



LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORKERS DEPLOYED IN RIDO-AFFLICTED AREAS

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Abstract

Rido continues to be a crucial and challenging issue in some parts of the country Philippines particularly in Maguindanao areas, that are affecting the lives of every individuals living in the community including helping professionals such as social workers. Thus, this study was aimed to uncover lived experiences of social workers deployed in rido-afflicted areas, specially sought to answer the challenges met by social workers in rido-afflicted areas, their coping strategies and the aspirations of social workers throughout their deployment.

The research comprised qualitative methods through focus group discussions and interviews. Eighteen (18) interviewed study participants were selected through snowball sampling technique. Three sets of focus group discussions were conducted and each sets were composed of six (6) study participants who were deployed in three municipalities Buldon, Matanog and Barira.

The findings revealed that social workers assigned in rido-afflicted areas face fears and tension in dealing with their day-to-day living in their deployment area. The research also determined the difficulties and agonies encountered at their area of deployment. They express being their life at risk, faced language barriers, mistaken identity, delivering social services became a threat, mentally distress, physically distress, and social workers individual differences. However these challenges motivates them and brought changes in their lives. They gained the means in dealing with these challenges, role adjustment, participations of LGU and BLGU, shown the essence of resilience, happy and grateful, and embodied with professionalism. Thus, the research revealed the need for coordination among Local Government and Barangay Local Government Unit and Ministry of Social Service Development (MSSD). More trainings, and seminars, and the need for immediate establishment of peace and reconciliation facilitations are deemed necessary.

Keywords: *Rido, Social Workers, Lived Experiences, Challenges, Coping Strategies, Aspirations.*

INTRODUCTION

Clan conflicts referred to as "Rido" continues to be a challenging and crucial problem in communities for past decades and even nowadays.

It was characterized by intermittent acts of punitive violence between communities, families and kinship groups. It can happen in places where people feel unsafe and unjustly treated.

Rido among the Maranaos had caused substantial issues in their society in addition to a large number of casualties, making it one of the main issues in Mindanao. Loss of life, property damage, economic decline, and a lack of peace and order are just a few of the devastating impacts.

The people's socio-economic, political, and spiritual progress were hampered by rido. Compared to other Moro tribes in the Philippines, Maranao society is more likely to experience it (Basir, 2011).

Maranaos were renowned for their pride and rido culture, which were related to conflict, vengeance, and punitive behavior on the one extreme and self-worth, personal dignity, honor, and pride on the other. As a result, they were sensitive individuals, especially when their "amorpropio" were under risk.

In relation to this attribute, inter-family conflict, or rido as it were known in the local dialect, happens whenever a family member were physically or verbally offended. The Maranaos referred to the conduct as retributive justice, however the Philippine legal system classifies as murder or homicide.

Rido were frequently invoked due to pride despite its violent outcomes. It strengthened Maranaos identity and sense of community. The Maranaos, a group that places a high value on status or position, go to any lengths to preserve their honor. Rido diminished pride in that it links it to chaos, bloodshed, and personal vendettas. It also highlights both disputants' propensity to disparage and dehumanize one another (Salerno, 2011).

Given the significance of this unique Maranao socio-cultural value, it was considered by some to be more valuable than life itself, this study aimed to learn more about this cultural practice and identify any potential implications for schooling.

Colonial powers and post-colonial administrations in the Philippines have made a variety of agreements with the indigenous Datus and armed militia in Mindanao, but these agreements had constantly changed in a complicated web of instability. Through contacts with other, rival Datus and their militia, armed opposition groups like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and the Philippine state, the bounds

of Datu power were, and still are, constantly fought, expanded, limited, and negotiated (especially the armed forces).

In Mindanao, there were competition for control of the land, the populace, and the resources between the clans and the Datus. But with economic modernization and decentralization, holding political office had also been a route to politico-economic dominance (Adam, et al., 2014). Elections for the Barangay (Village) Captain and the Barangay Council were fiercely and violently contested because they control how the Barangay's Internal Revenue Allotment were spend and made decisions regarding zoning, building permits, and public service contracts. One clan

can frequently controlled the barangay government since many of the same individuals who were on the barangay council were also on the peace and order committee.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was established after a comprehensive peace agreement and was negotiated in the year 2012 between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Philippines, ending a decades-long war in Mindanao (BARMM). Although the war were technically ended, violence still breaks out in Mindanao because there were still much more armed groups, local elites, and militias involved there, than included in the peace deal. Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) composed of five (5) provinces that were

also experiencing rido and affecting the community and its people and one of it were, the Maguindanao Province (2019).

METHODS

This study employed the qualitative research design which utilized face to face interview and Focused Group Discussions with the study participants as deemed necessary.

Because the qualitative method excels at telling the stories from the study participants' point of view, the researcher used it to carry out this study (Trochim, 2006). In qualitative research, the nature and substance of a situation, person, or case were also a subject for interest (Silverman, 2000). According to Davis (2000), description and direct quotation were two methods used in qualitative research to provide depth and detailed information. Also, it enables the researcher to learn more about a target group's views, beliefs, motivations, and behaviors.

The researcher specifically used the phenomenological strategy recommended by Creswell (1998). While seeking to learn about current occurrences in people's lives, the researcher stuck to the truth (Groenewald, 2004). However, the researcher also sought to precisely characterized the situation in which individuals might be certain of how things manifest in or reveal themselves to their consciousness (Eagleton, 1983).

According to Kruger (1988), "phenomenology understands social and psychological experience from the point of view of the participant." According to Groenewald (2004), a researcher using phenomenology were concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved, or who were involved, with the issue that was being researched. Additionally, the researcher hopes to understand the fundamental truths of the study participants' lived experiences.

In order to address the research topic, the research questions were centered on the study participant's unique experiences, emotions, and viewpoints. Also, the challenges of social workers who were deployed in rido-prone area were explored. The researcher investigated their coping strategies used as means in dealing with the challenges caused by rido.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Encountered by the Social Workers

Study participants shared the common challenges they met while being deployed in rido-afflicted areas. Rido really had an impact on their lives as social workers while working in communities.

Life is at Risk

Study participants expressed the experienced being their *life is at risk*. According to the study participants, there was an incident they encountered while they were in the area. They suddenly heard gunshots released by certain group of individuals. They were in a state of being shocked and felt fear that they might get hit by the rove bullets and might be the cause of their death at those times. Later those moment, they came to know the reason behind it, and it was because of rido.

“Grabi din ang nangyari na yun. Hindi ko talaga Makakalimutan yun”(The incident was intense. I’ll never forget it) [FGD4-20]

Most of the study participants said that rido usually occurs because of “maratabat” (pride) runs through in every individuals living in the community. When “maratabat” were being violated by a particular person, it might emanate situations that affect the lives of every single person including service providers (social workers) living in the area. According to study participants, in dealing this kind of situation that were still happening in their area, they often humbled themselves, and observed sensitivity with their surroundings. Study participant (2) stated that sometimes, they better to keep their own opinions and thoughts towards aspect of rido.

“Para sa’kin, better silent nalang ako pag dating sa rido na yan. Ayuko madamay”(For me, I better be silent when in regards to that rido)[FDG9-24]

The study participants pointed out that making your stand about rido situation faced by the community where they were deployed in, can possibly harm their lives as human being. Study participants put themselves away from political involvements or any other related concerns about rido. SPs stucked to their job as professionals that served as service providers to those vulnerable individuals. By this way of living while in the area, they surely find and feel the essence of secured and safe. But of course, these study participants were challenged by the community and its people that surrounds them and measures how far they made to surpass it, professionally.

Language Barriers

Study participant (10) stated that when she were first deployed in her rido-afflicted area as social worker, she found difficulties in communicating with the people in the community. She is a maguindanaon, and hearing how her clients talk to other individuals

made her feel that they were always angry to each other. The mother tongue (also known as local dialect) maguindanaon, she used as means of communication with her colleagues, were very different from the people's mother tongue they used in community. Most of them (people in the community) were unable to speak in filipino language and chose to use their own mother tongue, iranun and/or maranao. Communicating with those individuals with different mother tongue were being spoken, challenged the communication skill of the study participant as social worker.

"Hindi ko maintindihan sinasabi nila pag nag sa Salita sila na gamit ang kanilang linggwahe na iranun. Minsan feeling ko na pinag-uusapan nila ako"(I cannot understand what they are talking about and sometimes I felt that they are discussing about me.0)
[FGD 10-5]

Study participant (5) affirmed the statement of study participants and also expressed her assertion about fact that sometimes she felt offended because of the behavior they showed towards her. They act like she were not mean to be there as service provider. According to her, she thought few of those individuals were

talking about her behind her back. Especially, she was unable to understand them through their mother tongue language. She was concerned about language gap that can lead to misunderstanding when they were talking to each other.

Misunderstanding may take place for the study and the people in the community if they were unable to communicate well. The challenge of communicating through verbal communication using their own mother tongue can possibly grow gaps between the worker and its client/s and especially may affect the client-worker relationship. Somehow, she was very concerned that she may used words or terms that were not meant to say while having conversation with their clientele that can hurt or turned into disrespectful way. The study participant (5) highlights this problem.

"Aden isa gay ainid sa ko indaw sika luma nin a mama ka bag interview ako, bali sabi niya kawtu a pelasuan iyan a iyo gutoro sa lusod ka peka kamuwan" (One day I asked the mother where is her husband because I would like to conduct an interview and she replied, he is inside preparing the coconut milk to be used in vegetables.) [FGD 5-14]

Ardissono et al. (2004) pointed that misunderstanding occurs "when the listener chooses an interpretation for some turn which were absolute and consistent from his perspective, but is not the one intended by the speaker" (p. 1). Humphreys-Jones, 1986, (p. 109) supported the statement of Ardissono et al. (2004) where this kind of misunderstanding occurs "when the hearer (H) fails to comprehend the

proportion (p) which a speaker (S) conveys in a verbalization (x)". Misunderstanding through communication can affect the relationship

between the speaker and the listener and that can lead to poor communication as stated.

Bernstien K. (2016) also stated in her study that misunderstanding in intercultural interactions were often taken as certain unintentional side effects of coming to interactions with different languages between the speaker and the listener. Bernstien K. (2016) was certain that with enough efforts and learning on the parts of an individual, it might be mend or even avoided.

Mistaken Identity

Suspicion arises towards the study participants in the community where they often heard the term “*spy*” and were being called after them. According to them, when they were new to their area of deployment, where rido really existed, there were groups of individuals in the community doubted their identity as social workers. They often feel like they were being suspicious to the people they may interact with in the area. People in the community think that they were an ally against the party or just taking information from them that can be used against them itself. All of these aroused certain schism between the study participants and the people. Political involvement were one of the reason why most of them (people in the

community) started to doubt new people that were possibly entering their area of territory.

“Noong bago palang talaga kami sa area, Talagang napagkakamalan kaming spy” (When were still new to the area, they were mistaken for a spy)[FGD7-59]

Most of the study participants agreed that male social workers were often the subject for mistaken identity from the community. Men social workers were potentially became the most suspected individuals in terms of being a spy in the community. It was because men were showing their boldness and often displayed their stands towards situations that happens in their surroundings.

“Minsan pag nag sa area kami at dahil lalaki kami, madalas kaming napagkakamalan spy, galing sa ibang partido”(Sometimes, when we were in the area, we were often mistaken as spy from other political party)[FGD6-23]

Study participant (14) also expressed his feeling of not being trusted by those people with trust issues. According to him, his clientele had an issue about trusting people because of their situation they faced in the community. His clientele gave their reasons why they were not trusting new people because even their own family and relatives and afford to became a traitor or even confidently able to kill one of their members if their “maratabat” pride were being offended.

“Makatakot talaga kasi kaya nilang pumatay kahit myembro pa ng pamilya nila basta ang usapan ay maratabat”(It is very infectious because the can able to kill someone even if it is a member of their

family when it talks about
maratabat(pride)[FGD17-89]

Trust was one of the most important in building good relation between individuals. The more trust you gave to other people, the more expectation you want to meet towards them. Ennen N., Stark E. & Lassiter A. (2015) discussed in their study that trust mediates the relationships between perceived similarity and individual outcomes. When in regards to perceived similarity, it was when a person perceived himself/herself as similar to others who were giving their trust towards people whom they tend to trust with, and the measurement of expecting positive outcome of it, was in high level. They also added that trust may a source of satisfaction and motivation to work hard with others. When it is not met, that was the time when distrust exist (Ennen et al., 2015).

Lewicki R. & Tomlinson E. (2003) stated that distrust appears directly as the outcome of personal experiences among individuals. Distrust was likely to boost with the enormity of the violation, the amount of past violations, and the perception that the violators aimed to perpetrate the violation (Lewicki et al., 2003).

Lewicki J., McAllister D. & Bies R. (1998) in their study made a distinction meaning of trust and distrust. Trust defined in terms of confident positive expectations with regard to other's conduct while distrust was being stated as confident negative expectations with regard to another's conduct. Researchers used the term "another's conduct" in a very concrete, but encompassing, sense, addressing another's words and/or actions (what another says and does and how he or she makes decisions). Lewicki J., McAllister D. & Bies R. (1998) trust and distrust implicate towards certainly: trust concerning expectations of things aimed for and distrust concerning expectations of things feared.

Two male social workers (SPs 4 & 7) stated that, they were not able to go to their area without any barangay officials that accompanied them during the entire interaction between them and their clients. The area for intervention were far from the main road hence, they walked just to went there and met the concerned individuals. Most of their clients were living in remote areas or even in mountains. They do not have androids (cellphones) to be used as means of communication and the area had poor network signal. This was the reason why they find other plans to execute by doing home visit to their clients.

"Nahhirapan ako pag gusto kong kausapin client ko kasi andun siya sa bundok nakatira. Mahirap pumunta don lalo na pag walang kasama, delekado sa daan". (I have a hard time when I want to talk to my client because he lives in the mountain. It's hard to go there, especially if you don't have a companion, going there is dangerous) [FGD4-45]

"Hindi ko naman sila ma contact through tawag or text kasi wala naman sila signal sa bahay nila" (I

can't make contact through call and text because they have don't have signal in their home) [FGD7- 50]

Generally, most of them had made a clear statement that going to the area (community) where far from the main road was unsafe. Danger was possible while in the road especially when they do not had anyone to accompany them. Most of the people who were living far from urban areas were facing personal problems like rido as stated by the study participants. They kept distancing themselves(people in the community) from other people or even in crowd areas just to avoid the possible encounter between them and their enemy.

Delivering Social Services as a Threat for SWs

Study participants were very hands on in delivering social services to the community regardless of the hindrances they encountered. They make sure that the distribution were equal and be given for those individuals who were qualified in availing it. Study participant (4) frankly stated her thoughts about how delivering social services becomes a threat for her, she said that it was possible that those individuals who were not included in a particular program blamed them about it.

"Hindi talaga madali ang ma deployed kasa may Rido na area, makapagod at hindi talaga simple. Pwede nila isisi sayo kong bakit hindi sila nasali in the program(It is not easy to be deployed in rido- prone area, it is tiring and it is not that simple. It is possible that they'll blame you why they're not included)[FGD4-32]

Study participants were usually challenged by this dilemma. There were some instances that the programs and services were there, but the people who had been targeted as beneficiary were not present because they lived in a very remote area where they can stay and feel secured from any circumstances caused by their enemies. In some cases, they extended their arms just to avail the services given by the different agencies whether it was from government or non-government organizations (NGOs) for those vulnerable individuals in the community who were in need of assistance. According to the study participants, they did the house to house assessments just to make sure that everyone who were eligible and would be subjected for inclusion in the said programs and services.

"Nahirapan ako minsan hanapin ang clients ko, malalayo pa naman bahay nila sa isa't-isa" (I find difficulties in finding my clients, especially their houses are far away from each other) [FGD9-54].

Study participant (3) expressed his experience that he really exerted an extra effort for the well-being of every individual. Sometimes, even his weekends were being used for the interventions depend on the availability of both parties (social worker and the

clientele). *"Minsan, hindi na ako makapahinga sa weekends, especially kapag may dapat tapusin na trabaho sa*

area ko kong san ako na assign” (sometimes, I can’t even rest on our weekends especially, when there are works to be done in my area where I was assigned)[FGD3-63]

Study participants (6) were also confidently shared her experience that sometimes, she even used the weekends to deal with the problems and concerns of her clients especially if it were really needed to address it. She often receiving calls if there were a signal in her area or even her clients went to her place and being asked for the possible solutions.

“Umagang-umaga magri ring ang selpon dahil may tawag at magtatanong kong pupunta ba ako sa area” (A call the early morning asking if I’ll be in the area)[FGD6-26]

Most of the study participants agreed that field work was not easy as others perceived. Its not like just giving relief goods “*ayuda*” to community. Its more on timing in connecting and interacting with the community and its people. Its more on helping the community to function on its own with the collective effort of individuals. Its not like in office-based work, where social workers were interacting with clients inside the office with air-conditioned sometimes.

“Akala ng iba madali lang maging social worker, lalo na pag nalagay kasa may mga rido. Maghahanap ka pa ng magandang tsempo para makausap at Makita mo mga beneficiaries mo” (Others think that being social worker who are deployed in rido-prone area is easy, you’ll look for a perfect timing just to talk and see your beneficiaries) [FGD9-58]

Sherman R. & Cohn T. (2019) explained that timing plays extra significant role in work and life thatsometimes we appreciated. In work, timing often spells the difference between success and failure. Good leaders recognized that making decisions about when to lead were crucial. Developing a good sense of timing were explained leadership strategy.

Mentally Distress

Study participants were exposed in field work activities especially working in the community where a lot of difficulties were visible, they shared information that sometimes they had risen their concerns about their works. Most of them agreed that their mental health does not have any exemptions as result of this kind of dilemma. These study participants not only voice out the consequences of their experiences while working in rido-afflicted area but it also affected their personal matters especially the bond of their own family and within themselves as whole.

Most of the study participants were also shared their personal experience how these dilemmas really had an impact in their mental conditions as social workers. They were being identified and assessed of experiencing mentally distress by their respective supervisors. Agonies and worries were beyond any description, especially on their first week of working, they lived in a state of feeling anxious or worried about their safety, confused of something that might become the reason of misunderstanding and questioning themselves if they were able to do their tasks as social workers. Majority of the study participants stated that.

“Noong una talaga, natatakot talaga ako kasi na Maguindanaon ako, diko maintindihan sinasabi nila. Parang hindi ko alam isasagot sa tanong nila lalo na kapag gumagamit sila ng malalalim na salita, Ang hirap intindihin” (At first, I am very scared because I am maguindanaon. I can't even understand what they were saying. I do not even know what to answer regarding their queries especially when they are using deep words, it's difficult to understand) [FGD8-67]

“Nakaramdam din ako or naka experience din ako na sumasakit nalang bigla ang ulo ko kasi lagi ko naiisip na paano kong may masabi akong salita na bawal o masama sa kanila kasi hindi ko alam ang meaning. Magkaka problema pa ako”(I felt and experienced headaches because I always think that what if I talk certain words that I do not even know what is meaning and these words has bad meaning. I'll be in trouble) [FGD10-48]

“Nawawalan na'kong time sa pamilya ko kasi mas madalas sa area ako kahit weekends pa yan. Minsan nagtatampo na asawa ko kasi lagi nalang ako sa area. Nalulungkot ako pag ganun naririnig ko na salita galling sa pamilya ko” (I'm losing time for my family because most of the time, I'm in my area. I feel sad whenever I hear this word coming from my family)[FGD17-70]

Study participants did not knew if this deployment area away from their loved one (family) were even worth it. They were not only dealing with the community and its people but also their own concerns and difficulties as normal individuals. The feelings of fear were mutual for most of them and it really a challenged for them and for the people who surrounded them while in the area. Study participant (12) also stated that she were very worried when an incident happened while she were in the area for assessments. The two families (parties) had their misunderstanding about something and she saw that the two parties were shown of being angry to each other. She immediately vacates the area and went home because she knew that her safety

were more important.

“Natakot ako, muntik na sila mag kagulo sa time na yun. Nang mapansin ko nagalit na ang bawat panig, hindi na’ko nag dalawang isip, umuwe na talaga ako ng mabilis” (I was scared, they are almost got into trouble. When I noticed that the both parties are both angry to each other, I didn’t even think twice and I went home in speed) [FGD12-65]

“Ginagawa ko hanggang kayang mag distance, umiwas nalang, kesa naman sa madamay pa’ko diba?” (I did distancing until so and just avoid rather than get involve, right?) [FGD16-55]

Ayduk O. & Kross E. (2010) tackled in their study on how adaptive self-distancing across a variety of outcomes that have real life significance. Its more on the consequences intrapersonal behavior and outcomes. It was when people repeatedly focused on what and why they felt a certain things which intensify and maintains negative affect to them rather than reducing it.

Generally, study participants tried to gave an emphasis of what they had experience throughout the deployment. They were concerned or somehow worried about their security and safety while they were in the community. Study participants (women) were more bothered when in terms of their safety. One of the study participants openly shared her experience on how social workers (women) do their community visitation.

“Ako pag pumupunta sa community. Minsan, Pinapasama ko asawa ko” (When I went to the community, sometimes I bring my husband with me) [FGD18-55]

Study participants 2 and 10 also relayed their statement that they frequently felt being stress because some of their clients raising their voice and showing the act of being angry while they were in the process of intervention. It occurs when some of them were not included in specific programs as they really wanted their names to be included in it. Both study participants and the people in the community were aware about the process incorporated with criteria and guidelines on how an individual becomes beneficiary for the said program. But most of them (people in community) really wanted to insist regarding their inclusions.

“May na encounter ako na clients na nagagalit at nag tataas na ng boses sa’kin kasi bakit hindi daw siya nasali sa programa kahit alam naman niya na hindi siya pwede” (I had encountered clients who shows being angry and raise their voices towards me because they are not included in the program even though they are aware of not being eligible) [FGD2-78]

“Maka stress talaga pag may client na talagang magagalit sayo at kong minsan sisihin kapa bakit hindi sila nasali” (It is very stressful when there is a client that really got angry with you and sometimes they blame you why they not included) [FGD10-67]

Michie S. (2002) stated that stress can be draw up as of pressure from environment, then as strain within the person. Its the concurrence between the situation and the individual. This study supported the experiences of study participants in becoming stressful while working with the people because of their concerns.

Community and its people were all aware of the standard criteria and guidelines as basis of the social workers (study participants) from provincial and regional level when in regards to the selection of beneficiaries. They were also informed that the programs and services rendered for them had limited funds or slots. Only those suitable and qualified individuals were being included to benefit the said programs. These programs were equally distributed for those who were least fortunate that really needed to be addressed and met the criteria as stated by study participants.

Rawls J. (1971) theory of justice gave an emphasis that every individuals were equal and society should be fair in distributing social goods. This implied that the people in the community were holding equal basic rights.

Physically Distress

Aside from the mentally distress they faced, it had been determined that they were also experiencing *physically distress*. They were also kept saying that field work can be subject for physically exhausting for social workers. They openly shared the experience they had of being physically unconditioned. It because they had the uncomfortable feelings like being exhausted and they often felt the pain in their body. Walking or travelling in a long period of time when visiting the clients, it affected the reaction of the body. Also, the measures of activities incorporating physical involvement caused the feeling of discomfort.

“Kailangan talaga may sariling motor or sasakyan kapag mag area kasi malayo” (You really need to have your own motorcycle or car when going to the area because it’s far away) [FGD1-37]

Study participant 9 uttered her exposure going in her assigned barangay (area). She had no choice but to gave fare to those motorcycle drivers. Sometimes, she hired a private motorcycle to ride going to the said barangay (area). The road going there were not good, she added. The means of transportation were really a trouble for the study participant. Study participant 11 were also agreed to her (SP 9) statement because a long ride going there (in their area) caused them a lot of troubles. They started to feel uncomfortable feelings in their body. They started to feel pain in their back, feet or even headaches and somehow experiencing muscle weakness.

"Wala akong motor kaya ginarent kona lang motor ng kakilala ko para makapunta sa area ko at makausap clients ko. Malayo kasi area ko kaya nakakaramdam ako ng pagod, pananakit ng likod at kung minsan sumasakit ulo ko"(I don't have motorcycle hence, I'll just rent a motorcycle from a known person just to go to my area just to talk to my clientele) [FGD9-40]

"Minsan nakakaramdam ako ng pagkahilo pag nagapunta ako sa area ko kasi malayo lalo na pag mainit ang panahon. Nakakaramdam din ako ng pananakit din katawan ko pagtapos ko mag assess ng bahay-bahay (Sometimes, I feel dizzy when going to my area because of the distance along with the hot weather. I also feel pain in my body after I went and go through to house to house assessment)[FGD11-53]

These feelings they felt became normal for them (study participants) as they really practicing field work and both mental and physical engagement during the process of intervention were needed to established and come up with sustainable relationship towards the community and its people.

SWs View of Points and their Differences

Study participants agreed that they were not just dealing with the challenges given by the community and its people, but also within themselves. Study participants frankly shared their statement about problems they had experienced towards each other. Sometimes, they had difference view points towards something that lead to conflicts. Then conflicts became stressful for them and for their work environment. Some thoughts and opinions were contradicting others owned opinions. It approved to some of them and half of them were not into it. According to them, its normal for colleagues with a lot of differences especially on how each of them think and how they reacted to it.

"Minsan nagkakaproblema din kami sa bawat isa, minsan may hindi na pagkakaintindihan lalo na

pa tungkol sa pag handle ng clients” (Sometimes, problems arise between each of us. Sometimes, there is misunderstanding between us especially in handling clients)[FGD13-49]

National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Code of Ethics of National Association of Social Workers affirmed that social workers as professionals were required to treat their colleagues with respect and avoid negative criticism towards themselves. When having conversation with their respective clients or with other professionals. As social workers, they should not advantage of the conflict happenings between each other to attain position or diversely advance their own personal interest.

It was being cleared that the experiences brought by these challenges faced by the study participants had caused them stress. This conformed to the study of Auerbach (2008) study on stress that its normal and adaptive, reaction to threat. It was also an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological arousal that individuals experiences in situations that they perceived as dangerous or threatening to their lives. The study participants felt their life, security status, and future prospects which were their personal value were threatened. Along with these fear, agonies were also commonly felt by the study participants.

Means in Dealing These Challenges

Study participants were generally overwhelmed at first in their area of deployment. An area where the chosen profession were challenged them as social workers. The constant prayers made the study participants surpass life's difficulty. They had expressed their feelings towards the experiences they had, make them good and competent social workers.

Social Worker's Role Adjustment

Study participants positively shared their resilient behavior and persistence to stand up for their new role adjustment as social workers working in rido-afflicted areas. They did not think that these matters

would be possible for them as professionals. They were advantageously saying that the improvement of individuals lives in the community were one of the reasons that encouraged them and served as motivation. Study participants mostly and badly wanted was to become competent, productive and skilled social worker on their own.

SPs were all aware that being flexible and committed social worker gave a big impact towards their profession. Having good communication skills will help them a lot in combating language barriers between them and its clients. Social workers obliged to learn not only for one language (dialect) to use in interacting with people especially with their clientele.

“Inaaral ko talagang matutong mag Iranun at Maranao na salita nila” (I really study know how to speak In Iranun and Maranao as their language (dialect)” [FGD6-34]

Most of the SPs who were maguindanaon and catholic (bisaya), according to them, they were trying their best to learn and understand the language (dialect) that people in the community used as a means of communication. There were some of them (people on community) knew how to communicate using filipino language especially young people who were still studying or even finished their studies. They assist their loved ones, member of the families, or even aged people who were unable to communicate with them because of this dilemma (language differences). During sessions of intervention, some of them were present became the second bridge of delivering the information that a social worker wanted to relay. By this, study found it useful for them as well.

