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A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS
OF MATRIFOCAL HOUSEHOLDS
IN SELECTED URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES

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by

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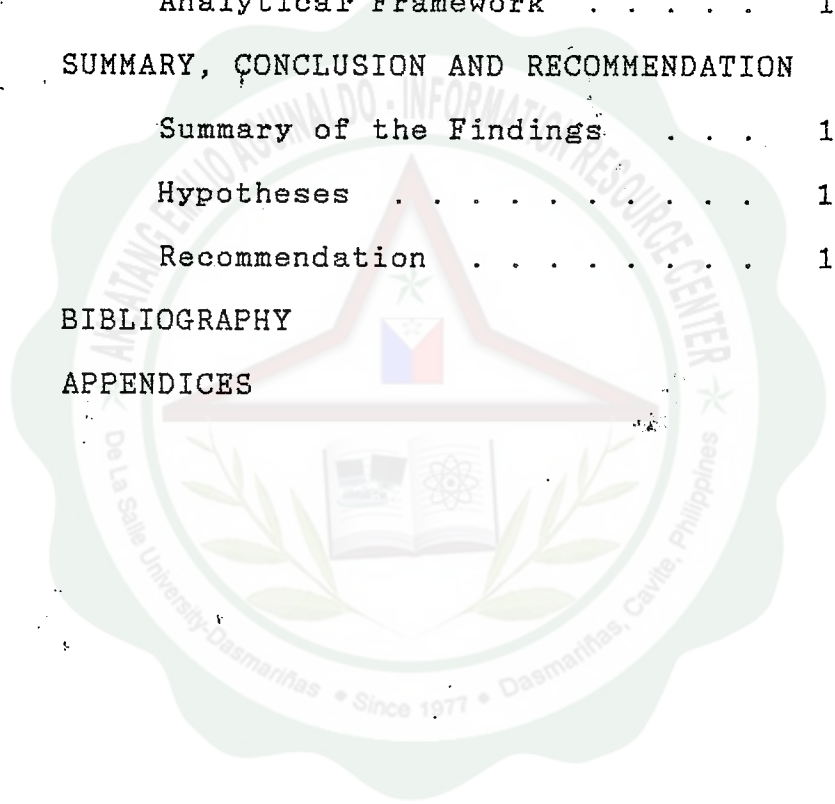
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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to provide a situational analysis of matrifocal households in selected urban poor communities.

This study focuses on the following interests: the background characteristics of matrifocal households; perception of mothers which include the advantages and disadvantages in child rearing, finance, decision making, self efficacy and the major problems encountered by the mothers; their coping strategies; support systems; and their aspirations for themselves, their children and their neighborhood.

The study utilized an exploratory research design comprised of ten key informant mothers--five are separated, three are widowed and two are unwed. From the ten key informants, three mothers from each of the three types were chosen to take part in "a day in a life" observation.

The major findings in the study are as follows: the average number of years the key informants became head of the family is seven, while the average number of children that they have is three. Five of these mothers earn an income which fall below the poverty level line while the other five belong to those who are above the poverty level line. However, the total average household income of these mothers is P2,600, which is still below the poverty level line. These mothers who have low incomes spend more than what they earn, which is why shortage occurs. These women who head matrifocal households prefer their present condition and consider it more of an advantage in terms of child rearing and decision making because the situation made them more independent, self-efficient and stronger in facing obstacles in life. Their only problem is the need for money, which is extremely essential for their survival. Various ways and means such as engaging in secondary occupations, attending religious activities, striving hard are employed by these mothers in order to cope with the pressing difficulties they encounter. They also depend on support systems like their friends, relatives who assist them during their times of need. Most of them believe and feel confident that they can cope with all their hardships and sufferings and fulfill their aspirations for themselves, to live a better life, for their children which is to complete their education and to have greater opportunities in life and for their neighborhood, to be peaceful and united.

