Second, the upland families are poorer by normal standards but have higher employment rates than those in the lowland sites. Stress due to occupational change is also not true for the upland families, because most of them remain farmers. Third, the majority of poor families are squatters and live in

more impoverished situations than the families in the study. It is considered a blessing for most of the families in this study that they have houses they can call their own, no matter how small they are. Fourth, the reason that the resettled families are poor is circumstantial, and they have been house owners. Moreover, families have high hopes that one day in the future they can return to their native towns and regain back through time what they lost. This may not likely happen among other poor sectors simply because the past is something they want to escape. The past in the case of these families is full of wonderful memories and sentimental values that make them look forward to going home.

Conclusions

1. Evidence from the results of the study shows that the family households in the study are still in the early stage of the family cycle where more than half of family members are children. The incidence for population growth is eminent. Basic services and development programs should cater to the basic needs and realities of the families in the resettlement.

2. At least 30 percent of these relocated families were farmers. Livelihood assistance programs should seriously think of capitalizing on the present skill of the population instead of investing on training for new skills.

3. The need to study specific types of Filipino families similar to this study is important, since we cannot deny that the family as a social institution changes and differs not only by socio-economic status but by the nature of their stress and in the nature of poverty.

References

- Adams, B. N. 1995. *The family: A sociological interpretation*. Texas: Harcourt Brace and Co.
- Anderson, Mary and Peter Woodrow. 1989. *Rising from the ashes: Development strategies in times of disaster*. West View Press and UNESCO Press.
- Bogue, Donald. 1969. *Principles of demography*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Burr, W. R. 1973. *Theory construction and the sociology of the family*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Burch, Thomas K. 1967. The size and structure of families: A comparative analysis of census data. *American Sociological Review* 32, no. 3: 347–63.

- Castillo, Gelia T. 1979. *Beyond Manila: Philippine rural problems in perspectives*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre.
- . 1993. *Where food and population meet: The Filipino household among other households*. Quezon City: Center for Integrative Development Studies, University of the Philippines.
- Clason, Christine. 1983. The family as a life saver in disaster. Abstract of Journal Articles.
- De Guzman, Eliseo A. 1985. Family household and nuptiality changes: A search for some explanations from the recent past. *Philippine Population Journal* 1, no. 2
- Facts Phil. 1993. *Factbook Philippines* 1.
- Fox, Robert. 1961. The Filipino family and kinship. *Philippines Quarterly* 2, no. 1: 6–9.
- Goode, William J. 1963. *World revolutions and family patterns*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe Collier, MacMillan Inc.
- Kuznets, Simon. 1978. Size and age structures of family households exploratory comparisons. *Population and Development Review* 4, no. 2 (June):187–223.
- Marshall, Gordon. 1996. *The concise Oxford dictionary of sociology*. Oxford: University Press.
- Medina, Belen T. G. 1991. *Family: A text with selected readings*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Mendez, Paz Policarpio and F. Landa Jocano. 1974. The Filipino family in its rural urban orientation: Two case studies. Manila: CEU Research and Development Center.
- McCubbin, H. I., et al. 1980. Family stress and coping a decade. *Review Journal of Marriage and Family* 42, no. 4: 855–71
- Morada, Hector B. and M. C. Gregorio. 1983. Household structure variation and urbanization in the Philippines. *The Philippine Statistician* 23 (1–2): 15–44.
- Murphy, Shirley A. 1986. Stress, coping and mental outcomes following a natural disaster: Bereaved Family Members and Friends Compared. National Statistics Office. 1995. *Census of Philippine Population*.
- Neal, David and Perry Joseph. 1984. Family friends and propinquity in a rural disaster setting: A case of the severe winter of 1976–1977. Rural Sociological Society Association Paper.
- Nelson, Gloria Luz M. and J. Mallari and G. Garcia. 1996 Resettlement system in Pampanga. Unpublished research project funded by the Office of Research Coordination University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City
- Reiss, D. 1981. *The family's construction of reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rahman, Atiqur. 1995. The state of world rural poverty a profile of Asia. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

- Stallings, Robert. 1986. Conquering disaster: Family recovery and long term consequences. *Contemporary Sociology* 15, no. 2 (March).
- Stinner, William F. 1977. Urbanization and household structure in the Philippines. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 39, no. 2: 377-38.
- Tanzo, Irene R. 1996. Coping mechanisms and Social networks of Mt. Pinatubo affected Philippine farm households in Pampanga. M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines-Los Baños, College, Laguna.
- United Nations. 1986. *Disaster prevention and mitigation a compendium of current knowledge*. Vol. 12. Geneva: Social and Sociological Aspects Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordination.