

Traditional Livelihoods and Indigenous Peoples



Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIPP	Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact	NFDIN	National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development	NGO	Non government organization
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region	NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-Operation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
CF	Community Forestry	PLUP	Participatory Land Use Plan
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts	REDD	Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Degradation
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research	RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
DPA	Development and Partnership in Action	SC	Shifting Cultivation
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment	SNDP	Strategic National Development Plan
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization	SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Netherlands Development Organization)
FLEG	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance	TO	Traditional Occupation
FPIC	Free Prior Inform Consent	UN	United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Fund	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GHG	Green House Gases	UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
GTZ	German Society for Technical Cooperation	UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
HYV	High Yielding Variety	UNDP-RIPP	United Nations Development Program-Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
IPs	Indigenous Peoples	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples Rights Act	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
LEAP	Land Empowerment and People	WWF	World Wildlife Fund
MoI	Ministry of Interior		
MoE	Ministry of Environment		
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development		
NCIP	National Commission on IPs		
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities		
NER	Natural and Environment Resources		

Preface

Most indigenous peoples have developed highly specialized livelihood strategies and occupations, which are adapted to the conditions of their traditional territories and are thus highly dependent on access to lands, territories and resources. These traditional occupations include hunting, fishing, trapping, shifting cultivation or gathering food and forest products, handicrafts such as weaving, basketry, woodcarving among others, and rural and community-based industries. In some cases, indigenous peoples are identified by their traditional occupations, for example, pastoralists, shifting cultivators and hunter-gatherers.

In Asia, most indigenous peoples are primarily involved in small-scale agriculture, fishing, hunting and gathering from nearby forests. Other activities include animal husbandry, together with traditional economic activities that support agriculture and involve artisans such as weavers, carpenters, welders, among others. Since access to land and resources is central to indigenous peoples' livelihoods, most have elaborate land tenure and distribution systems, and customary laws regulating the use of resources¹.

The process of nation-building, coupled with the impact of the modern economic system, has been disastrous in the continuing practice of indigenous peoples traditional livelihoods. The free market model as the path to development has been causing more economic and social marginalization of indigenous communities instead of ushering development. Annexation and privatization of ancestral lands and the historical process of systematic displacement of indigenous peoples from their ancestral territories have had devastating consequences, not only in terms of loss of land and livelihood, but also in maintaining cohesion of indigenous communities and their exercise of self governance.

As the demand for cash grows, more and more indigenous peoples move away from subsistence production to more commercial forms of production. In this process, many have lost precious resources such as agricultural lands to loan schemes and contract farming schemes. Access to market is still limited, and communities that want to market their goods very often have to operate through third parties who in turn reap most of the benefits. Indigenous producers have very little control over the pricing of their goods as their bargaining power is limited, and they are subjected to the fluctuations of market prices. To compete in the open market, many indigenous farmers are forced to use chemicals, while others such as craft producers and fisher folks have overexploited their environment in order to increase production and, in many cases, in an attempt to maintain an increasingly

1 Concept Note: Asia Regional Seminar on Traditional Livelihoods and Indigenous Peoples, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 16 – 18 August 2010.

consumerist lifestyle.²

Traditional occupations of indigenous peoples, such as shifting cultivation, fishing and pastoralism, are often not recognized by governments who regard these sustainable practices as outdated and antithetical to 'development'. This has led to discrimination against such occupations and their subsequent marginalization resulted in significant loss of income and traditional knowledge. In the worst case, the practices of shifting cultivation have been banned in most countries in Asia resulting to food insecurity, loss of bio-diversity, traditional knowledge and customary forest governance. This condition is being aggravated by the impacts of climate change to the practice of traditional livelihoods. This is despite the fact that ILO Convention No 111 – (anti-Discrimination on Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958 has been ratified by 169³ countries which most of the Asian countries are a party to. Further, ILO Convention No 111 provides an important framework for promoting the rights of traditional occupations of indigenous peoples in line with ILO Convention No 169 and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Realizing that they are caught in a vicious cycle through their integration into the market economy and globalization, many indigenous peoples have become increasingly convinced that they have to look within their own systems if they are to survive and maintain their communal values.⁴ It is now urgent for indigenous peoples to find ways and means to strengthen their practice of sustainable traditional livelihoods along the line of having their collective rights recognized and secured in order to carve their own path of development that guarantees their cultural integrity and dignity as distinct peoples.

Given this backdrop, AIPP in partnership with UNDP-RIPP and ILO commissioned case studies on traditional occupations and co-organized a regional workshop on traditional occupations with the Ministry of Rural Development of the Royal Government of Cambodia. These two initiatives were aimed at looking deeper into the specific concerns and challenges relating to the practice of traditional livelihoods, and coming out with concrete recommendations on strengthening these sustainable practices amidst economic globalization and climate change. The result of the workshop and the case studies are presented in this publication. It also includes an overview on the particular context of indigenous peoples of Asia.

The regional workshop that was successfully carried out in partnership with the

2 Lasimbang, J, 'Indigenous Peoples and Local Economic Development', AIPP, Issue No. 5, 2008 - @local.glob

3 Source : ILOLEX – 27.05.2010 : <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>

4 Lasimbang, J, 'Indigenous Peoples and Local Economic Development', AIPP, Issue No. 5, 2008 - @local.glob.

Ministry of Rural Development of the government of Cambodia came out with substantive discussions on traditional occupations, as well as concrete recommendations on strengthening these practices and addressing the key concerns and challenges faced by indigenous communities relating to their traditional livelihoods. Likewise, the case studies are presented here in the hope of providing a better understanding of this lifeline of indigenous communities. The studies focused on the key issues and challenges surrounding the practice of traditional livelihoods. They offer as well policy advocacy and direction for strengthening traditional livelihoods for sustainable development and promotion of indigenous peoples' wellbeing in line with UNDRIP and ILO Conventions 107, 169 and 111.

This publication has been divided in three parts;

Part A: Traditional Occupation, Food Security and Impacts of the Climate Changes (Bangladesh, Thailand and Viet Nam)

Part B: Traditional Occupations and Livelihoods (NE India, Malaysia, Philippines and Cambodia).

Part C: Summary report of the Cambodia workshop - key issues, challenges and recommendations on the practice of traditional livelihoods.

Part A

The case study from Bangladesh highlights the traditional shifting cultivation in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) which is an integrated farming system of agriculture and forestry, fish culture, domestic and wild life rearing. This traditional livelihood practice has contributed to regeneration of forests and soil fertility, conservation of biodiversity and watersheds, and protection of the environment. This study also discusses the effects of climate change and global warming in Bangladesh evidenced by increasing occurrences of cyclones, floods and other destructive natural calamities which is greatly impacting in Indigenous Peoples territories. Climate change and its adverse impacts, and outreach basic services and fair prices are increasing the food insecurity in the country. The government and its development policies are not supporting shifting cultivation and are denying the communities of their ownership to their lands which is affecting their traditional livelihoods.

The case study of Thailand highlights the traditional livelihood of Indigenous Peoples of the said country and their cultural rights which is creating conflict between the Indigenous Peoples and the government on land and natural resource management. Along with that, the current climate change issues have added to the negative prejudice of the government to the shifting cultivation. The government believes that the rotational farming/shifting cultivation is negatively causing carbon emission and directly contributes to the climate change. This study argues

that rotational farming is not a cause of climate change or smog problems as the fields are burned only on one short period of time with only 2-3 days per year, and with a certain burning period of about 1-2 hours per day.

Viet Nam paper focuses on the situation of rotational farming which not only provides food security for ethnic groups in mountainous areas but also to conserves IPs knowledge in farming and traditional seeds that produces diverse in gene resources and conserves the IP traditional culture. This rotational farming is closely related to the ancestral worship through the practice of rituals using rice, chicken, and pig all in line with their cultivation periods which remain unchanged till date. Further, it also elaborates on the REDD programme where the shifting cultivation and rotational farming should be included in the programme and policy for IPs in particular as part of the conservation of customary laws and traditional knowledge in the REDD implementation at the local level.

Part B

NE India study focuses on the shifting cultivation in Ukhrul district, Manipur state specifically on how the forests, rangelands and farming systems are managed collectively by the community. It focuses on the biodiversity conservation which produced many kinds of foods, maintained collective efforts and ensured social security, observation of traditional norms and practices, addressed equity in resource allocation. Land and forest resources are often collectively owned and utilized to meet individual and collective needs in this area. The study discusses the challenges of ethno nationalism and armed conflict situation in the region, the lack of market linkages, land alienation and lost of forest areas, state policies erosion of the roles of traditional institutions, tapping market value in potential niche crops.

The case study from Malaysia presents the results of case studies on traditional livelihoods in two selected indigenous communities in Sabah, formerly known as North Borneo before its independence from Malaysia and the transmission of indigenous knowledge on traditional livelihood and practices to younger generations. The said traditional livelihoods are bead making and weaving by the Run-gus community in Pitas and traditional herbal healing by the Kadazandusun in Penampang. The study shares the practice of herbal healing where the community people are very strong in herbal medicine, and the community forest is one of their sources for this. The traditional knowledge on herbal healing is practiced by only a few these days due to lack of traditional knowledge transfer to the young generations from the healers who are knowledgeable in the communities.

Philippines study focuses on the roles of indigenous women in traditional livelihoods. Indigenous women in the Philippines are very much a part of the traditional subsistence agriculture in their communities and play a major and critical

role in traditional agricultural production. This study shares the traditional skills and knowledge of women in IP farming systems, responsibility of nurturing the land, resources and culture that they pass on to the next generations such as the traditional healing practices, and also assist in conflict resolution within their own communities as well as to other communities. The role of IP women in agricultural production is inadequately recognized and appreciated though. Further, the non-recognition of IP women weavers as workers in the informal economy denies them those rights to fair wages and benefits for their labour.

Cambodia paper shares the sustainable forest management and market access support through maintaining forest resources, legal recognition of the community boundaries, access to the finance, capacity to meet the market demands, and access to the long-term market system. This study highlights the honey project of the IPs in Mondulkiri province which is located in the Northeast of Cambodia with the 1.5 million hectares of surface. The honey project is located within the Mondulkiri Protected Forest in an expanse of 300,000 hectares, and part of a larger protected area in the Northeast region of the province. The Bunong communities have been managing Prey Rodang and Prey Krung Ratuon (forests) and their honey enterprise since 2007.

Part C: Summary report of the Cambodia workshop - key issues, challenges and recommendations.

We hope this publication will help strengthen relations between governments and indigenous peoples, enrich dialogue and cooperation, and inspire greater collaboration and engagement towards respect of customary laws and traditional systems of indigenous peoples.

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Dr. Prasert Trakansuphakon is the Regional Director of Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples (IKAP), an indigenous network working for the protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge throughout mainland Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, south-west China and Vietnamese NGO Burma). Dr. Trakansuphakon is from the Karen ethnic group in Thailand where he has worked with indigenous/ethnic peoples for over 20 years. He is trained and practiced in indigenous knowledge and education and in natural resource management. He is also involved in diverse related issues including natural resource management policies such as on rotational farming, biodiversity, indigenous peoples rights, food security, climate change and sustainable development.

Ms Anne Lasimbang is the Executive Director of PACOS Trust. She was responsible for setting up the Community Education Programme of PACOS, which involves education programmes for women and children. Since 1993 she has set up 25 rural preschool centres in rural areas of Sabah. These centers provide opportunity for indigenous children in the remote areas to have the best possible start in formal education as well as provide the teaching of traditional knowledge to the younger generation. She previously coordinated the Early Childhood Care and Development Network for Indigenous Peoples in Malaysia.

Ms Jill Cariño is an indigenous Ibaloi of Baguio City, Philippines who has worked with indigenous peoples organizations and indigenous issues since 1980. She is the Vice-Chairperson for External Affairs of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), a grassroots-based alliance of organizations working for the defense of the ancestral domain and for self-determination of the Cordillera peoples. She is also the Convenor of the Philippine Task Force for Indigenous Peoples Rights (TFIP), a national network of NGOs promoting indigenous knowledge, food sovereignty and indigenous peoples' rights.

Mrs. Luong Thi Truong is director of the Centre for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas (CSDM), a Vietnamese NGO. She belongs to the Thai ethnic minority in Vietnam. She manages a number of development projects carried out in mountainous areas. The projects aim to improve the socio-economic condition of vulnerable groups including women, children, disabled and ethnic

minorities; ensure good governance for people-oriented development in mountainous areas; protect and promote indigenous knowledge, culture and language; encourage and help ethnic minority peoples for the proper use of land and natural resources to sustain livelihoods and maintain biodiversity; and strengthen community organizations and networking with national, regional and international development organizations for advocacy at different levels.

Mr. Goutam Kumar Chakma is an indigenous Chakma of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh who has been working with indigenous peoples organizations and in the rights movement since 1973. He is currently a member of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC), an apex body of the special administrative structure set up under the CHT Accord, and acts as the Convenor of the Committee of CHTRC on Law, Land and Local Councils. He is regularly engaged in the CHT Accord implementation process, promoting human rights, environment and biodiversity, and conflict resolution.

Ms. Femy Pinto is the Cambodia Facilitator of the Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia (NTFP-EP). NTFP-EP is a collaborative network of non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia. She has been working with NTFP-EP since 2007 where she has managed NTFP pilot projects on wild honey and enterprise development support and facilitated partnership development and organizational support to local NGOs and community-based organizations on sustainable natural resources management, community forestry and community-based NTFP livelihood development. She has field experience in the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand and has been engaged in community networking and advocacies on indigenous rights and land tenure (in the Philippines), community participation and empowerment on Mekong river basin management, participation, consultation and reparations (especially for downstream) communities affected by large infrastructure development in the Mekong. In the last 10 years she has been specializing in the field of participatory development management, community-based natural resource management, and indigenous peoples development, such as strengthening their capacity in sustainable management of natural resources.

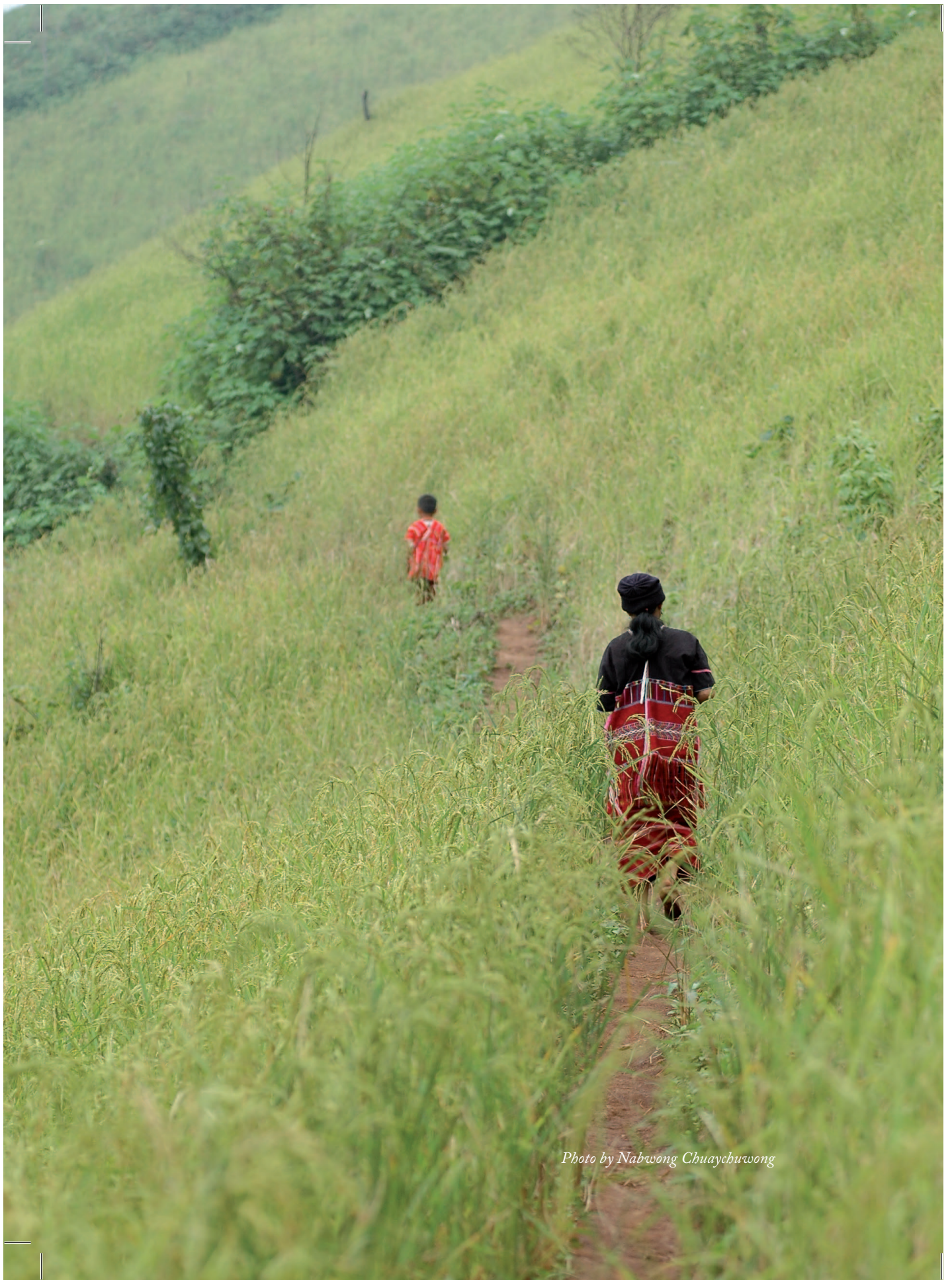


Photo by Nabwong Chuaychurwong

An Overview of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Livelihoods in Asia

By Jill K. Cariño

Who are the indigenous peoples in Asia?

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries adopted in 1989 refers to:

(a) tribal peoples in independent countries [as those] whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations; and

(b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

ILO Convention 169 makes it clear that self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of the Convention apply.

Additionally, Jose R. Martinez Cobo, Former Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, on his study of the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations¹ defines indigenous communities, peoples and nations as:

“... those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.”

More and more people in Asia identify themselves as indigenous peoples. But given their varying national contexts, indigenous peoples in Asia are called by dif-

ferent names in different countries, depending on the terminology applied in their domestic policies and legislation.

In Thailand, they are called Ethnic Minorities, Hill Tribes or Hill/Mountain People. Bangladesh calls them Tribal while Malaysia refers to them as Natives. Burma/Myanmar, China, Laos and Vietnam refer to them as Ethnic Minorities. In Cambodia they are called Indigenous Minorities; and in Nepal, Indigenous Nationalities. India labels them as Scheduled Tribes, while Pakistan calls them Tribal People. In the Philippines they are identified as Indigenous Cultural Communities/ Indigenous Peoples. Japan also refers to the Ainu as Indigenous Peoples.

Specific terms are also used in national languages like Adivasis in India, Janajati in Nepal, Orang Asal or Orang Asli in Malaysia, Adi vaas in Pakistan, Masyarakat Adat in Indonesia, and Pahari, Jumma, or Adivasi in Bangladesh.²

Indigenous peoples often experience discrimination because of their origin and identities, as reflected in the terms used to refer to them. The common terms that dominant populations use, such as fan in China, upajati in Bangladesh or sakai in Thailand, carry derogatory connotations of “barbarian”, “primitive”, “uncivilized” and “backward.”³

However, as the ILO’s Committee of Experts has highlighted, “indigenous communities are covered by the Convention [No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples] irrespective of what they are called. [...] Where rural communities meet the requirements of Article 1(1) of the Convention, they must enjoy the full protection of the Convention regardless of differences from or similarities to other communities and irrespective of what they are called.”⁴ Also, it is worth emphasizing that self-identification remains the fundamental criterion for determining the groups for which indigenous peoples’ rights apply.

Legal status and policy recognition of indigenous peoples in different Asian countries

Legal recognition and status granted by Asian states to indigenous peoples vary from country to country. In colonial times, some were given special legal status, like in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. After independence, however, many Asian countries asserted the principle of “national unity” to suppress any specific recognition of indigenous peoples. This approach has begun to change in recent years. In a number of countries, indigenous peoples are granted constitutional recognition or are the object of special laws.⁵

Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples in Asia is provided in the India Constitution (1950) that has provisions for “scheduled tribes”, the Constitution of Malaysia (1957) that has special provisions on the natives of Sarawak and Sabah, the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) that recognizes federally and pro-

vincially administered Tribal Areas, the Philippine Constitution (1987) and the interim Constitution of Nepal (2006).

In other countries, they are recognized through special legislation including the Cambodian Land Law (2001), Philippine Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, the Nepal National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act (NFDIN Act) of 2002.

In China, Vietnam and Laos, they are given a legal treatment similar to that of other minority groups. In Indonesia, those who identify themselves as indigenous peoples fall under customary law or adat. Court decisions have also served to affirm indigenous peoples' rights based on international indigenous rights standards such as in Japan in relation to the Ainu and in Malaysia, where courts have affirmed aboriginal title of the Orang Asli over their traditional lands.⁶

Ratification of international conventions by Asian governments gives additional legal recognition to indigenous peoples. Three Asian countries are parties to the 1957 ILO Convention 107 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations in Independent Countries. These are India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The most recent signatory and the first country in South Asia to ratify ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples is Nepal, which ratified it on September 5, 2007.⁷

The UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in September 2007. The Declaration sets the minimum standard in recognizing the collective rights of indigenous peoples. It provides for measures to address their particular situation in rectifying the historical injustices and discrimination against them. All countries in Asia voted in favor of the adoption of UNDRIP, with the exception of Bangladesh and Bhutan that abstained from voting.⁸

Most indigenous peoples in Asia have a common history of resistance against colonization, or have withdrawn to remote areas in response to encroachment and incursions by outsiders into their territories. In some cases, they were forced to leave their lands because of violent conflicts.

This common history and situation was articulated by indigenous peoples themselves in the Workshop Statement and Resolutions of the Asia Workshop for the Promotion of the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2008:⁹

"We have lived in our territories since pre-colonial history; defending and sustaining our land, territories and resources; developing our own distinct cultures and collective identity; while being firmly grounded on our environment and our aspirations as indigenous peoples.

“We were colonized and continue to be discriminated against, dominated and marginalized politically, economically, culturally, socially and in the process of nation state formation and globalization.

“We are called by our governments and others by derogatory terms and are subjected to policies of assimilation, integration, annihilation or even ethnocide.

“Despite these, we have not only survived, but have asserted our rights as indigenous peoples and have attained a position of strength in the international community and in international human rights law as evidenced by the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Location and population

It is widely recognized that the majority of the world’s indigenous peoples live in Asia. Globally, they are believed to number about 300 to 340 million, and of this, some estimate that 100 million are found in Asia.¹⁰

However, the lack of reliable country-level census data on indigenous populations makes these figures mere approximations. Rough estimates made by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in 2010 for South, Southeast and East Asia indicate that indigenous peoples in Asia may number as many as 260 million. This represents around 5 percent of the estimated total population in Asia of nearly 4 billion.¹¹

Indigenous peoples are made up of numerous ethnolinguistic groups and are distributed in almost all countries in Asia, some of them across borders. Most are small in number, and some have populations of just a few thousand. But they all have distinct language, cultural customary laws and social and political institutions that are different from those of the dominant ethnic groups. They are distributed among the different Asian countries as follows:

Country	Number of Ethnic Groups	Estimated Total IP Population (percentage of national population)
Bangladesh	45	1.7 - 3.7 million (1.2 - 2.5%)
Burma/Myanmar	135	14.4 – 19.2 million (30-40%)
Cambodia	19-21	101,000 - 190,000 (0.9 - 1.45%)
China	Around 400 (55 officially recognized ethnic minorities)	105 million (8.5%)
India	622-635 (622 recognized scheduled tribes)	84.32 million (8.3%)
Indonesia	Over 700	50 - 70 million (20-29%)
Japan	2	Ainu: 50,000 - 100,000 (0.04-0.08%) Ryukans: 1.3 million (1%)

Country	Number of Ethnic Groups	Estimated Total IP Population (percentage of national population)
Laos	Around 200 (49 officially recognized ethnic minorities)	2.4 - 4.8 million (35 - 70%)
Malaysia	97	3.4 million (12%)
Nepal	Over 80 (59 recognized indigenous nationalities)	10.6 million (37.1%)
Pakistan	Over 20	35 - 42 million (21-25%)
Philippines	110 officially recognized indigenous peoples	6.9 - 12 million (10-15%)
Thailand	Over 25 (10 officially recognized hill tribes)	925,825 (1.5%)
Vietnam	Over 90 (53 officially recognized ethnic minorities)	15 million (13.8%)

[Sources: AIPP, IWGLA 2010, Trakansuphakon 2010]

Traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples in Asia

Many of the indigenous peoples in Asia usually live in remote communities in the mountains, plains, river basins, forests and coastal areas. They live in some of the most biodiversity-rich areas of the world, where they engage in a range of occupations for livelihood. While there is enormous diversity among indigenous peoples, common to all are a strong cultural attachment to the land and the dependence of their traditional livelihoods on the land, forests or sea, and the natural resources found therein.

Traditional occupations are still the chief sources of livelihood of most indigenous peoples in Asia. During the 4th Indigenous Development Conference in Asia held in Sabah, Malaysia in 2008, traditional occupations were estimated to account for 95 percent of indigenous peoples' livelihoods in Timor Leste, 90 percent in Cambodia, 80 percent in Malaysia, 70 percent in Thailand, and 50 percent in the Philippines.¹²

The traditional occupations of indigenous peoples in Asia include farming, livestock raising, fishing, hunting and gathering, making of handicrafts and food items, sale of local products, small scale mining, among others.

The majority are engaged in agriculture as a traditional livelihood. Agriculture is practiced both for subsistence and for the market. Sedentary agriculture in rice fields and vegetable gardens, as well as rotational cultivation or swidden farming are widely practiced. In Asia, the majority of people practicing rotational cultivation, also called shifting cultivation, belong to ethnic groups that are generally categorized as indigenous peoples.¹³ For instance, Vietnam has approximately 3

million of its ethnic minorities practicing rotational farming mostly in the mountainous areas.

Traditional farming by indigenous peoples is usually a combination of sedentary farming, shifting or rotational farming, and crop rotation. Sedentary farming of rice as a staple food is usually done in wet-rice terraces or irrigated paddy fields in the lowlands, highlands and high valleys where traditional varieties of rice are grown. Rotational farming is done in mountain slopes and forested lands for the cultivation of dry rice, vegetables and other crops in areas where there is no dependable water source. It is a sustainable farming system that shifts cultivation from place to place in order to allow recently cultivated fields ample time to lie fallow and recover their fertility.

Another system is crop rotation cultivation, which is widely practiced by indigenous peoples in the highlands today. This system depends on the cultivation of a different type of crop in the same field every year, in recognition that different crops extract different nutrients from the soil. Crop rotation is increasingly done because some communities are no longer able to allow lands to lie fallow because of the lack of land to produce enough food for the community.¹⁴ Vegetables and other crops like corn, legumes, root crops are also grown in home gardens or vegetable fields and terraces.

Agricultural production is largely for consumption or subsistence, although cash crops are increasingly produced to earn cash income for the needs of the family. Small-scale barter or trade of agricultural products is also done in order to acquire other products or commodities not available in the community.

Another common traditional occupation is raising of domesticated animals or livestock including buffalo, cattle, horses, pigs, goats, chickens, ducks, among others. This is usually done to provide a source of protein in the diet and to augment crop production for the needs of the household. Livestock are also raised to provide the needed animals in the performance of traditional rituals and as a source of cash for emergency needs.

For indigenous peoples living near water bodies like rivers, ponds, lakes and seas, fishing is a significant traditional occupation. Indigenous peoples living in forests engage in hunting of wild animals like deer, wild boar, birds and others as a major source of food. Gathering of materials or products from the forest like wild vegetables, fruits, herbal medicines, honey, rattan and other non-timber forest products is another significant traditional source of livelihood. These forest products are both for local consumption and for sale in the market.

Most indigenous peoples engage in the production and sale of traditional handicrafts like basketry, textile weaving, carpet making, pottery, metal smith-

ing, jewelry making, beadwork and others. Some indigenous groups in Asia also do carpentry, wood or stone carving or sculpting. Traditionally, handicrafts were produced to supply local needs for clothing, cooking utensils, and other household needs. However, the intricate designs and superior handiwork of indigenous crafts have made them attractive for sale to tourists, travelers and other consumers. Traditional handicrafts have thus become a valuable source of additional cash for local producers among indigenous peoples.

Traditional small-scale mining for gold and other metals is also a traditional occupation for some indigenous peoples. This is particularly engaged in by indigenous peoples in the Cordillera, Philippines, who use traditional methods of mineral extraction and processing that have proven environment friendly and sustainable as a source of livelihood of the community.

Other common traditional occupations are wine and beer making, sugar making, salt making, and other local food production and processing systems.

In many indigenous Asian societies, there are also persons who earn some or all their living as traditional specialists in healing, mediation with the ancestors and nature spirits, divining, and conflict mediation and resolution of intra-community and inter-community conflicts.

International standards relating to traditional livelihoods: a brief overview of ILO Conventions 111, 169 and 107 and UNDRIP

The table below lists the Asian countries that have ratified ILO Conventions 111, 169 and 107.

Asian Countries that have ratified ILO Conventions 169, 107 and 111		
Convention 169	Convention 107	Convention 111
Nepal	Bangladesh India Pakistan	Bangladesh Cambodia China India Indonesia Lao PDR Mongolia Nepal Pakistan Philippines Rep. of Korea Vietnam

Sources: ILO Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards. Ratification and promotion of fundamental ILO Conventions. Geneva, November 2008, ILOLEX - 27. 9. 2010

The Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation, known as the Declaration of Philadelphia 1944, states that "... all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity..."¹⁵

As stated in the Declaration of Philadelphia, which is an integral part of the ILO Constitution, the principle of equal treatment and equal opportunity is a major concern of ILO. The elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation has also been recognized in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as a fundamental human right that all ILO members must respect, promote and realize.¹⁶

ILO Convention No. 111 on discrimination in employment and occupation aims at eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, including indigenous peoples' traditional occupations, irrespective of race, colour, national extraction, sex, religion, political opinion or social origin. The Convention defines discrimination as: "any distinction, exclusion or preference [...] which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation."¹⁷

Under the Convention all individuals shall be treated equally and shall have equal opportunity to have access and practice employment and occupation of their choice. This will include access without discrimination to the material goods and services necessary to carry out a certain job. In the case of indigenous peoples, the ILO's Committee of Experts has emphasized, in particular, that "access to land and natural resources is essential for indigenous peoples to engage in their traditional occupations. Access to land and resources without discrimination on any of the grounds mentioned in the Convention is one of the objectives of the national policy aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, including traditional occupations."¹⁸

The Convention also calls for the adoption of special measures designed to meet the particular needs of certain persons and groups, including indigenous peoples, with a view to ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment in practice, taking into account the diversity of situation experienced by individuals and groups because, for example, of their race, colour and national extraction, and/or of their sex.

It is also worth highlighting that the Convention does not only cover access to employment and particular occupations and terms and conditions of employment, but also access to training and education, which is crucial to enter employment or an occupation.

ILO Convention No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples recognizes¹⁹ that

indigenous peoples' traditional activities are important factors in maintaining their cultures and economic self-reliance and development and calls upon Government to ensure that these activities are strengthened and promoted with the participation of these people (art. 23).

The Convention contains a number of other provisions which are relevant to the protection of indigenous peoples' traditional livelihoods, including:

- Non-discrimination and adoption of special measures (arts 3 and 4);
- Land rights (arts 13 ff):
 - a) The Convention recognizes that indigenous peoples have
 - b) rights of ownership and possession over the lands which they traditionally occupy;
 - c) right to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities.

In this regard, the Convention stresses that "particular attention shall be paid to the situation of nomadic peoples and shifting cultivators."

- Displacement (art. 16):

As a basic principle, the Convention provides that indigenous peoples shall not be removed from the lands which they occupy. Where the relocation of these peoples is considered necessary as an exceptional measure, such relocation shall take place only with their free and informed consent.
- Natural resources (art. 15):

The Convention recognizes that indigenous peoples have

 - a) rights to the natural resources pertaining to their lands, including the right to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources;
 - b) In case of State ownership of mineral or sub-surface resources or rights to other resources pertaining to indigenous peoples' lands, indigenous peoples shall be consulted before undertaking or authorizing exploration and exploitation activities; shall participate in the benefits of such activities wherever possible; and shall receive fair compensation for any damages suffered.
- Development (art.7):

The Convention enshrines the fundamental principle that indigenous peoples have the

- a) right to decide their own priority for development and to exercise control over their own economic, social and cultural development;
- b) right to participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly.

The Convention further emphasizes that the improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and co-operation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development of areas they inhabit.

Other relevant provisions contained in the Convention concern the right to consultation and participation (art.6), education (arts. 26 ff); vocational training (arts. 21 ff); employment (art 20), recognition, protection and respect for indigenous peoples' values, practices and institutions (art. 5), recognition of these peoples' customs and customary law (art.8).²⁰

Similar provisions are included in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, it should be noted that Convention No. 107 on indigenous and tribal populations, although revised by Convention No. 169 and closed to new ratifications, is still in force for a number of countries including India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. This Convention contains a number of provisions that are important to the protection of indigenous peoples' traditional livelihoods, such as the provisions on participation and development (arts. 2 and 5), land rights (art. 11), displacement (art. 12), handicrafts and rural industries (art.18).²¹

Concerning the application of the Convention in Bangladesh, for instance, the ILO's Committee of Experts has expressly requested the Government "to indicate the measures taken to ensure that indigenous communities have the possibility to continue to engage in jum cultivation, including through accelerating measures protecting their land rights, and the measures taken to include shifting cultivation in relevant policies and programmes regarding rural development."²²

The UNDRIP sets out several provisions for indigenous communities to practice and apply the principles of their traditional economic systems.²³ It contains a number of provisions and preambular paragraphs in relation to their livelihoods and provides the right to be free from discrimination in the exercise of their traditional economic practices. The preambulars 4,6,10 and 11 state,

PP 4 – Affirming further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust,

PP 6 - Concerned that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests,

PP 10 - Convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs,

PP 11 - Recognizing that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment,

Article 3 of this Declaration recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and to pursue economic development. Further it addresses the rights to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities (Article 20).

Article 21 provides that indigenous peoples have the right to improvement of their economic and social conditions without discrimination and, where appropriate, States shall take effective measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions.

Indigenous peoples also have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development, in particular, the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions (Article 23 of Declaration).

All the aforementioned preambulars and articles of UNDRIP provide spaces for indigenous peoples to maintain, protect and practice their livelihood and economic development through traditional occupations. Further, the State Parties are advised to take effective measures to legally recognize and protect these rights (Articles 26, 32).

Article 26 gives the right to indigenous peoples to use lands, territories and resources for economic development and traditional occupations. It states,

- a) Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources

which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

b) Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

c) States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 32 on the other hand states,

a) Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

b) States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

c) States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

The traditional occupations are the main source of livelihood of indigenous peoples, and UNDRIP as an international human rights instrument provides space to exercise those rights. Except for Bangladesh, most of the Asian countries voted in favour of UNDRIP, but the practical application and implementation of those rights still rely on government policies and programs.

Issues and challenges faced by indigenous peoples in Asia on traditional livelihoods

Indigenous peoples' traditional lifestyles and livelihoods have been threatened through colonization, State development policies and pressures of globalization. The process of nation-building, coupled with the impact of the modern economic system, has been disastrous for many indigenous societies.

A major issue that indigenous peoples face today is displacement from their ancestral lands and territories due to extractive industries including logging, mining, land conversion and dams, coupled with the environmental degradation that results from these activities. The negative impacts of what has come to be referred to as “development aggression” include the loss of lands, culture and identity, causing indigenous peoples to be displaced and further marginalized.

Another common issue is migration and resettlement of settlers on indigenous peoples’ land and territories. This is usually a consequence of conscious resettlement policies and programs of government, as in the case of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh and in Indonesia. This has minoritized indigenous peoples in their own lands and territories and eroded their indigenous culture.

Traditional livelihoods are often not recognized or are discriminated against in State laws and policies. For instance, the practice of rotational farming is branded as destructive to forests and prohibited by forest laws, without proper appreciation for its sustainable practice by indigenous peoples through generations. In all countries in South and Southeast Asia, government policies seek to reduce or eradicate shifting cultivation in one way or the other. These policies aim to protect the forests from what is seen as an ecologically harmful practice, of modernizing what is considered a backward form of agriculture, and of controlling and integrating into the nation a population that is viewed with suspicion due to its “nomadic” way of life.²⁴

Thus, governments have carried out programs and projects, such as the Vietnamese program for Settling Cultivation and Living from 1968 to 2002, to stop rotational farming, resettle indigenous peoples and encourage them to engage in sedentary cultivation, without studying its impacts on the people and their culture. In Thailand, State officials have arrested indigenous peoples for engaging in rotational farming because it was considered as contributing to the degradation of national forest land, damaging a water source without permission and causing rise in temperature. However, studies show that rotational farming enhances biodiversity in the forests and provides rice and food security in vegetables the whole year round for local people. In addition, the farming systems and ways of life of the indigenous peoples help to maintain the balance of the ecosystem and have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.²⁵

Another challenge facing indigenous peoples is the promotion of modern agricultural systems. Due to the increasing demand for cash, many of them are moving from subsistence production to commercial production. The desire to meet the market demand and earn more cash has resulted in overexploitation of resources and excessive use of chemicals in farming, which undermine traditional sustainable agricultural systems. At the same time, limited market access and low

and fluctuating prices of local products put indigenous peoples at a disadvantage in the market, often resulting in chronic indebtedness. Loan schemes and contract farming schemes lead to privatization and loss of agricultural lands. Indigenous technologies are set aside, taking away control over production, especially from indigenous women.

Climate change, as well as adaptation and mitigation measures to address it, poses new threats to indigenous peoples and their traditional livelihoods. Increased occurrence of natural calamities like drought, typhoons, floods due to extreme weather conditions have put them in a vulnerable situation in relation to climate change. Famine, widespread hunger and destruction of crops usually occur especially during natural calamities. In addition, the implementation of climate change mitigation schemes in Asian countries like REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) could mean the prohibition of traditional rotational farming practices and gathering of firewood and non-timber forest products in forests that have long supported the subsistence of indigenous peoples.

As a backdrop to all these, indigenous peoples remain at the margins of national development efforts. They are among the government's lowest priority in terms of provision of basic social services such as education and health. Deprived of such basic public services, they are usually lowest in terms of national indicators of wellbeing such as literacy, life expectancy and nutrition, and have higher poverty rates than the national average. In addition, mainstream formal education in different countries do not allow for the transmission of traditional knowledge and indigenous languages to the youth.

Indigenous peoples are often excluded from participating fully in decision-making processes in the political life in the countries where they live. They are victims of serious human rights violations as a consequence of being dispossessed from their lands and natural resources. They suffer from violence due to political repression and militarization, which are often reactions to the defense of their human rights, often by the authorities of their own countries.²⁶

Asia Regional Seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Livelihoods: main findings and recommendations

During the Asia Regional Seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Livelihoods, organized by ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development of the Kingdom of Cambodia, UNDP-RIPP and AIPP, held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on August 16-18, 2010, a number of case studies were presented that pointed out some serious challenges indigenous peoples face in relation to their traditional livelihoods and continued survival and identity.

The case studies covered a range of situations in different countries, including: traditional livelihoods in relation to food security (Thailand), the roles of women (Philippines), transmission of traditional knowledge on traditional livelihoods to the younger generations (Malaysia), rotational cultivation and biodiversity (North-east India), REDD and rotational farming (Vietnam), shifting cultivation and the impacts of climate change (Bangladesh), among others.

The case studies provided an overview of the situation of indigenous peoples at the national level and a description of certain traditional livelihood activities they engage in. These also identified key issues and challenges, as well as some good practices and lessons learned. Finally, recommendations were offered for policy advocacy to strengthen indigenous peoples' practices of traditional livelihoods for sustainable development and to promote their wellbeing in line with UNDRIP and ILO Conventions 107, 169 and 111.

The right to occupation and traditional livelihood is a basic right that all indigenous peoples enjoy in accordance with their rights under national and international law, as contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UNDRIP and ILO Conventions 107, 169 and 111.

Among the important recommendations arising from the regional workshop and case studies were:

1. To ensure that the land rights of indigenous peoples are recognized, including their right to access, control and manage their natural resources through their traditional and customary laws;
2. To ensure the intergenerational transfer of good practices of traditional livelihoods to the younger generation and the sharing of lessons learned to the wider population;
3. To recognize traditional livelihoods and enable indigenous peoples to continue these practices with more support from the State;
4. To protect the traditional practice of rotational farming as an appropriate and sustainable livelihood. It provides not only a source of food but also a means to conserve indigenous knowledge in farming and traditional seeds that insure the diversity of genetic resources;
5. To ensure gender equity and equal opportunities in terms of representation and in consideration of the specific roles men and women play in traditional livelihoods;
6. To recognize the rights of indigenous peoples over their forests and support their traditional use of forest and natural resources;
7. To adopt community-based, market engagement activities to strengthen

the role and tenure of indigenous communities in forest management for traditional livelihoods;

8. Finally, to conduct effective policy advocacy and reform for the respect, recognition, protection and promotion of traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples in Asia.

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- ⁵ Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. UN Special Rapporteur report on the General Considerations on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples in Asia; A/HRC/6/15/Add.3, 1 November 2007.
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²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Stavenhagen, Rodolfo; UN Special Rapporteur report on the General Considerations on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples in Asia; A/HRC/6/15/Add.3, 1 November 2007.



Photo by Nabwong Chuaychurwong

Part One

Traditional Occupation, Food
Security and impact of the
Climate Changes (Bangladesh,
Thailand and Vietnam)

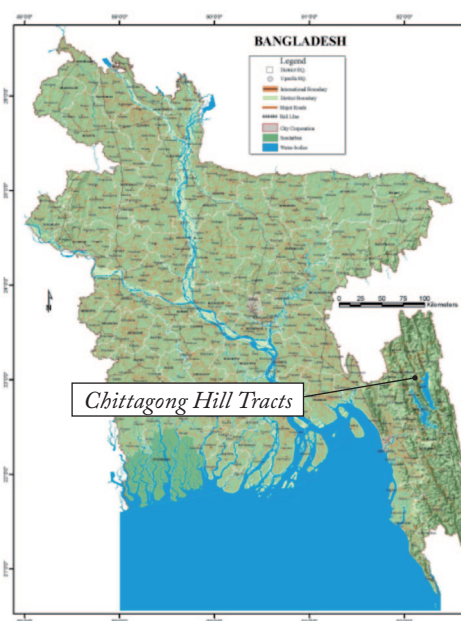


photo by Showmitra Chakma

Shifting cultivation as traditional livelihood and impacts of climate change in Bangladesh

by Goutam Kumar Chakma

Introduction



Bangladesh covers a total area of 147,570 sq km (56,977 sq miles). It has a population of 14.67 million,¹ the majority of whom are the Bangalee.²

More than 90 percent of the total area is low land, the alluvial gift of the great river systems that traverse the country to reach the Bay of Bengal.³ The low lying land has led to the practice of plough cultivation unlike the shifting cultivation adopted on hillsides.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in southeastern Bangladesh, a part of the Eastern Himalayas, is mostly covered with rugged hilly terrain, with a predominance of steep

slopes. The main hill ranges seldom exceed one thousand meters in elevation.⁴ Greater Mymensingh and Sylhet Division in northeastern Bangladesh have some hills adjacent to the state of Meghalaya in India, also a part of the Eastern Himalayas.

- 1 Samakal, a Bengali Daily in Bangladesh - Desher Janasangkhya 14 koti 67 lakh, news on 27 September 2010 quotes a report of the Health Ministry of GoB submitted to the High Court Division of Bangladesh Supreme Court on 23.09.2010.
- 2 Philip Gain - Bangladesh Environment: 21st Century, 1998, p 1.
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- 4 Raja Devasish Roy (c) Occupations and Transition in Economy: A Case Study of Chittagong Hill Tracts in Traditional Occupations of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: Emerging Trends, Geneva, ILO, 2000.

Indigenous Peoples

According to the Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, about 45 indigenous ethnic groups (indigenous peoples) can be found in Bangladesh,⁵ but the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) recorded only 27 ethnic groups in an Act in 2010.⁶ The indigenous peoples (IPs) number 3 million⁷ or 2 percent⁸ of the country's total population.

There are 10 multilingual indigenous groups⁹ in the CHT, and they collectively identify themselves as the "Jumma People" (peoples of the highland with a common heritage of jhum or shifting cultivation). The Garo and Hajong are concentrated in Greater Mymensingh, while Khasi and Monipuri are predominantly found in Sylhet Division. Other indigenous groups are scattered in various parts of the country.

The population of indigenous peoples in CHT is estimated at 0.85 million. In 1947, they far outnumbered the non-indigenous population at 97.5 percent and 2.5 percent,¹⁰ respectively of the total population. However, these numbers became 55 percent and 45 percent in 1997; and in 2010, 51 percent and 49 percent respectively.

Various terms are used to refer to indigenous peoples. The CHT Regulation 1900 (1 of 1900), an "Existing Law"¹¹ (pre-constitutional law) in CHT, uses 'hill men,'¹² 'indigenous'¹³ and 'indigenous hill men.'¹⁴ The East Bengal State Acquisi-

5 Publication of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, 2003.

6 The Kshudra Nritatwik Janagosthi Sankskritik Pratishthan Aine, 2010 (Act No. 23 of 2010), 12 April 2010.

7 Publication of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, 2003.

8 Professor Mesbah Kamal – Parliamentary Caucus on IPs, A paper presented in the Round Table Discussion in Dhaka on 20 December 2009 on ILO Convention 169: IPs and Bangladesh Jatiyo Sangsad and adopted in the meeting of Parliament Caucus on IPs in Dhaka on 10 February, 2010.

9 PCJSS (Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti, the IPs Political Organisation, which signed the CHT Accord with GoB in 1997) states that there are 10 multilingual IPs groups, namely, Chakma, Marma (or Mog), Tripura, Murung (Mro), Khiyang, Bawm, Lusai, Khumi and the Chakma. It is notable that in recent decades the Tanchangyas, who were so far regarded as sub-group of the Chakmas commenced identifying themselves as a separate ethnic group. However, until now they claim their language as Chakma. In addition, there are some families, who belong to the Saontal, the Assamese and the Nepalese peoples, who migrated to CHT during British colonial rule.

10 PCJSS (Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samahati Samiti) - An Account of Chittagong Hill Tracts, published in 1980.

11 Article 152 of Bangladesh Constitution defines 'Existing law', which obviously included CHT Regulation.

12 See section 4 and others of 'Rules for the Administration of CHT' framed under section 18 of CHT Regulation, 1900.

13 See section 52 (a) *ibid*.

14 See section 34 as amended in October, 1971, *ibid*

tion and Tenancy Act, 1950 (Act XXVIII of 1951), an 'Existing Law' prevalent in other parts of Bangladesh, continue to define them as 'Aboriginal' or in Bengali as 'Adivasi' (a word synonymous with the term indigenous peoples). On various occasions, government authorities, including the Prime Minister, have used the term Adivasi, which, for all intents and purposes, is synonymous with the category of indigenous peoples.

The term Adivasi is also commonly found in other official documents, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of 2005, the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR) of 2008 and the Revised Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2009. The Ksudra Nritatwik Janagoshtthi Sankskritik Pratishthan Aine, 2010 (Act No. 23 of 2010) also employs the term Adivasi to mean the indigenous ethnic groups of the country. In spite of this trend, it should also be noted that in 2010 the Ministry of CHT Affairs, with reference to letters from the Bangladesh Army General Headquarters in Dhaka and the Prime Minister's Office, circulated two letters to Deputy Commissioners and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (ie. Sub-District Executive Officers) in CHT advising that the term Adivasi should not be used in official documents because of their concern that it would facilitate indigenous peoples to claim rights provided in various international conventions and treaties related to them.

Land rights

Originally Bangladesh was covered with forests, with indigenous peoples living by shifting cultivation and hunting. To date they can be found in the north, northeast and southeastern parts of the country.¹⁵ During the pre-British period, the rulers only collected taxes but were never owners of lands. In fact, the village people were the real owners of lands in India. However, in 1793 a Permanent Land Settlement Act was enforced and lands were leased out to middlemen, Zemindars. This served to establish ownership of land by the Government. Nonetheless, possession by village people of their ancestral lands and cultivation thereon was respected and maintained.¹⁶

In 1858, the British Government took over the subcontinent and enacted the Government of India Act 1858¹⁷ and enforced the District Act 1836 throughout India, including Bengal, the eastern part of which emerged as Bangladesh in 1971. In 1870, however, the Government of British India enacted the Government of

15 Md. Abdul Kader Mia - Bhumi Jorip O Bhumi Byabasthapana, 8th edition, 1995, p 1.

16 Md. Abdul Kader Mia - Bhumi Jorip O Bhumi Byabasthapana, 8th edition, 1995, p 8

17 Dr. Md. Shafiqur Rahman - Bangladesher Aine Bichar Byabastha aebong Sangbidhanik kramabikash, 3rd edition, Jul 2008, p 474.

India (for Administration of Backward Tracts) Act 1870, under which the Scheduled District Act 1874¹⁸ was framed. This Act effectively maintained the rights of indigenous peoples, including community ownership over the lands where to date they practice jhum cultivation. The CHT and Assam (Mymensingh and Sylhet Division being under the then Garo, Khasi and Jaintiya Hills of Assam, now Meghalaya) were among the other 35 districts declared as Schedule Districts.¹⁹ The Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 replaced the Permanent Settlement Act 1793 and introduced individual ownership by tenants on certain conditions, which gradually abolished ownership by village people of the village lands.²⁰ This affected community ownership by indigenous peoples over their ancestral lands, and they had to abandon their traditional occupations.

The CHT Regulation 1900 (which remains in force today) maintains a provision in section 34 for individual ownership of lands, and section 42 provides rights for jhum cultivation on payment of jhum tax in any area within the concerned mouza²¹ (an area that consists of 5-6 villages)

It is notable that CHT continued to be regulated by special legislation, while in other areas inhabited by indigenous peoples the general legislation of Bengal was enforced. As a result, the general legislation ended rights of possession of ancestral lands and subsequently the rights to shifting cultivation of indigenous peoples in other parts of Bangladesh.

In 1950, the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 replaced the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885. This Act ended the Zemindari system, as well as community ownership on lands particularly in forest areas where shifting cultivation was until then the principal means of livelihood of many indigenous peoples. For instance, during the pre-partition period Greater Mymensingh and the Sylhet Division, being parts of Assam, were administered under the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation 1880²² under which indigenous peoples enjoyed rights over their ancestral lands and forests and continued shifting cultivation. But their rights ended with the enforcement of the State Acquisition Act 1950. However, section 97 of the Tenancy Act restricts transfer of indigenous peoples' lands to non-indigenous persons without permission from the Revenue Officer of the Government.

18 Bose, Manilal- Historical and Constitutional Documents of North-Eastern India 1824-1973, p 164-169.

19 Subodh Ghosh – Bharater Adivasi, page 134.

20 Md. Abdul Kader Mia - Bhumi Jorip O Bhumi Byabasthapana, 8th edition, 1995, page 10.

21 See sections 34 and 42 of 'Rules for Administration of CHT' framed under CHT Regulation, 1900.

22 Bose, Manilal - Historical and Constitutional Documents of Northeast India (1824-1973), New Delhi, 1979, page 169

As a journal observed, “The Garo people in Greater Mymensingh had to abandon shifting cultivation, which was the only means of livelihood for many of them in early 1960s without any alternative arrangement by the government.” (Gain, Land vol 2 1999 p 56) Many of the Khasi in Sylhet Division until now continue pan-jhum (betel leaf shifting cultivation) on hills leased out from the Forest Department, for periods ranging from 20 to 90 years.

