



# Measuring Women's Empowerment and Women's Autonomy in the Philippines

by

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# I. Introduction

- The Philippines is committed to improving the socioeconomic conditions for women. In August 2009, the Republic Act Number 9710 : Magna Carta of Women was signed into law by the President (NCRFW, 2009).
- The law prohibits discrimination against women and recognizes, promotes, and protects their rights. Implementation of the law by all government agencies is overseen by the Philippine Commission on Women (formerly the National Commission on the Role of Women), under the Office of the President.
- The law also applies to women working abroad through the designation of a gender focal point in the consular section of the Philippines' embassies or consulates, who will be trained on handling gender concerns of women migrant workers, especially those in distress.





- According to the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Report for 2009, the **Philippines ranks 105 among 182 countries on the HDI** and ranks **59** out of **109** countries on the Gender Empowerment Measure (**GEM**), which measures gender inequality from an economic and political perspective (UNDP, 2009).
- Empowerment of women is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. The full participation and partnership of both women and men is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintaining the household.





## II. Sources of Data/Indicators

- The 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) conducted by the Philippines National Statistics Office (NSO) explored women's empowerment in terms of employment, type of earnings, control over cash and earnings, and freedom of movement.
- The Women's Questionnaire collected information on general background characteristics including age, education, and household wealth status, for women age 15-49.
- In addition, the 2008 NDHS collected information on other measures of women's autonomy and status, particularly women's roles in making household decisions.
- Information collected in the survey is used to estimate two indicators of women's empowerment: women's participation in household decision making and women's acceptance of wife beating.





### III. Measures

- Currently married women were asked whether they were employed at the time of survey and if not, whether they were employed at anytime during the 12 months preceding the survey.
- The type of earnings they received (cash, in-kind, both, or neither) is also asked.
- Besides having access to income, women need to have control over their earnings in order to be empowered. To assess this, currently married women with cash earnings in the 12 months before the survey were asked WHO usually DECIDES how the money she earns will be used: mainly the woman herself, mainly her husband, or the woman and her husband jointly.





# IV. Findings

## Table 1 Employment and cash earnings of currently married women

Percentage of currently married women age 15-49 who were employed at any time in the past 12 months and the percent distribution of currently married women employed in the past 12 months by type of earnings, according to age, Philippines 2008

Age	Currently married women		Percent distribution of currently married women employed in the past 12 months, by type of earnings					Total	Number of women
	Percentage employed	Number of women	Cash only	Cash and in-kind	In-kind only	Not paid	Missing		
15-19	40.9	283	86.4	6.5	1.6	5.4	0.0	100.0	116
20-24	43.7	1,000	87.0	6.1	1.7	5.2	0.0	100.0	437
25-29	52.0	1,560	88.2	5.9	1.3	4.6	0.0	100.0	810
30-34	60.3	1,573	86.5	6.2	1.3	6.1	0.0	100.0	949
35-39	64.2	1,522	84.0	8.5	1.5	5.9	0.0	100.0	977
40-44	70.0	1,299	82.7	8.9	1.6	6.7	0.1	100.0	910
45-49	74.5	1,181	80.8	8.2	1.8	8.8	0.4	100.0	880
Total 15-49	60.3	8,418	84.7	7.4	1.5	6.3	0.1	100.0	5,079

- Three of five (60%) currently married women age 15-49 were employed in the 12 months before the survey. Women in the youngest age group were least likely to have been employed (41%). The proportion employed increases with each age group to a high of 75% among married women age 45-49.
- Other findings
  - Not all women receive earnings for the work they do.
  - Not all women who receive earnings are paid in cash.



# Findings

## Table 2 Control over women's cash earnings and relative magnitude of women's earnings

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 who received cash earnings for employment in the 12 months preceding the survey by person who decides how wife's cash earnings are used, according to age, Philippines 2008

Background Characteristics	Person who decides how the wife's cash earnings are used:					Total
	Mainly wife	Wife and husband jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing	
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	47.2	42.8	8.0	2.0	0.0	100.0
20-24	47.4	45.9	5.7	0.7	0.3	100.0
25-29	37.7	58.7	3.1	0.0	0.4	100.0
30-34	38.8	54.8	5.8	0.0	0.6	100.0
35-39	40.8	54.9	3.7	0.1	0.6	100.0
40-44	43.6	52.6	3.5	0.0	0.3	100.0
45-49	42.3	54.6	3.1	0.0	0.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>4.1</b>	0.1	0.4	100.0

- About two in 5 (41%) currently married women with cash earnings mainly decides how their cash earnings are used , while more than half (54%) say they decide jointly with their husband.
- Only 4 percent of women said that their husband mainly decides how their earnings are used.
- Women age 15-24 are more likely than older women to mainly decide how their earnings are used.





# Findings



## Table 3 Control over men's cash earnings

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 whose husbands receive cash earnings, by person who decides how husband's cash earnings are used by age, Philippines 2008

Background Characteristics	Mainly wife	Husband and wife jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing	Total	Number of women
<b>Age</b>							
15-19	25.1	62.4	11.0	1.5	0.0	100.0	275
20-24	25.9	63.2	10.1	0.5	0.2	100.0	984
25-29	25.7	64.7	9.4	0.1	0.1	100.0	1,546
30-34	26.9	63.0	9.9	0.2	0.0	100.0	1,555
35-39	25.7	64.9	9.3	0.1	0.0	100.0	1,508
40-44	29.9	60.6	9.5	0.0	0.0	100.0	1,281
45-49	28.6	62.8	8.5	0.0	0.1	100.0	1,163
Total	27.0	63.3	9.5	0.2	0.1	100.00	8,311

- Almost two thirds (63%) of currently married women whose husbands receive cash earnings report that decisions about the use of the husbands earnings are made jointly by husband and wife.
- Surprisingly, 27% of women say that they themselves are the ones who mainly decide how their husbands earnings are used.





# Findings

## Table 4 Control over men's cash earnings

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 whose husbands receive cash earnings, by person who decides how husband's cash earnings are used by residence, Philippines 2008

Background Characteristics	Mainly wife	Husband and wife jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing	Total	Number of women
<b>Residence</b>							
Urban	28.9	60.7	10.1	0.2	0.1	100.0	4,222
Rural	25.0	65.9	8.9	0.2	0.0	100.0	4,089
Total	27.0	63.3	9.5	0.2	0.1	100.00	8,311

- A higher number of currently married women residing in the rural areas than the urban areas report that decisions about use of husbands earnings are decided jointly by husband and wife.





# Findings

## Table 5 Control over men's cash earnings

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 whose husbands receive cash earnings, by person who decides how husband's cash earnings are used by education, Philippines 2008

Background Characteristics	Mainly wife	Husband and wife jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing	Total	Number of women
<b>Education</b>							
No education	25.8	64.4	9.7	0.0	0.0	100.0	132
Elementary	28.0	61.2	10.7	0.2	0.0	100.0	2,020
High school	27.7	63.1	9.0	0.2	0.1	100.0	3,681
College	25.2	65.1	9.4	0.2	0.1	100.0	2,478
Total	27.0	63.3	9.5	0.2	0.1	100.00	8,311

- Eleven percent (11%) of currently married women of elementary education reported that mainly their husbands make decisions on the use of husbands earnings.
- Currently married women who had no education and those with college education report that decisions are made jointly by husband and wife. Differentials by background characteristics are small.





# Findings

## Table 6 Control over men's cash earnings

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 whose husbands receive cash earnings, by person who decides how husband's cash earnings are used by wealth quintile, Philippines 2008

Background Characteristics	Mainly wife	Husband and wife jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing	Total	Number of women
<b>Wealth quintile*</b>							
Lowest	25.7	64.8	9.4	0.1	0.0	100.0	1,653
Second	27.0	64.2	8.5	0.4	0.0	100.0	1,670
Middle	28.9	61.7	9.2	0.1	0.1	100.0	1,723
Fourth	28.0	61.4	10.5	0.2	0.0	100.0	1,677
Highest	25.2	64.4	10.1	0.1	0.2	100.0	1,590
Total	27.0	63.3	9.5	0.2	0.1	100.00	8,311

\* Proxy measure of standard of living of household based on ownership of durable goods; dwelling characteristics; source of drinking water; type of sanitation facilities; and other characteristics related to the household socio-economic status.

•Differentials are small with respect to wealth quintile.



## Table 7 Women's control over their own earnings and the earnings of their husband

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 with cash earnings in the past 12 months by person who decides how the women's cash earnings are used, and percent distribution by person who decides how the husband's cash earnings are used, according to the relative amount of the woman's and husband's cash earnings, Philippines 2008

Women's earnings relative To husband's earnings	Person who decides how the wife's cash earnings are used:					Total	Number of women
	Mainly wife	Wife and Husband jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing		
More than husband	45.0	50.7	4.1	0.1	0.0	100.0	1,039
Less than husband	44.5	51.2	4.2	0.1	0.0	100.0	2,542
Same as husband	28.5	67.5	3.9	0.1	0.0	100.0	986
Husband has no cash earnings/ did not work	63.7	30.0	3.3	3.0	0.0	100.0	74
Woman has no cash earnings	na	na	na	na	na	na	0
Woman did not work in past 12 months	na	na	na	na	na	na	0
Total <sup>1</sup>	41.5	54.0	4.1	0.1	0.4	100.0	4,677

na = Not applicable

<sup>1</sup>Exclude cases in which the woman or her husband has no earnings, and includes cases in which the woman does not know whether she earned more or less than her husband

- Women whose husbands are not working or who do not earn cash are the most likely to be the one who mainly decides how their earnings will be used (64%).
- Women who earn either more or less than their husbands are almost equally likely to be main decision maker with regard to how their earnings are used (45%).
- Women whose cash earnings are the same as the husbands are the least likely to make their own decisions about their earnings and are much more likely to decide jointly with their husbands (68%).

# Findings



**Table 8 Women's control over their own earnings and the earnings of their husband**

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 with cash earnings in the past 12 months by person who decides how the women's cash earnings are used, and percent distribution by person who decides how the husband's cash earnings are used, according to the relative amount of the woman's and husband's cash earnings, Philippines 2008

Women's earnings relative To husband's earnings	Person who decides how the husband's cash earnings are used:					Total	Number of women
	Mainly wife	Wife and husband jointly	Mainly husband	Other	Missing		
More than husband	36.2	5.7	9.9	0.2	0.0	100.0	1,029
Less than husband	28.0	62.6	9.5	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,542
Same as husband	21.4	70.8	7.5	0.2	0.0	100.0	986
Husband has no cash earnings/ did not work	na	na	na	na	na	na	0
Woman has no cash earnings	20.1	69.2	10.7	0.1	0.0	100.0	401
Woman did not work in past 12 months	25.9	63.9	9.9	0.3	0.1	100.0	3,316
Total <sup>1</sup>	27.0	63.3	9.5	0.2	0.1	100.0	8,311

na = Not applicable  
<sup>1</sup>Exclude cases in which the woman or her husband has no earnings, and includes cases in which the woman does not know whether she earned more or less than her husband

- Around two thirds of women in each category say that decisions about how their husbands earnings are used are made jointly, although the proportion is somewhat lower among women who say they earn more than their husbands.





# Findings

## Table 9 Women's participation in decisionmaking

Percent distribution of currently married women by person who usually makes decisions about four kinds of issues, Philippines 2008

Decisions	Mainly wife	Wife and husband Jointly	Mainly husband	Someone else	Other/ Missing	Total	Number of women
Own health care	49.6	44.0	6.1	0.2	0.1	100.0	8,418
Major household purchases	20.7	64.8	13.6	0.6	0.3	100.0	8,418
Purchases of daily household needs	59.1	33.3	6.5	0.9	0.3	100.0	8,418
Visits to her family or relative	22.5	70.3	6.8	0.2	0.2	100.0	8,418

- Married Filipino women are usually involved in all four decisions, although the extent of their involvement depends on what is being decided.
- Almost six in ten women say they alone make decisions about purchases for daily household needs.
- Decisions about visits to the woman's family or relatives are most likely to be made jointly by the woman and her husband (70%).
- Decisions on making major household purchases are also likely to be made jointly (65%), however, 14% of women say their husband usually decides about major purchases.
- Half of married women say they make decisions themselves about their own health care, while 44% say they make decisions jointly with their husbands.