“Yung iba may mga anak sila na nag-aaral o nakatapos, sumasali sila sa sessions namin para ma explain nila ulit sa nanay or tatay nila” (Some of their children who were studying or finished their schooling, they are joining in our sessions to explain it further to their mother or father)[FGD8-61]

Stroup H. (1960) defined social worker as an art leading numerous resources bring on individuals, groups by the and community demand by practicing and administering the scientific method of helping vulnerable people to help themselves. He stated in his study that social workers with good communication skills understand the needs of the beneficiaries and avoid misunderstanding. Simon R. (2015) affirmed it, as he stated that communication become a means of bringing change towards individuals and considered as essential skill in social work profession.

Study participants openly expressed one of the obstacles they experienced and it was all about trust issue. Most of the people in the community had difficulty in trusting others. They did not give their

trust since they had experienced a lot of instances that others are giving false hope and sometimes wasted their time and money over it. Because of this dilemma, social workers were collaborating with the trusted individuals in their area like barangay officials and datu to help them made people understand the reasons and their motives of interacting with them.

“Gina make sure naming na samahan kami sa mga datu para matulungan kami na ipaintindi kong bakit kami nasa lugar nila” (We make datu are accompanying us to help us making them understand why we are in there area)[FGD11-57]

The study participants were also mentioned in their statement about the distribution of programs and services as being their tasks and fully delivered it to those vulnerable individuals. Programs and services from regional level were categorized into different sectors living in community. It had been determined that the funds of programs and services were directly from MSSD-BARMM and will be distributed per slots from different municipalities in BARMM region. And because of limited funds/slots given to the area, they were prioritizing the people who belongs to poorest of the poor and became beneficiaries of it. Some of those who were not being included in a certain program were showing their dissatisfaction and sometimes confronted them about it.

Before choosing beneficiaries, programs with guidelines in choosing beneficiaries and benefited through it. SPs cannot just put the names on their own will rather than, making an assessment and then choose them as beneficiaries. According to SPs, it was difficult to make them understand why their names were not in the lists but what they did was addressing their issues and concerns to raised it in regional level (MSSD-BARMM) and create the best solutions for it.

“Nagagalit ang iba kasi hindi sila nakasali sa programa” (They are angry because they are not included in the program)[FGD14-54]

Moreover, study participants were giving their best to satisfy and pleased most of their clients by their efforts and works to make their lives and community function as one. But there were still group of individuals who were not pleased (especially those who are not included in a certain programs) and making their own statement on how SPs choosing possible beneficiaries. They were denying the fact that, before coming to the deliberation of programs and services, LGU, BLGU and other concern individuals were informed about it and its guidelines. SPs believed that informing and making them understands it, is more reliable, efficient and effective.

“Aware naman ang tao about sa guidelines sa pagpili kong sino ang pwede masali or ma include sa programa” (People are aware of the guidelines of choosing to be Included in the program)[FGD3-62]

Carter C. (2016) stated the pleasing others may feel happiness within themselves. It served as an instant booster. Researcher stated that gratitude practice were often shown to everyone, trying to meet people's expectations in order to feel that a person liked by others. But doing this, they were generally at odds with their own wants and needs. The researcher came up with the realization that, thinking other's expectation were not atrocious, rather than keep pleasing others were not same as helping others.

LGU and BLGU's Participation

Study participants were also needs of having the support and participations of Local Government Unit and Barangay Local Government Unit to lessen the hindrances they faced while working with their constituents. They also stated that they were building a productive relationship towards local government unit and its barangay local government unit for the betterment of their constituents (people). Generally, proper coordination with them (LGU,BLGU) offered and plays a vital role in stepping stone of a certain programs and services rendered from regional and provincial office (MSSD-BARMM).

"Kilangan namin ng full support galling sa LGU at barangay, dahil sila ang susi para magkaroon ng maayos na ugnayan sa mga tao sa community" (We need the support from LGU and barangay because they will be the key to have a good correlation towards and people in the community)[FGD14-87]

In municipal level, study participants were following the protocols of any agencies they tend to work with by making a courtesy call where its included the introduction of their works and intentions towards them especially in the community and their constituents. Local government officials (elected) were showing supports and introducing them at the barangay level where they were being assigned/deployed. While in barangay level, they were also required to do courtesy call, explained and make them (people in the area) understand the reasons of their existence as social workers. They make sure that their good intensions be realized especially the barangay officials and the datu were there to make the programs and services rendered efficient and successful.

"Gina make sure talaga namin na makuha naming ang suporta ng barangay officials at ng mga datu kasi sila ang makakatulong samin pag nasa area kami" (We'll make sure that we will have the support of barangay officials and the datu because they will help us when we are in area)[FGD-13-75]

Moreover, study participants were positively sharing their interaction with the LGU officials on how they welcomed them and

how thankful they were becoming part of the journey in up lifting the lives of in need individuals in their community. With the proper communication and interaction with them (LGU/BLGU officials)) there had no reason of not achieving the goal of becoming well equipped and developed community with the participation of their constituents.

"Very supportive ang LGU, pag kailangan naming ng tulong para sa community, nagpo provide sila. Very participative po sila"(LGU is very supportive, If we need help for the community, they'll provide it. They are very participative) [FGD3-56]

In addition, local government unit and barangay local government unit aware the study participants that whenever they needed help and if they had any other concerns regarding in their area of deployment, just coordinate and raised to addressed it, find an accurate solution for it. On the very beginning, LGU enlightened them (study participants) about rido happenings in their community. Rido problems were not only experienced in their area but also in other places or region in the Philippines because of numerous reasons behind it. But the importance of it is that, the community and its people were striving to become better on their own, with the help of the study participantsto surely achieved their goals.

"Nag aware naman sila sa'min (LGU) about sarido na yan, basta proper coordination talaga ang kailangan" (LGU aware us about rido and proper coordination is really needed)[FGD17-35]

Crowston K. & Malone T. (1993) affirmed that coordination had been described as a shared action-taking process whereby organizations change in response to one another to complete common tasks or goals. Despite the fact that defined service coordination had varied across disciplines, the concept were frequently described as a process of managing interdependencies, in which agencies exchange the resources they need and make adjustments in response to one another to complete tasks or achieve shared goals.

