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THESIS/DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

(1330)

Title: Why Ventures of Cooperatives Do Not Always Attract the Poor: The Case of a Weaving Project in Leyte

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Statement of the Problem

Main Problem: The study seeks to describe the involvement of the local people in the Abaca-Based Integrated Project (ABIP) and the ways in which it promotes participation of the local people, especially the poor.

Subproblems: To address the aforementioned concern, this study focuses on answering three questions: (1) what makes the business venture of a cooperative unattractive to the poor, its intended beneficiaries? (2) What are the social costs of working in the business venture of a cooperative? (3) Why do the poor prefer to produce outside a cooperative business venture despite the risks of exploitation?

Procedure

This study is descriptive in nature; its design is purposively chosen to explore why a business venture of a cooperative does not always attract the poor. The study also uses qualitative and quantitative data. Through these, the study figures out the crucial factors that lead to the people's decision to join or not to join a business venture of a cooperative.

Treatment of Data

The study employed three data-gathering techniques, namely, secondary data collection (SDC), key informant (KI) interviews, and participant observation (PO). SDC was used to gather community profile data. This was supplemented with KI interviews and an ocular inspection of the research site. PO was conducted to enable the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of how the ABIP operates.

To be able to gather sufficient information on the topic at hand, the researcher interviewed two kinds of informants: the weavers and the manager of the cooperative or any representative. In selecting sinamay weaver KIs, the researcher went to the field to do an inventory of weavers and to look into some patterns and characteristics.

Findings

1. Weavers in the ABIP earn less compared to what subcontracted workers receive from their employers. Workers are promised SSS membership, which they do not benefit from. Workers are also encouraged to buy capital shares

in the cooperative. However, owing to various reasons, most weavers do not have capital shares in the ABIP.

2. There are costs and benefits of the prevailing weaving system in Southwestern Leyte. Generally, weavers in the ABIP have no actual control of their time. Some workers find it very difficult to travel to and from ABIP, particularly during rainy days. However, ABIP's weavers do not need to invest on anything because the cooperative provides them with all the materials.
3. Sinamay weaving does not require the use of sophisticated machines. It is a very traditional and simple type of technology that heavily relies on the skills of the weaver. There is little or no incentive in weaving for a cooperative; thus, there is always the temptation to just weave at home.
4. Subcontracted weavers benefit more than those who weave in the ABIP. Subcontractors purchase the products from their weavers at a pre-agreed and higher price than what the ABIP offers its weavers. Aside from earning more, their subcontractors are generous to them.

Conclusion

1. The ABIP is a dynamic idea to help the poor of Southwestern Leyte. It served as a training center for those who would like to learn the art of weaving sinamay. However, it fails to function as it was intended to be. It is unable to offer alternative benefits to its members.
2. Good intentions do not assure the success of a cooperative business venture.
3. In the ABIP, there was the lack of information dissemination as regards attracting people to join the cooperative. The leaders missed or made no effort to train the people to become members of the cooperative and actively participate in its business ventures. Thus, people did not join and participate in this cooperative and its ventures because they do not know about the organization.
4. Most of the studies done dealing with business ventures of cooperatives tend to be captivated or focused only in the activities, businesses, and the structure of the organization.
5. Married women with young children require assistance in childcare for them to be able to engage themselves in income-generating activities like weaving sinamay.

Recommendations

1. It is very important to persuade the workers to join as members of the cooperative for them to feel they are really part of the business. This can be done by letting them enjoy more benefits from the business and commendation of the members by the actual hold of their share of stocks in the cooperative.
2. It is very important to make the people feel they are part of the cooperative system. In this way, they would feel the need to increase their capital shares, thereby, making them true members of the cooperative.
3. A business venture of a cooperative must have a good technical formation, which is essential in running a business. Proper training and

seminars aimed at educating leaders and staff in various areas and other relevant issues related to business management must be completed.

4. To study business ventures of cooperatives, it is a must to consider the sociodemographic characteristics of the members, their immediate family, and the members' physical environment in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of cooperative projects, programs, and activities.
5. In studying organizations, such as business ventures of cooperatives, it is very important to consider the life cycle of the women. Understanding the life cycle of women may be instrumental in coming up with plans and possible solutions that would adjust to the obligations and needs of the women.
6. Married women with young children always call for childcare support. To decrease women's workload and to ease their double burden, cooperatives and business ventures must consider extending to women childcare assistance.