## Attitudes Towards Wife Beating

A woman's attitude toward wife beating is considered to be a proxy measure for her perception of her status.

Women were asked whether a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under a series of circumstances:

- if she burns the food
- if she argues with him
- if she goes out without telling him
- if she neglects the children
- if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him.

A lower score on the "number of reasons wife beating is justified" indicates a woman's greater sense of entitlement, self-esteem and status, and reflects positively on her sense of empowerment.

In contrast, a woman who believes that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife for most or all of these reasons may consider herself to be of low status, both absolutely and relative to men.

And the findings reveal.....







# Findings

## Table 10 Indicators of women's empowerment

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 who participate in all decision making and percentage who disagree with all reasons justifying wife beating by value on each of the indicators of women's empowerment, Philippines 2008

Empowerment indicator	Currently married women		Percentage who disagree with all the reasons justifying wife beating	Number of women
	Percentage who participate in all decision-making	Number of women		
<b>Number of decisions in which women participate<sup>1</sup></b>				
0	na	92	84.5	92
1-2	na	599	77.4	599
3-4	na	7,726	85.7	7,726
<b>Number of reasons for which wife beating is justified<sup>2</sup></b>				
0	78.0	7,161	Na	11,673
1-2	70.0	1,050	Na	1,603
3-4	61.0	178	Na	270
5	(62.4)	28	Na	48

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases

<sup>1</sup> Restricted to currently married women. See Table 9 for the list of decisions.

<sup>2</sup> See previous slide for the list of reasons.

na = Not applicable

- Vast majority of women participate in making 3-4 decisions.
- Eighty six percent of women who participate in 3-4 household decisions disagree with all reasons justifying wife beating. This percentage is higher than for women who participate in two or fewer decisions.
- Similarly, the more reasons a woman believes that wife beating is justifiable, the less likely she is to participate in all 4 household decisions.





# Findings

## Table 11 Current use of contraception by women's status

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 by current contraceptive method, according to selected indicators of women's status, Philippines 2008

Empowerment indicator	Any method	Any modern method	Modern methods				Any traditional method	Not currently using	Total	Number of women
			Female sterilization	Male sterilization	Temporary modern female methods <sup>1</sup>	Male condom				
<b>Number of decision in which women participate<sup>2</sup></b>										
0	38.7	23.5	6.8	0.0	16.8	0.0	15.1	61.3	100.0	92
1-2	43.2	25.2	6.6	0.1	16.8	1.7	18.0	56.7	100.0	599
3-4	51.3	34.7	9.4	0.0	22.8	2.4	16.6	48.6	100.0	7,726
Total	50.6	33.9	9.2	0.0	22.4	2.3	16.7	49.3	100.0	8,418

Note: If more than one method is used, only the most effective method is considered in this tabulation.

<sup>1</sup> Pill, IUD, injectables, implants, female condom, diaphragm, foam/jelly, and lactational amenorrhea method.

<sup>2</sup> See Table \_\_\_ for the list of decisions.

- Married women who participate in more decisions and women who accept fewer justifications for wife beating are more likely to use contraception.
- Current use of any contraceptive method increases from 39% among women who do not participate in any decision to 51% among women who participate in 3-4 household decisions.



## V. Concluding Remarks



- **Women's empowerment and women's autonomy can be measured** by asking questions on decision-making within the household.
- **Decisions that affect well-being of family and members of the households are very important.**
- **Gender equality in decision-making at household level** by which resources are allocated is important for a family and society.
- It would be good to **explore other areas of decision-making** in succeeding surveys.





# Thank you!

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