Resilient, Happy and Grateful SWs

Study participants believed that in facing those difficulties, they had the essence of being a resilient, happy and grateful individuals and resulted for positive impact that they aimed for.They remained

strong despite of the challenges they had, practicing self-control and had the sense of humor all the time to portrait problem-solving skills.

Most of them (SPs) handling various problems raised by their clients and these were put in their shoulders on how to solve it and of course, with the participation of those involved individuals(clients). They stated that, these problems caused them a lot that affects the way they think and how their body reacts on it. But spite of all these obstacles, study participants were pursuing to do their job with passion and dedication to attain and achieve their goals. This personality trait of perseverance flowed in their veins. They worked hard and finishing what they started with sustainable outcome in the end. The intervention they imposed, the programs and services they rendered and most especially the bond they made with their clients were their top priorities that had beneficial outcome for them and their clients.

Study participants felt happy. They were blissful having good relationship with the local government unit and the barangay local government unit of their assigned area. They (LGU &BLGU) were full support to the SPs in making a good impact to the community especially to their constituents. The supports and other needed materials during the field work were given to them freely. The presence of the officials from LGU & BLGU along with datus in local areas make them (SPs) felt the safety they need when they were in the community. Most of them were informed by the LGU & BLGU that whenever they will have sessions in future with their clientele in the area, they make sure to informed them (LGU &BLGU) so that staffs and other trusted individuals from the communitypossibly accompany them (SPs) in their respective areas. They were happy because despite most of them were maguindanaon, they never felt discriminated and judged but provided with help as stated by SPs.

Study participants had also expressed the feeling of gratefulness to Allah/God because in spite of challenges they had experienced while working in rido- afflicted areas, they did not feel rejected but were accepted not only by the LGU but also those groups of people in the community. They were able to manage and overcome hindrances and bounce back. They were also grateful to the endless help from those individuals to make their session and interventions possible.

“Nagpapasalamat ako sa Allah na anjan lagi naka guide sa'kin na malagpasan ang mga problemang kinakaharap ko”(I am very grateful to Allah that HE is always there to guide me surpass the problems I am facing)[FGD4-89]

Generally, they were all agreed that they were grateful for the experiences they had as social workers working with community and its people that makes them realize how lucky they are, to serve and help them to become better citizen in their own community. The active participation of the barangay officials and their existence from the beginning made them very much happy because according to them,

without LGU, BLGU and other concerned citizen assistance, maybe people in the community would not participating in every sessions they had and resulted to failure. This made the study participants exert more efforts, work harder, became stronger and makes an open-eye to their fellow social workers that working in community with rido problems and with diverse individuals were not always experiencing the feelings of fear but a feelings of satisfaction.

Collins et. al (2010) reported that higher level so job satisfaction had also been linked to social workers' perspective son their self-worthwhile interacting with clients. According to their study, almost of the 76 social work students perceived themselves as "person of worth," and they were also said that they enjoyed the time they spent working directly with clients. According to Collins et al. (2010), by working directly with clients, found that students experienced sensations of enthusiasm and exhilaration rather than anxiety or exhaustion. On the other hand, more experienced licensed social lworkers expressed satisfaction with their accomplishments with clients, particularly when taking into account their capacity to manage the complex socio-economic issues that their clients faced (CHW, NASW, 2006).

Acceptance, Self-Determination and Strengthening of Faith

Study participants were also practicing acceptance, self-determination and strengthening of faith became a better version of themselves. They were only dignified their own personal views of something that would only benefited them. SPs were tend to accept what task they had given by their supervisor or mostly, they usually used the word "boss" to the one who supervise their work in particular area of assignment. Despite of the fact that sometimes, they were hesitant to accept the reality of being the one instead of others who will be deployed in a certain area that were out of their comfort zone. But when SPs internalized the reason why they were being put in that situation, first thing came in their mind was, this were one of the tests for them as social workers on how the overcome it, as proficient and skilled social workers.

"Naiisip ko bakit ako na assign sa remote area, samantala ang iba nasa city na assign" (I keep thinking why am I the who was assigned in remote area, whereas others was assigned in the city) [FGD18-79]

Acceptance of the study participants on their works while in the area was one way in achieving their goals itself. They were enlightened that loving their job had a good impact in the entire intervention within the community. And the most important thing for the study participants to gain was the acceptance of the community and its people. The acceptance of them (community and its people) drawn a good sign in bringing positive change to their community as whole. SPs learned to accept and let go of the negative feedbacks by those individuals who were not satisfied in their service. Most of their clients

were very thankful that they were there helping them to make their lives at place and became better as individuals. By these positive feedback, SPs felt the contentment and well appreciated within themselves. According to them, it made them think that it was not always problem that they experienced in community, but also individuals who were giving encouragements, reasons to work hard and became more passionate about the job they had.

“May mga tao din sa area ko na nakikita kong nasisiyahan sa trabaho ko” (There are people in my area who are satisfied in my work)[FGD8-76]

Study participants reported the feelings of satisfaction and happiness after all the efforts they established working with community. Positive and good impression given by their clients makes them feel that they are competent and best social workers. Study participants' determination to achieve their goals were one of the factors that implies of having good intention towards their vulnerable clientele. SPs were motivated even more to overcome all hindrances drawn in attaining the particular goal determined by them and their clients.

Patrick H. & Williams G. (2012) study about Self-Determination Theory, supports the statement of study participants where, it was being cleared that motivation is a psychological energy directed at a particular goal. This motivation became an energy that driven a person or an individuals pursuing the achievable goal.