The indigenous peoples currently scattered in many other parts of the country were given legal land titles during British rule under the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 and were employed in wet rice cultivation. However, over the decades, they have gradually been uprooted from their ancestral lands by non-indigenous peoples in various ways. The result is that almost all of them have become or are to become landless. Section 97 of the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 on restriction of transfer of indigenous land to non-indigenous peoples has never been properly followed or enforced.²³

Shifting cultivation and indigenous peoples in CHT

In 1860 Chadigong (in English Chittagong), the kingdom of the then Chakma King, was annexed to Bengal in British India. However, CHT was separated from Chadigong or Chittagong²⁴ and made a non-regulated district, where a system of individual ownership of plough lands was introduced and community ownership of other lands including jhum fields was retained.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts covers an area of 5,089 sq miles or 13,295 sq km. It has only 3.1 percent (124,000 acres) of land suitable for plough agriculture, 18.7 percent (755,884 acres) of highland for horticulture, while 72.9 percent comprises steep slopes of high hills suitable only for forestry and 5.3 percent comprises water areas and settlements.²⁵ In 1960 the Kaptai Dam inundated 40 percent (54,000 acres) of the best arable lands in CHT, uprooting 100,000 people or 18,000 families, including 10,000 peasants.²⁶ Except for a few families, most of them were indigenous peoples. Due to lack of proper rehabilitation, including the provision of cultivable lands, several thousands of families were forced to resume shifting cultivation.²⁷

23 Banya, a woman activist of Oraon indigenous ethnic group spoke in the seminar on IPs Rights in Bangladesh 03 July 2010 at CCDB of Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

24 See section 20 of CHT Regulation, 1900 (1 of 1900).

25 B.H. Sohrowardi – Parbatya Chattagramer Arthnoitik Ruprekha – Aekti Parjalochana published in Rangamati in the magazine Vision on 15 June 1995 page 35.

26 *ibid*, page 36.

27 Sharadindu Shekhar Chakma – Bhumu Byabasthapana O Bipanna Manabata, second edition, page 29.

Today, the main occupation of indigenous peoples in CHT is wet rice cultivation on cultivable flat lands, which has become the most important bone of contention between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous settlers or political migrants from outside CHT. Many of the latter are patronised and backed by some government authorities and religious fundamentalists. It is estimated that about 40,000 indigenous families are engaged in shifting cultivation in CHT to date. (Tripura and Harun, 2003) Many of them were uprooted (since early 1970s) through military operation or forcible land takeover. The displacement of indigenous peoples from their homes and their practice of shifting cultivation will continue until land disputes, caused by land grabbing by non-indigenous settlers, are resolved.

Legal instruments

The Government of Bangladesh has ratified, among others, ILO Convention 107 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations and ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupations. However, it has yet to ratify ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. It also abstained in voting for the adoption of the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. The Bangladesh Constitution declares in Article 28(4) that the state can make a special law for women, children and backward sectors. According to Article 152 on “Existing Law,” the CHT Regulation 1900 is valid to date. This Regulation (section 42) provides for shifting or jhum cultivation, the main livelihood option for many indigenous peoples, so long as they pay tax on it. In addition, section 41A empowers the headman to conserve his village’s resources and to prevent newcomers from opening jhum if he deems this to result in a scarcity for his own tenants in future years. This right has been regarded by indigenous peoples as a right to collective ownership over their ancestral lands in CHT.

Three Hill District Council Acts of 1989, amended by the 1997 CHT Accord, declare Land and Land Management and shifting cultivation as subjects under the jurisdiction of Hill District Councils (HDCs). The CHT Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act 2001, framed under the CHT Accord, provides that land disputes be resolved according to existing law and custom of CHT,²⁸ ie. through legal land titles provided under CHT Regulation and according to customary rights of indigenous peoples on ancestral lands. However, this Act has yet to be amended to make some of its provisions consistent with the CHT Accord and to have the 9-Member CHT Land Dispute Settlement Commission²⁹ functional.

A sharp contradiction continues to exist between various government authori-

28 CHT Land Dispute Settlement Act, 2001 section 6, page 3.

29 Notice of Ministry of establishment of GoB of CHT Land Commission on 3 June 1999.

ties (including the Forest Department) and indigenous peoples and their leadership -- ie the traditional institutions (such as Circle Chiefs, Mouza Headmen and Village Karbaries) and institutions constituted under the CHT Accord and subsequent Acts (CHT Regional Council and Hill District Councils) -- on shifting cultivation and rights of possession of jhum lands.

Good practices and lessons learned

Jhum is an environment-friendly, integrated farming system

In CHT, traditional shifting cultivation is an integrated farming system of agriculture and forestry, fish culture, domestic and wild life rearing, which has contributed to regeneration of forests and soil fertility, conservation of biodiversity and watersheds, and protection of the environment.



Traditional Jhum in Bandarban in 2010; photo by Mr Hari Kishore Chakma

In the traditional process of shifting cultivation, jhumiyas or jhum cultivators used to leave lower slopes under vegetation and standing big trees with light crown in the plots. If they had to cut the trees at all, they would leave about a meter of

stump above ground to allow new growth.³⁰ Every year the villagers, i.e. jhumiyas would hold meetings chaired by the Karbari (traditional village head) or the Headman (mouza head) to select a site for jhum, allot a plot for each family, create fire lines and fix time and date of firing the jhum and so on. In later periods, it became a planned agricultural cultivation mainly on hills and mountains in which forests were protected and regenerated, watersheds and biodiversity were conserved, and thereby the environment was protected as well.

Some of the indigenous communities in CHT, particularly the Bawm, Pan-khua and Mro (or Murung), who are dependent mainly on jhuming, still follow the traditional process including taking precautionary measures to prepare fire lines to protect forests and useful species from damaging effects of the jhum fire. Gradually, this practice has disappeared in many areas because of the erosion of jhumiyas' cultural and social life due to mainly external factors, such as excessive population pressure, forcible land grabbing and armed conflicts since mid-1970s.

However, those mainly dependent on jhum products, such as grains and vegetables, for their subsistence usually practice the traditional process. This provides them a variety of food throughout the jhum cycle. At the start, they collect forest products, ie. leaves, bamboo shoots and other plants, and then vegetables. In the middle of jhum cultivation, they harvest rice, other vegetables and different cash crops like ginger. At a later stage, they get spices, chilly in particular, and sometimes sesame and cotton in high hills and mountains. Vegetables, fruits and chilly continue in the second year of jhum cultivation. Therefore, until now, the jhum is able to provide food and nutrition for the jhumiyas for at least 6-10 months in a year.

Shifting cultivation facilitates animal and wild life rearing

Shifting cultivation produces different crops and maintains trees and roots, which provide food for both domestic animals and wild life. The jhum fields are a magnet for birds and wild animals throughout the jhuming cycle. Right after cultivation, different seeds, ie. paddy, root crops and fruits, attract birds and wild animals including chickens and boar. During the rice harvest in particular, many bird species and wild boar come to the fields. In the second year of jhum cultivation (after rice harvest), birds and wild chickens eat the remaining paddy rice in the field. Once jhum field starts to be covered with green vegetation, wild deer and elephants come for grazing, which continues until the start of the next round of

30 A. Kamal, M. Kamaluddin and M. Ullah – Land Policies, Land Management and Land Degradation in the Hindukush-Himalayas – Bangladesh Study Report, ICIMOD, 1999, p 54.

jhum cultivation.

In the traditional process of shifting cultivation, big trees are left and bushes and forests on down slopes are retained, which shelter birds and animals. This practice helps to prevent conflict between man and wild animals, and provides the latter safe sanctuary, corridor and food.

Community leadership and consultation

As earlier cited, villagers hold regular meetings chaired by the village or mouza head to discuss jhumming (cultivation of jhum). This includes the fallow period, selecting sites and allotting plots of land to jhumiya families based on their requirements. They also fix the fire line to avoid unnecessary burning of forest products and the date and time to set fire to the jhums. For any problem relating to cultivation, such as cutting down bushes and trees, clearing fields after firing, sowing seeds, reaping and hauling crops from paddy to house, a jhumiya can request help from the village head, his relatives or others.

These processes for jhumming are still partly or wholly followed among the jhumiya communities in CHT.

Gender dimension

The men play a role in all aspects of the traditional system of shifting cultivation. But the women in jhumiya families are entrusted with the responsibility to preserve seeds of vegetables, cash crops and spices as well as to provide opinion in choosing sites in the jhum field for sowing seeds. They participate in almost all phases of jhumming except cutting forests and bushes. In addition, women enjoy an honorable status in the family and in the community.

As the Bangladesh Gazetteers (1971) stated, “There was a fair distribution of working element between the two sexes of the tribal people throughout the year.”³¹ However in remote areas, women seldom go to marketplaces because of the distance involved and their domestic responsibilities in the household, but their movement is neither restricted nor discouraged.

Key issues and challenges

Government policy

Shifting cultivation is not only a central part of the livelihood of many indig-

31 Ibid, page 41.

enous peoples in CHT but also an inseparable part of their traditions, culture, economy and identity. But all the Governments since British rule have held a strong negative view, a result of colonial discourses, which regard shifting cultivation as detrimental to the environment and a primary cause of soil erosion.

Although the Government in 1972 ratified ILO Convention 111 which recognises rights of indigenous peoples to traditional occupations, it has hardly given positive attention to jhum cultivation in CHT. Rather, policies and programs to control and discourage it continue, serving to perpetuate wrong perceptions of this farming system. Many researchers and policy makers blame indigenous peoples and the practice of shifting cultivation for the depletion of forests in CHT, which in turn has enhanced misunderstanding about jhum in Bangladesh. The Forest Department maintains a strong position against jhum cultivation. However, in reality, it also engages indigenous peoples to plant the Department's teak plants in fallow jhum fields inside reserved forests. This example would seem to imply that clearing forest and doing jhum cultivation is acceptable to policy makers and forest departments if it is able to produce commercially valuable timber products.

Rights of ownership of jhum fields

The collective rights of indigenous peoples were somehow recognized in CHT Regulation of 1900. On the other hand, Article 31 of the Bangladesh Constitution upholds the right to protection of law on property of any person. If the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands and resources were recognised, as per Article 11 of ILO Convention 107, which Bangladesh ratified in 1972, then this Constitutional Article would necessarily include the right of jhumiyas to property, along with common lands or jhum fields. Article 11 of Convention 107 provides that right of ownership, collective or individual, over the lands traditionally occupied by the population concerned should be recognised. This provision is applicable to the protection of ownership of jhumiyas in CHT over their lands including jhum fields, but finds insufficient expression in Bangladeshi legislation. Recently the Government initiated a process to amend the Constitution. But it is uncertain whether it would modify the concerned Article for the purpose.

The indigenous peoples in CHT practice jhum cultivation over the common lands they collectively own in the concerned mouza. However, the Government neither respects common ownership over such lands nor recognises jhumming as a main occupation and livelihood of indigenous peoples, thus the existence of certain policies and laws.

Shrinking jhum fields, rising food insecurity

Despite all the above legal obligations over the centuries, jhum fields in CHT have decreased. This is on account of a number of factors including; demarcation of reserve forests; creation of protected forests; population increase; inundation of jhum fields by the Kaptai Lake in 1960; massive migration of non-indigenous peoples to CHT; establishment of military camps and cantonments; displacement of indigenous peoples; forestation program since early 1970s; denial of traditional land rights and land dispossession. This has led to many livelihood challenges for the jhumiyas, particularly in relation to food security because of decreasing yields from jhum cultivation and lack of alternative skills to enable them to diversify their livelihood options.

Until 1970 unless jhum crops failed, local food scarcity was rare. The Bangladesh Gazetteers (1971) noted, “Local scarcities occur owing to the failure of jhum crop, which may be due to many causes.”³²

Climate change and adverse impacts

Climate change resulting from global warming and increasing sea levels has undoubtedly become a serious challenge for the whole world. Its effect on Bangladesh is thought to be particularly acute due to the large areas of low-lying lands, which are particularly vulnerable to changes in sea level. Many experts have opined that large parts of Bangladesh would be submerged within a few decades. Another school of thought predicts that, due to the soil erosion occurring in Nepal and India, the land area of Bangladesh is gradually increasing. Such predictions have created concern among many people in the plains districts that their lands would be flooded. The motivation to migrate to CHT is thus increased, despite the fact that cultivable land is very limited there.

