



This is an excerpt (translated version) from an interview with Paz Verdades Santos, a feminist and cultural worker from Naga City, Camarines Sur, during the Art and Feminism in the Philippines Campaign 2021.

Question 1: What is the state of the art here in Bicol, is it constantly evolving or is there a decline in activities due to the current pandemic?

The state of art, especially in literature, in the Bicol region is good, two decades after the collaborative action of the first Pagsurat Bikol 2000. It continues to grow, even in the midst of a pandemic, but we must further enrich it, so it would remain in its current state unlike in the 1950s where it seemed to weaken.

Question 2: Are artists or cultural organizations aware of the importance of women in the arts or does the old -fashioned aspect of patriarchy still emerge?

I think that individuals and cultural groups are also aware of the importance of women in art, but awareness often does not translate to correct behavior and action. The patriarchy is still strong. This is why only few Bicolanas write compared to male writers.

Question 3: As one of those acting for the arts and promoting Feminism, what are some ways you have done or led this past to the present for this cause?

As one of those acting for art or in promoting the goal of feminism in literature, the first step I took, was to pay attention to the selection of Bikolana writers in the study of Bikolnon literature in my dissertation in the 1990s., which in turn became the book, *Hagkusi: 21st Century Bikol Women Writers* in 2003. I also support women writers. In my previous job as a teacher and in my current work in editing books, I use the approach of feminism, in addition to race, class, sexuality, age, etc., but what it really means is, the writers follow the suggestions about these issues.

Question: What is your suggestion for art and literature to co -produce programs affiliated with Feminism?

Suggestions for art and literature to collaborate in creating programs close to Feminism:

- A. Publications, workshops, grants, and competitions exclusively for women writers and women's themes;
- B. Increased participation, action, and leadership in activities like yours. Although this Art and Feminism does a lot, it is the opposite because it is men who initiate it. Well maybe, active and conscious women should be in the leadership of this initiative.
- C. Organize more women from the Mothers 'Club to the national women's movement for women, because feminism can help all people, men and women.
- D. Teach parents, male or female, the principles of feminism to change the double standard of raising their sons and daughters.
- E. Develop gender-fair criteria and critique in selecting, reading, writing printed texts.
- F. Teach feminism in schools and in all government offices, especially among the country's top leaders who obviously have no respect for women.



- G. Connect feminism to advocacy for the environment to help women and the majority in ecological protection. (For example, the mother herself should teach her child to respect the woods, trees, plants, ibo, and other living and non -living things in order to balance the world; this will be even more helpful in preventing disasters such as of hurricanes and pandemics brought on by the climate crisis.)