Study participant (4) also mentioned that one way of having self-determination is when a person do not rely on the external rewards or punishments to be motivated and then take action, rather than working it on the behaviors that design to have internal desire to set goals and working on achieving it.

“Namomotivate ako pag alam kong makakabuti ang ginawa ko sa kanila lalo na kong alam kong may mabuting kalalabasan ito para sa kanila” (I am feeling motivated when I know that my works are favorable for them and it has good outcome for them)[FGD4-80]

Most of the study participants also mentioned that, their deployment in areas where rido existed and still existing were somehow happening for a reason and they knew that it was a scheme from the Almighty Allah. They were always kept praying that at the end of the day, a sustainable outcome for them and the community as well were being met. Study participants were giving their trust and surrendering to Allah/God that whatever happened to them, its from the will of Almighty God.

“Naniniwala kami na naassign kami dito kasi may plano ang Allah sa amin at makakabuti ito sa'min, Insha ALLAH” (We believe that we were assigned here because Allah has plan and it will be good for us, Insha ALLAH)[FGD15-60]

Kreilein (2017) stated that faith within ourselves were important. Faith is a vital part of life, regardless of claimed position on organized religion. Without faith, it were incredibly difficult to love others, accomplish goals, accept significant and immensely complex facts while maintaining hope for success.

Embodied Professionalism

Another thing that study participants shared their personal view to surpass these challenges were having embodied professionalism within themselves. Most of the study participants were committed in their professions. They were guided with core values and the five (5) principles of social work that had to be followed. According to them, they were practicing these principles in working with their different clients. *First*, principle of acceptance implied that a social worker accepts the client sincerely. Social worker taking the clients genuinely and understand their problems/concerns and their situations.

Second, the principle of individualization, social workers seen their clients as unique individuals. Social workers affirmed clients' individuality. They can recognized and appreciate client's unique qualities and their differences. This principle served as guide to treat individuals as unique as their thumbprint.

Third, the principle of self-determination were pursued by the social workers in interacting with their clients. Clients were giving freedom of making choices and decisions in their lives. Social workers were strengthening this principle because they do not wanted to put the phrase "working to them" in client's mind rather than "working with them". This implied that the participation of the clients were also important during the entire intervention. It were not just depending on the workers effort to make goals that had to be achieved but also with the clients' effort to get involved on it as whole.

Fourth, principle of non-judgmental attitude, social workers were not allowed to give judgment to their clients based on their personal backgrounds and appearances. Social workers were valuing their clients' dignity and worth. They were not able to make judgment based on their own first impressions because not all things seen by our naked eye were explaining it directly.

And fifth, principle of confidentiality, social workers were not able to share the information given by the clients especially when the information can be used that will harm or put herself/himself into danger. Social workers were only allowed sharing relevant information to other line agencies that would help the client in the process, but they are required to follow the procedures in accessing the said confidential information.

These principle were being applied by the SPs and bringing it into reality. Study participants were sharing their experiences on how they managed to enforce these principles while working with their clients. In the community, SPs were handling case work, group work and community empowerment. Its visible how these principles running into their profession as social workers.

Study participants as case workers doing case management. Mostly, they were dealing with their specific client that were in need of intensive intervention (like with psychological problem). In group work, its more on assessing and facilitating group of individuals in decision-making. On the other hand, social workers working with the community were more on helping the people to improve the quality of their lives through community empowerment and sustainable ways of living through creating livelihood or employment opportunities in their own efforts.

According to National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics regulates these values, principles and standards to guide social workers' conduct. These were important things to remember and internalized by social work professionals.

Implications

Study participants have experienced and met difficulties throughout working in rido-afflicted areas. The enthusiasm, commitment and determination were done by the study participants to surpass all of these obstacles that hampered them in reaching the very end of every sessions and interventions they had, and the word was being determined as success. Study participants reached to the point of applying the coping strategies in the profession to counteract the possible new sprouts of the problems. The *first* coping strategy used by the study participants was, before deployment, they typically coordinated with the Local Government Unity and the Barangay Local Government Unit for safety reasons; *second* was ,they followed professionalism also known as core values, principles and standards identified by NASW (National Association of Social Workers), which includes adhering to a social worker's personal and professional characteristics; *third*, they used their knowledge of psycho-social interventions and a strategic method of communication; and *Fourth* was, they generally have altruistic thoughts.

Study participants agreed that in this situation, the barangay chairman and municipal mayor can both aid in managing these social workers. Study participant (6) asserted that social workers should build a connection with the locals in the area where they were working. Also, the study participants suggested that conflict management and psychosocial trainings would be a great response in handling these challenges they were facing up until today's' generation.

Recommendations

Considering the results of this study, the following key to actions were hereby recommended by these study participants. First, social workers should be thorough study to the geography of the place where social workers were yet to deploy including the people's attitude, culture, and norms for an advance. Second, social workers employed

to rido-afflicted areas faced mental and physical problems, thus needed to be reinforced. Sufficient trainings to social workers deployed in rido-afflicted area such as handling tensions, pressures, and fears should be promoted and attained. Therefore, line agencies including MSSD-BARMM, the LGU and BLGU should utilize trainings and assistance that should be fully implemented. Third, social workers should have good communication skill and observe sensitivity within themselves in interacting with those people in the community. Fourth, social workers should have strong coordination between the LGU, BLGU, and MSSD for a clean deliberation of services towards vulnerable and needy individuals. Fifth, social workers should lived at all times with utmost professionalism. Sixth, academic should strengthen its curriculum, instructions on instilling ethical standards that future social workers must adhere. Lastly, there should be peace and reconciliation center to every barangay to minimize the existence of rido that causes the distresses and apprehension of social workers.

These line agencies like the local government unit, barangay local government unit, MSSD-BARMM and schools (both private, public and even universities) may benefited by this study.

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