Climate change and global warming are affecting Bangladesh through more cyclones, floods and other destructive natural occurrences. These also result in an increase in landless families. It is noted that the ongoing migration of people from the plains to CHT has already brought excessive population pressure and extremely adverse effects on CHT’s land situation, including jhum fields, occupation of jhum, biodiversity and demographic balance, culture and ethnic identity, and above all the environment and forests. Even after passage of the CHT Accord, migration, forced land grabbing (by settlers, individuals and a few NGOs from outside CHT), communal attacks on indigenous peoples and their eviction from their homes and ancestral lands have made the sustainability of economic development for indigenous peoples uncertain. This includes indigenous jhumiyas in the

32 Muhammad Ishaq - Bangladesh District Gazetteers - Chittagong Hill Tracts- 1971, page – 23.

region because they do not have livelihood security nor do they have alternatives to their present occupation.

It is notable that due to the Kaptai dam, 29 sq miles of reserve forests and 234 sq miles of unclassified state forests, i.e. mouza forests, all rich in tropical forests, went under water.³³ It led to grave changes in the environment and forest condition, adversely affecting lands, natural resources, biodiversity and climate in the region.



Kaptai Dam 2010, photo by Mr Amiyo Chakma

In addition, planned migration of about 400,000 - 450,000³⁴ non-indigenous population was implemented under a government scheme between 1979 and 1985. Most of these migrants were plough cultivators and by the 1980s as suitable land was no longer available, they were resettled on occupied and recorded plough lands³⁵ (wet rice lands) of individuals or on common lands (uplands or jhum fields) or villages of the indigenous peoples including jhumiyas.

33 Ibid.

34 Shapan Adnan (b) – Migration, Alienation and Ethnic Conflict: Causes of Poverty in the Chittagong hill Tracts of Bangladesh, 2004, p49

35 See details on settlement and lease to individuals and community ownership under rule 34 of the CHT Regulation.

The indigenous peoples in CHT have been the least contributors to climate change either locally or globally but they are the worst sufferers of its adverse impacts either in the country or in CHT. And they continue to bear the negative impacts owing to the political migration. Although the indigenous peoples, through application of their traditional knowledge, have been able so far to adapt their occupations and innovate crops suitable to the soil and climate in CHT, the issue of identity and rights to land and resources including jhum has become a major concern. That is why it is necessary to stop the adverse impacts of climate change, ie. mainly to prevent further migrations of non-indigenous populations to CHT and ensure that indigenous peoples can continue their occupations, maintain their culture, tradition and identity.

Lack of development interventions

Around 40,000 indigenous families in CHT are either fully or partly dependent on jhum for their livelihood. Yet jhum is not recognised as an agricultural practice; the government's agriculture policy therefore overlooks jhum cultivation and livelihood improvement for jhumiyas. As a result, none of the agriculture development programs or projects benefits the jhumiyas. They are left out of agriculture development interventions, which have the potential to increase their crop yields.

Lack of basic services and fair price

Most of the jhumiyas live in remote areas, most of which are not easily accessible and remain outside the range of basic services, particularly education and health care. The service providers, in most cases, are available either in the district or sub-district headquarters. They hardly visit remote places, and as a result the jhumiyas have little access to social services. The educational needs of children for instance are not fully met. During the jhuming period, indigenous families move to the fields, which are quite far from the village, and they often bring their children along.

As they live in remote areas, jhumiyas have less access to information and market prices, and thus face difficulties in getting fair prices for their products. Mostly non-indigenous middlemen enjoy the strategic advantage of being able to wait until the jhumiyas are ready to offer low prices for their products. Since the latter have to travel some distance from home to market and back, they are often forced to sell at reduced prices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The CHT Peace Accord was signed between the Government of Bangladesh and the PCJSS (Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti) in 1997, but it is still under process of implementation. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2005-2015), adopted by the government after consultation with various stakeholders including indigenous peoples, contains several observations and suggestions that could help address many of the basic needs of indigenous communities in the rural areas, including, jhum cultivators in CHT.

The long-standing CHT problem has developed over the years due to discriminatory policies, laws and programs which continue to be enforced despite the signing of the 1997 Accord. Therefore, long-term measures to supplement the Accord with complementary and ancillary legal, policy and program changes are absolutely vital. In addition, distortions, myths and other prejudices related to shifting cultivation need to be addressed in a substantive manner to bring about changes in perspective on the part of non-indigenous policy makers.

The adverse impacts of climate change on Bangladesh and particularly on CHT will only increase further political migration, forcible land grabbing and discrimination in employment and occupations, including jhum cultivation in CHT. It would therefore be logical and practical to take up policies, programs and measures to address the needs of shifting cultivators, including their livelihood of shifting cultivation, in partnership with their representatives and leaders. Such attempts may open up space for consideration of broader measures to tackle the socio-economic conditions of jhumiyas and protect their cultural rights, which are closely related to the identity of indigenous peoples in CHT.

In light of the above, the following recommendations are placed for consideration of policy makers, development institutions and workers, and human rights activists:

1. Take up preventive as well as remedial measures against adverse impacts of climate change on marginalised indigenous peoples in CHT, and with this end to stop further migration of populations to the region
2. Compensate alienated jhum fields and amend the CHT Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act 2001 to activate the Commission for the purpose.
3. Transfer the subjects - shifting cultivation, protected forests and Unclassed State Forests, Land and Land Management, Preservation of Environment -- from the Government to Hill District Councils.
4. Protect and resume the traditional process of jhum for positive contribution to global climate.
5. Eradicate biased perceptions and prejudices on jhum and recognise it as an

integral and integrated form of agriculture of jhumiyas and as a traditional occupation of indigenous peoples in CHT.

6. Provide constitutional recognition to indigenous peoples, ratify ILO Convention 169 and endorse UNDRIP.
7. Create market facilities for jhum products at fair prices.
8. Recognise directly the right of common property of indigenous peoples on community lands and natural resources in the interest of marginalised jhumiyas in CHT.
9. Provide arrangements for preservation of varieties of seeds of jhum to conserve biodiversity.
10. Take actions on CHT issues recommended in PRSP 2006 and the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction 2008 in relation to protection and promotion of forests and biodiversity of CHT.
11. Provide vocational trainings and arrange study tours for promotion of jhum in CHT through learning good practices of shifting cultivation and adaptable innovations.
12. Conduct workshops, conferences and discussions on awareness building mainly among jhumiya communities on the integrated farming process of shifting cultivation.
13. Encourage democratic process in all activities of shifting cultivation and ensure participation of women in decision making at various levels.
14. Formalise and revitalise indigenous knowledge and culture systems.
15. Modify credit policy to facilitate credit for common property lands used for jhum.
16. Conduct research on the impact of traditional jhum on biomass, biodiversity, soil fertility, forests and watershed, so as to provide evidences on environmental benefits and sustainability of shifting cultivation.



Photo by Nabwong Chuaychurwong

Traditional livelihoods, food security and climate change in Thailand

By Dr Prasert Trakansuphakon

Introduction

Thailand lies in the heart of Southeast Asia, bordering Laos and Cambodia to its northeast and southeast respectively, Malaysia to its south, and the Andaman Sea and Myanmar to its west. Thailand comprises 76 provinces, covering an area of 513,115 km². It has a total population of 62,418,054.¹

The indigenous peoples in Thailand are most commonly referred to as “hill tribes,” and sometimes as “ethnic minorities.” There are 10 officially recognized groups who are usually called *chao khao* (meaning “hill/mountain people” or “highlanders”). These are: the Akha, Hmong, H’tin, Karen, Khmu, Lahu, Lisu, Lua, Mien and Mlabri. These and other indigenous peoples live in the north, north-western and western parts of the country.

According to the Department of Social Development and Welfare (2002), the officially recognized “hill-tribe” population stands at 925,825², distributed across 21 provinces in the north and west of the country. The Karen is the biggest group at around 411,670, with most of them still practicing the rotational farming (RF) system.

With the drawing of national boundaries in Southeast Asia during the colonial era and in the wake of decolonization, many indigenous peoples living in remote highlands and forests were divided. There is thus not a single indigenous person that resides only in Thailand.

Over the last five decades to the present, the indigenous peoples of Thailand have suffered from historical stereotyping and discrimination like indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world. Underlying many laws, policies and programmes targeting them are the same prejudices and widespread misconceptions of indigenous peoples as drug producers and posing a threat to national security and the environment.

1 Central Census Bureau publication of the Kingdom of Thailand, including Bangkok, the surrounding area, and provinces. 31 December 2005.

2 Source: A directory of ethnic highland communities in 20 provinces, in Thailand, B.E. 2545 (2002), provided by the Department of Social Development and Welfare.

The indigenous peoples in Thailand also do not have a right to their traditional occupation or livelihood practices. Rather, they are fined or arrested for practicing their traditional occupation and livelihood systems, or resources are seized or exploited by private companies. The problems associated with rotational farming agriculture, which has been the livelihood of upland indigenous communities for centuries, continue to be severe. Officials of the state have been arresting them for engaging in such activities without any respite. In addition, villagers are now being penalized for “causing deforestation and rise in temperature.” Thus, making a specific reference to climate change has added a new dimension to the nature of the so-called “crime”.

For example, the Karen people who have been practicing rotational farming for many centuries still get arrested by government forest officers every year. In March, 2008, 80-year-old Mr. Dipaepho and 35-year-old Ms. Naw He Mui Wingwittcha from Mae Omki Village, Mae Wa Luang Tambon, Tha Song Yang, Tak Province were detained by forestry officials as they were preparing their fields for planting rice and upland crops. The charges related to clearing of land, felling trees, and burning the forest within a national forest. These were considered as contributing to the degradation of national forest land, damaging a water source without permission and causing rise in temperature.³

Key issues and the challenge

In all countries in South and Southeast Asia, government policies on shifting cultivation are basically informed by environmentalist and developmentalist rhetoric. With the official aim of protecting forests from what is seen as an ecologically harmful practice, of modernizing what is considered a backward form of agriculture, and of controlling and integrating into the nation a population that is viewed with suspicion due to its “nomadic” way of life, all of these policies seek to reduce or eradicate shifting cultivation in one way or another.

Particularly important are the rights of access to natural resources, a key factor in the rotational farming cultivation system. Forest and rotational farming are different sides of the same coin, depending on the definition. This has been a chronic problem because the government’s Forest Department manages natural resources in a linear or monolithic way; only government officers have rights to manage the forest (and its impact on RF). Local people are not allowed to manage or even co-

3 Report on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand submitted to Prof. James Anaya, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People. Presented on 19 January 2010 Chiang Mai, Thailand.

manage their own resources. However, in the same highland areas, some highland projects working with cash crops in cool/cold climates enjoy full rights of access to the forest, supported by government policy. At the same time, local people are not allowed to farm their ancestral lands and practice traditional rotational farming because policy excludes them. This amounts to discrimination against local/indigenous occupations and cultural rights, and creates natural resource competition between those with traditional and those with legal/policy rights.

The current climate change discourse has taken the debate on shifting cultivation to another - a global - level, reinforcing existing prejudices, laws and programs with little concern for the people affected by them. Now, shifting cultivation is bad because it causes carbon emission and thus contributes to climate change.

If we admit rotational farming to be a traditional cultural practice, and that cultural rights are to be protected by legal regulation, the practice of rotational farming as a cultural livelihood is then legal and must be recognized and protected under the law. The right to occupation and traditional livelihood is a basic right that all Thai citizens, and therefore also indigenous peoples, enjoy in accordance with the Constitution of 2007, especially Sections 43 and 66. Furthermore, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 6 states, “the state must guarantee the rights of free employment and livelihood, including the provision of continuing technical advice and support.” This is also supported by ILO Conventions 111 and 169.

Case study: rotational farming and Hin Lad Nai community

Huay Hin Lad Nai Community is ‘Karen/Pgaz K’Nyau’, one of the major hill tribe groups living in northern Thailand. The community, located in Wiang Pa Pao District, Chiang Rai Province, has a total of 17 households and a population of 93 people. The people earn their living by growing rotational farming and terrace paddy fields, tea gardening and collecting food from the forest. The community forest covers an area of 9,527 Rai.⁴ The villagers’ livelihoods are heavily dependent on nature, therefore protecting the forest and carefully using it is their priority.⁵ Their core belief is that living in harmony with nature is the heart of a sustainable community.

Sustainable agriculture, from recent experiences in Thailand, has high potentials to be a key measure for coping with and combating climate change. On one hand, sustainable agriculture can be an appropriate adaptation strategy, as seen in the case study in Hin Lad Nai. The rotational farming and integrated farming or

4 1 Rai = 0.16 ha

5 Prayong Doclamyai, 2010

agroforestry practiced by this community can be defined as sustainable agriculture. These systems ensure more food security by promoting farm diversity and resource integration as well as solutions to cope with water shortage through better water management. Rotational farming and agrobiodiversity/agroforestry in Hin Lad Nai therefore serve as adaptation strategies.

On the other hand, sustainable agriculture can also work as a mitigation strategy through the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and higher carbon storage in fertile soil and community forest. Apart from climate benefits, it also provides significant advantages for poverty alleviation, especially in terms of enhancing food security and reducing market uncertainties and financial burdens for household food consumption.

From this point of view, sustainable agriculture can be a good strategy for farmers' risk management. First, it can reduce risks, both production and marketing, through better water and farm management. Second, it can diversify risks through farm diversity. Moreover, community forest protection and agroforestry can also serve as a strategy for risk reduction and risk insurance, if disasters, such as drought and storms, may occur. However, the concept of risk management for climate uncertainties is still not well addressed in farming communities in Thailand. The benefit of sustainable agriculture as a climate change coping strategy is thus generally underestimated.

It is very important to note that as seen in the case study, the key success factor in promoting sustainable agriculture as an effective climate change coping mechanism is a deep understanding of the eco-cultural dimension of each community. Without deliberative understanding of the local ecosystem and culture systems, it is hard to suggest practical ways of investing in sustainable agriculture which suits local conditions and ways of living. Thus, although the promotion of more sustainable farming practices is quite an urgent task, it must be done deliberately in order to ensure long-lasting results.

Rotational farming enhances biodiversity and food security

Rotational Farming enhances biodiversity in forests. It is a mother of diverse seeds and plants (Waralak, 1996).⁶ We can say it creates biodiversity of seeds and plants through the in-situ process. Rotational farming does not destroy the forest, but generally improves it.

Self reliance, based on yearly consumption of rice and food security in vegetables (which links with seed and plant biodiversity), also increases because in dif-

6 Waralak Ittipon-olan (1998)

ferent seasons different types of vegetables and other plant foods are available from rotational farming (and animals are available by traditional traps and so on). Most importantly, we have found that the food produced from this system is valuable for people's health. It is extremely healthy food, clean and natural, and better than the 'organic' and other health foods that some people search for in supermarkets.

Rotational farming promotes agro-biodiversity because a wealth of different plants and seeds comes from this system. We have found around 207 species in rotational farming⁷ (Ganjanapan et.al, 2004). It is also possible to define this rich diversity as ancestor heritage of seeds and plants. If we are forced to stop this farming system, it will also stop the continuity of the diverse ancestor heritage of seeds and plants in the world.

Rotational farming provides a space for food security not only for humans but also for animals, both wildlife and domestic. The fallow areas are places for revival of numbers of diverse wildlife during the time these are regenerating by natural processes. We have found that in some areas in Thailand where the rotational farming system has disappeared because of a government ban, the number of diverse types of wildlife has also decreased, eg. the areas surrounding Doi Inthanon National Park, Chomthong, Chiang Mai which already prohibit rotational farming.

Agroforestry creates income

In Hin Lad Nai community, the forest is of importance to the villagers as their livelihood greatly depends on nature. The community forest provides their basic needs, not only in terms of food, shelter, herbal medicines or household energy, but also as a major source of family income. Preserving the forest means their lives will be secured and sustained.

The area of Hin Lad Nai is the source of tea that is naturally grown in the forest. Tea leaves are the main income of the community. The people collect tea leaves for different types of tea. For green tea, the three top leaves are picked, and for white tea, only one top leave; the rest is sold as Chinese tea. In the past, the villagers were asked to grow Oolong tea but they did not agree as this variety requires a great deal of fertilizer.⁸

As the forest is vital for the community's life, the people manage and use it carefully. For example, bamboo caterpillars, a popular food from the forest, are collected with local wisdom. The villagers know which bamboo stems have cat-

⁷ Anan Ganjanapan, et.al

⁸ Alternative World (Op.Cit)

erpillars and it is only these which will be cut down, while outsiders have to cut down all bamboo stems in order to find caterpillars. For honey, collection is done from March – May without destroying the beehive or killing bees. Significantly, 20 baht per bottle is deducted from honey sales for the Forest Management Fund.

During fire season between March and April, firebreaks are constructed. The community establishes a firebreak team to survey and look after the forest. They have also formed a network with other communities up to watershed level to protect the forest against fires. The areas around the watershed forest and underground water are regarded as sacred forest. The community protects these areas, disallowing anyone to use the land as they believe it belongs to the forest spirit;⁹ forest conservation is upheld as a community value.

Mr. Chaiprasert Pho Kha stated, “We are using agroforestry gardens in Hin Lad Nai as collective sources, e.g. tea gardens. We collect the produce together; this is led by the owner of the tea garden, which means that each tea garden has an owner, which is a family. But the products are collected together as the common produce of the community. This is our responsibility -- to protect and nurture our resources and territory together.”

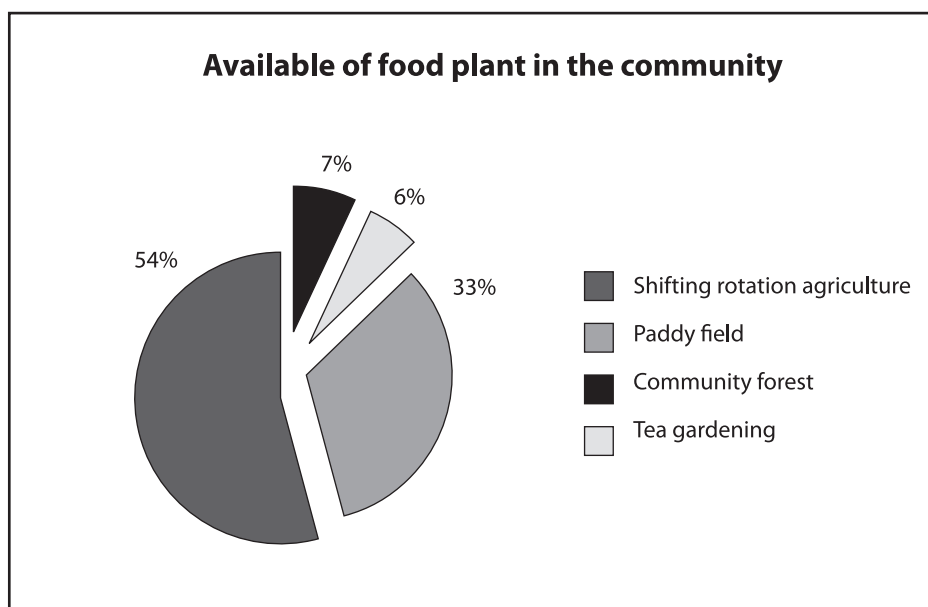
More food diversity, less energy consumption

Due to their farming system and way of living, Huay Hin Lad Nai community has had strong food security for generations. More than 90 percent of household food consumption comes from what they grow, and less than 10 percent is bought from outside. Expenses for household food average 1,162 baht per month or about 39 baht per day, while the average monthly household income is 4,330 baht.

On food diversity, it was found that there are more than 90 types of food plants and 28 types of animal meats available in the community. Approximately 54 percent of food plants comes from rotation farming fields, 33 percent from terrace paddy fields and the rest is available from the community forest and tea gardening.¹⁰ Hpatij Poov Noov, a shaman of Hin Lad Nai village, declared, “Our food comes from the fields we farm and from our forest, and it is more valuable than the food from outside, some of which are processed by technology and mixed with chemicals and pesticides. If we eat these, it may impact our health and decrease our longevity!”

9 FORRSA_RE-2. A Diary from field course on forest landscape restoration in Southeast Asia, 18 January 2006

10 Prayong Doclamyai et al, 2010. (Op.Cit)



Sources of food plants in the community, Rotation farming field is major source of household food (Prayong Doclamyai et al, 2010).

Household income in the community mainly comes from cultivating tea, selling raised animals and wages. Household income averages approximately 52,000 baht/year, while expenditure is about 37,860 baht/year; household debt accounts for 3,235 baht/year. Tea gardening and the community forest are major sources for income generation, whereas rotation farming and terrace paddy fields enhance the community's food security.

As Mr. Prcha Siri explained, "Ma kwaen (a small fruit used for seasoning) gardens pass through the burning process during the burning of the rotational farming field. People in Hin Lad Nai create ma kwaen gardens from fallow areas, which generate cash income. In these gardens it is not only ma kwaen alone that is grown, but also tea trees, rattan and natural forest, and produce from all of these plants can be collected for food as well as generate income from sales."

Energy consumption of the community is also very low compared to that of people who live in the city. Their main energy sources come from the forest and tea gardens, while some people buy outside the community, in particular fuel.

Firewood is the energy source for cooking. To collect firewood, the villagers use trees which die naturally or dried branches. Wood consumption is about two cubic meters/person/year for firewood, and one cubic meter/person/year for house construction, while the use of gasoline and diesel is about 32 and 29 liters respec-

tively.¹¹

Rotational agriculture and community forests help reduce GHG emissions

Dr. Jürgen Blaser, an international forestry expert, has explained that a forest which recovers naturally has a high capacity to absorb carbon since this is necessary for its growth. Rotational fields, which are left to recover from 1-8 years, also have a potential to absorb carbon. A study by Dr. Somsak Sukkhawong, a Thai expert on forestry, found that rotational fields have the capacity to absorb about six tons of carbon/ha/year.¹²

Some believe that greenhouse gas emissions from rotational fields, particularly in the process of burning the fields, are a major cause for smog problems in northern Thailand and of climate change. The issue of burning rotational fields has been a controversial issue in Thailand for several decades.

This writer's study argues that burning rotational fields is not a cause of climate change and smog as the fields are burned only once a year, for only 2-3 days and for about 1-2 hours per day. Furthermore, firebreaks are constructed before burning in order to prevent the fire from spreading into the forest, and thus only field areas for cultivation are burned. Since rotational fields, which recover for 1-8 years after cultivation, have the potential to reabsorb the carbon arising from the burning of fields, there are rarely any net greenhouse gas emissions from rotation agriculture.

The study by Prayong Doclamyai et al (2010) on Forestry Agriculture and Community Forest and its Roles to Enhance Food Security and Reduce Greenhouse Gases also found that carbon storage in the community forest at Huay Hin Lad Nai and two nearby communities, Huay Hin Lad Nok and Pha Young, covering 19,481 Rai (3,120 ha), is approximately 661,372 tons. On the other hand, carbon storage in farming areas (3,547 Rai or 568 ha) which cover rotational fields, paddy fields and tea gardens is about 59,459 tons. Total carbon storage in the community is around 720,831 tons. From shifting rotational agriculture (fallow fields left to recover from 1-10 years), which covers 1,476 Rai (236 ha), net carbon storage accounts for 17,348 tons, while carbon dioxide emission from burning of rotation fields is only 480 tons.

Chai Prasert PhoKha, a young leader of Hin Lad Nai, said, "In the adaptations to climate change that the community has already carried out, we face only one problem: how the Thai state will understand and recognize our adaptation activi-

11 Prayong Doclamyai et al, 2010. (Op.Cit)

12 Prasert Trakarnsuphakorn et al, 2006.

ties despite the fact that they continue to blame us for deforestation.”

Summary and Recommendations¹³

The way of life and farming system of the communities in the mountainous areas of Thailand are not the cause of climate change. Rather, these help to maintain the balance of the ecosystem, are of benefit and have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and are in a position to maintain food security due to the following reasons:

First, the way of life and farming system of the mountain communities produces an effect that lowers carbon emissions (476 tons from rice fields, 68 tons from corn fields), produces only 0.8 tons of methane gas from terraced paddy fields, and produces only 0.1 ton of nitrous oxide from chemical fertilizers. Meanwhile, the capacity to store carbon reaches 720,627 tons and the communities generate only 0.08 percent carbon emission when compared to the capacity for storing carbon.

Second, the consumption of people in the communities is based on sufficiency and sustainable use and management of resources in diverse dimensions, for example, the belief system, rituals, indigenous knowledge, and community regulation or agreement in relation to control of resources. They have held all of these things as a way of life from a long time ago. Therefore their system of production and way of life has a small ecological footprint which is less than their capacity to maintain the resources. They consume less than the amount of resources existing, and hence this way of consumption assists the balance of the ecosystem.

Third, the community members place value on the consumption of locally produced food rather than buying from external sources (determined from the ratio of consumption in the family). This helps to continue consumption of local vegetables, most of which come from the rotational farming fields. Such fields are places where many varieties of vegetables and local species can be found.

Fourth, other studies [Sombat et al. (2004) and Prasert et al. (2010)] have found three reasons behind rotational farming and food security:

- 1) The rotational farming system allows vegetables to grow naturally using no chemicals, and thus the food for consumption from RF fields is safe for the health.
- 2) The products of rotational farming represent a basis of sufficiency and can be

¹³ The summary and recommendations refer to 1) the research findings of the Northern Development Foundation in cooperation with the Hin Lad Nai community (research supported by Oxfam, Great Britain), 2) the recommendations of the research findings of Anan et al, 2004, and 3) recommendations to the cabinet of Thailand in the Committee of Recovery of the Life of Karen.

harvested over a long term.

3) The livelihoods of community members who produce food through the rotational farming system are based on self-sufficiency of food. They are not dependent on paying for food from outside; therefore production from rotational farming is based on food security and community values of consumption; it enhances the maintenance of sustained food security.

The following recommendations are made on two levels: the first are addressed to policy makers and the second consist of practical recommendations.

General recommendations to policy makers

1. The research data and findings show that highland or indigenous communities, which depend on the forest for their lives, have the potential and capability to manage their farming system and use forest and other natural resources sustainably to meet their needs and maintain their economy. Thus, in order to support their rights, especially of those clearly capable and recognized by society for their way of caring for and managing natural resources, they should have access to the rights as set out in the Constitution. They should also be allowed to find alternative ways to solve problems arising from contradictions between them and state organizations. This includes establishing an integrated process to enable them and their community organizations to have a role in alleviating the impacts and problems from global climate change, which are now tending to be increasingly severe.
2. Because rotational farming has diverse types and differences, it cannot be presumed to be one category; thus policy should be open and flexible.
3. To design policy by a proactive process, it needs to be based on the results of research studies based on the principle of internationality, principles of the Constitution and goals for appropriate development for society
4. In order to build an atmosphere of confidence and creativity between government and highland community organizations, a moratorium and review should be made on government activities and ways of thinking that threaten and deprive highland communities of their rights. This includes declaring national parks, arresting and charging community members who depend and make a living on their traditional lands in forest areas, and implementing various projects and policies that adversely impact their way of life. An integrated process that is decided on by the community and is fair and transparent should be initiated.
5. The state and related organizations should approve and ensure the rights

of highland communities to live and make a living in security, especially those who use and manage natural resources sustainably under production systems appropriate to local ecology and local knowledge. This will help reduce contradictions and tensions between forest officials and communities. In addition, highland communities should be encouraged to adjust the style of production that tends to endanger food security and destroy resources, for example growing cash crops to the exclusion of other crops for direct consumption.

6. Clear standards, methods and policies should be formulated to promote the introduction of the rotational farming system of production in highland communities and the management of community forests. This can be achieved by field studies and widespread implementation by highland communities of styles of production suitable to the land to build security and alleviate poverty and the impacts of climate change.
7. In order to solve long-term issues, forest laws should be revised and adjusted, or new laws enacted, to uphold the rights of communities as set out in the Constitution in a concrete manner. This will enable communities and networks of community organizations to utilize, manage and care for natural resources to ensure sustainability and security of life through a collaborative and integrated process between the government and the people.
8. To give force to the law requires giving emphasis to the diversity and complexity of the context and conditions.
9. The number of years for the rotation cycle in rotational farming should not be fixed or specified; an important consideration is that it should not have adverse impacts on the security of life of the communities.

At the least, the minimum necessary number of years of the rotational cycle should be maintained in the present implementation process. Research findings show that in mixed forests, a fallow cycle of at least five years needs to be maintained; and in evergreen forests, at least seven years.

Practical recommendations

1. Design of the master plan and agreement on sustainable resources management should be carried out from the level of the river basin network itself, rather than by the state alone.
2. The design should consider a combination of use and management of resources that considers not only rotational farming but also other types of resources.

3. Plans and activities should be based on genuine participation by stakeholders.
4. The role of river basin network communities in managing the river basin should be increased.
5. Conflict resolution learning processes should be supported and promoted.
6. Land use should be classified under the same system as in the river basin.
7. The community forest should be used as a buffer zone between agricultural land use and natural forest.
8. Opportunities for increasing alternatives for the communities to be free to adapt their agricultural system should be developed rather than exclude them from the right to use resources.
9. Integration between economic, social and cultural processes should be supported and promoted.
10. Human development should be seen in terms of both quantity and quality.
11. Traditional knowledge and local wisdom should be emphasized or given priority.
12. The learning process of adaptation should be given priority.
13. Communities should be supported in inventing or creating appropriate production systems and diversity rather than sticking to only one system that some people might deem good.
14. Terraced paddy fields or alternative/appropriate agroforestry should be expanded in areas where this is possible.
15. The rights of communities who have settled in watershed areas should be recognized in the form of community forest or community land ownership certificates. This should include clear boundaries in the river basin and should bear the status of a management unit of the watershed area.
16. The rights of communities, community organizations or community networks to manage and develop their river basin areas through an integrated approach should be recognized.
17. The capacity of community organizations 1) to develop management systems and 2) to implement their own poverty improvement measures should be increased, supported and promoted.
18. Legitimacy should be given to the rights and obligation of community organizations to protect their own river basin from encroachment by outsiders.
19. All stakeholders who stand to gain or lose should have full participation in

the management of resources under investigation, and these should act as a check and balance.

20. Communities should be supported in the management of land use in sustainable ways through an integrated process.
21. There should be a cancellation of the classification of land designated as conservation or protected forest that overlaps with land used by indigenous (Karen) people for livelihood or residence and for which there is true and clear proof that they had settled and used the land long before the state issued the pertinent law or policy.
22. Arrests should cease and people of indigenous (Karen) communities who are on disputed land, which they consider their traditional land and use to make a living, should be protected.
23. A committee or mechanism should be established to determine land to be used for livelihood, residence and cultural activities in order to manage disputes concerning use or control of indigenous (Karen) community land. This should emphasize an integrated process to include people of the community who stand to lose or gain, experts or researchers, such as those carrying out cultural activities, human rights experts, anthropologists and sociologists. It should also determine the powers and duties of this mechanism, including the promotion of constructive dialogue to manage and resolve contradictions.
24. The rotational farming system, which is a cultural activity of the indigenous (Karen) people and supports sustainable resource use and self-sufficiency, should be promoted and recognized. This should include its endorsement as a world cultural heritage.
25. Agriculture of sufficiency and alternative agriculture, which are not monocultures or industrial agricultural systems, should be supported.
26. Biodiversity, in terms of preserving seed diversity, building food security, and enhancing ecological balance through the process of rotational farming, should be encouraged in highland communities.
27. Land utilization and management practices of local traditional communities should be promoted, supported and recognized through community land ownership certificates.

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Photo by Ms Luong Thi Truong, CSDM

REDD and rotational farming in Vietnam

by Luong Thi Troung

State of forests

Vietnam is a multiethnic country, with 54 ethnic groups, on the Indochina Peninsula. It has a total land area of approximately 317,000 sq km and a population of over 86 million, of which 13 percent are minorities living mostly in the mountainous regions. Vietnam lies within the tropical climate zone, with a topography of alluvium flat land, hills, mountains and plateaus.

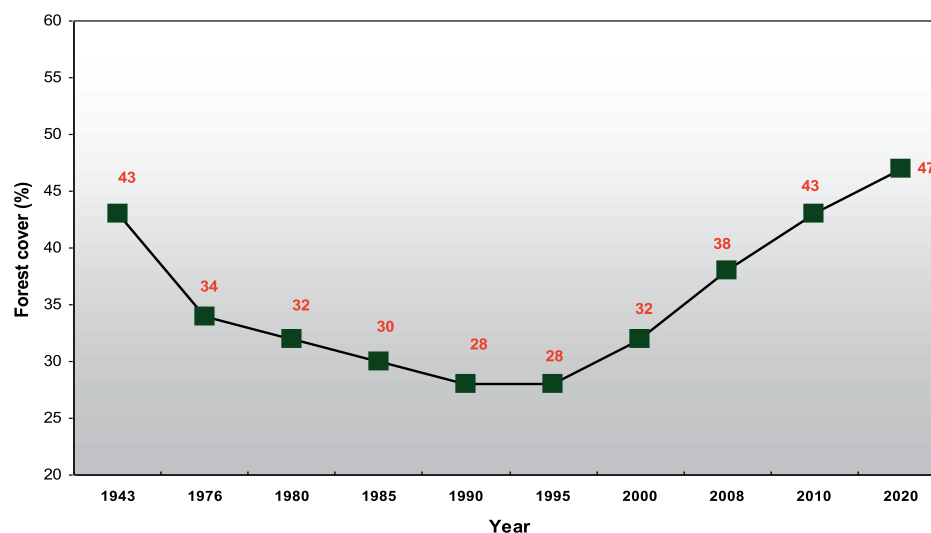
About 70 percent of Vietnam is covered by forest, and less than 20 percent of its land area is suitable for agriculture. Forests are home to over 25 million people, of which 15 million belong to 53 ethnic minority groups, accounting for 13 percent of the country's total population. Most of the ethnic minority groups live in upland and mountainous areas in the northern and central parts of Vietnam and are much poorer than the majority Kinh population. The poverty rate among these groups at 46 percent, and in some places at 80 percent, is so many times higher than the country average of 11 percent. At the same time, they face a lot of difficulties due to population pressure, degraded and reduced forest land per capita, and natural resource exhaustion.

Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Despite steadily increasing total actual forestry coverage in Vietnam, deforestation and forest degradation still occur, such as in the Central Highlands, central and southeast coastal area, and the northern mountain region. Over two-thirds of Vietnam's natural forest is considered of poor quality, and the rich and closed-canopy forest constitutes only 4.6 percent of the total (in 2004), mostly located in remote mountainous areas.

Forest quality and biodiversity are also continually deteriorating. Between 1999 and 2005, the area of the natural rich forest decreased by 10.2 percent and medium forest, by 13.4 percent. Through government national programs for forest protection and plantation, many forest lands have been planted, and as a result the forested area increased from 9.2 million ha in 1992 to 13.1 million ha in 2008. Forest cover thus increased from 28 percent to 38.7 percent during this period. Forest cover has changed dramatically and dynamically over time and space (See graph 1).

Graph 1. Forest Cover Changes



Forest cover change from 1943 – 2008 (and projections to 2020)

Source: Research Centre of Forest Ecology and Environment

However, change is not the same in all regions. Importantly, with forest expansion from afforestation with monocultures of fast growing and short rotation species, the forest has a single canopy layer and relatively low biodiversity and low carbon stock. Forest quality is thus low and some parts of special use and protected forests are still degrading. The area of primary forest decreased from 3.84 million ha (1990) to 0.84 million ha (2005) or a decline of 29,900 ha/year.

Major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

The results of several studies on changes in forest resources since 1991 indicated the following major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Vietnam:

- Conversion of forests into other land uses especially agriculture and aquaculture (the latter especially in lowlands and coastal mangrove forests);
- Development of infrastructure and construction of hydropower plants;
- High population growth, resettlement, migration and poverty;
- Inappropriate forest management and harvesting methods (e.g. excessive timber logging), and especially continuing illegal logging. There are an estimated 30-50,000 forest violations per year, very few of which lead to criminal prosecution;

- Incomplete legal system and lack of capacity to enforce the rules, lack of coordination between enforcement agencies, unclear land-forest tenure and corruption;
- Increasing market demand for timber products, wood processing and sale of furniture in particular.

REDD in Vietnam

Vietnam has joined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and is now beginning to engage in the international discussions through policy forums on both Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG). The government has thus issued national policies and plans to address deforestation and forest degradation in the country. Among these are the Country Program Framework on sustainable forest land management, Action Plan to mitigate and adapt to climate change, community-based forest management, national forest development strategy, and strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting on sustainable forest management.

Vietnam believes that REDD requires a new level of forest governance. Thus, it needs to reframe policies on forestry and targets for capacity building in the context of climate change. Its views on REDD implementation are:

- REDD is a trans-boundary issue that requires different stakeholders' participation.
- It requires a national scale program to avoid leaking out of resources but accepts project-based interventions in the first phase in order to achieve the learning-by-doing strategy.
- It is an important part of the National Target Program to respond to climate change and the National Forestry Development Strategy.
- It uses existing institutions, networks and forums and develops a close relationship between relevant ministries.
- It is important to mobilize resources from Government, donors, private sector and local authority, and to integrate REDD in the Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP).
- Both market-based and non-market based mechanisms should be used in REDD program implementation.
- REDD focuses on internal effort, resources and national coordination but also looks for external support from international donors.

Vietnam's national REDD strategy has the overall goal to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. It also aims to ensure economic

development and poverty reduction for ethnic communities in the mountainous areas through sustainable forest management and development (reforestation and afforestation). Its specific objectives are: a) to strengthen forest management and reforestation to cover a total of 14.3 million ha by end 2010 and 16.24 million ha by end 2020 (with a forest cover of 47%); b) to establish forest plantations of a total 1 million ha in the period 2006 - 2010 and 1.5 million ha from 2011 - 2020; and c) to reach wood production of a total 20-24 million m³/year.

The REDD objectives indicate that the Vietnam government gives priority to reforestation over afforestation and ensures biodiversity conservation of the tropical forest, increased forest carbon stock and sustainable forest management. Significantly, the status of ethnic minorities, the poor and women is identified clearly in the REDD strategy, which recognizes that many of the poorest communities, particularly in the mountainous areas, are ethnic communities.

The REDD strategy promotes processes in which points of view, needs and rights of vulnerable groups (women, the poor and ethnic minorities) will be integrated in program activities. These groups can participate in the discussion and negotiation on the development processes and in using natural resources and improved implementation of sustainable development policies by applying their knowledge and practical experience. However, while ethnic minorities are a stakeholder in REDD, they do not have any representation at the national level except through Vietnamese NGOs who work with them.

REDD implementation

Vietnam has produced the national Action Program Framework to respond to climate change in agriculture and rural development for the period 2008-2020. And one of its more important aspects is reducing greenhouse gas emissions through efforts to prevent deforestation and forest degradation.

REDD is also a key component of the National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC) and the National Forestry Development Strategy. REDD implementation, together with Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PES), is expected to create a sustainable and innovative financial mechanism in order to attain sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and socio-economic development in rural and mountainous areas.

Capacity building for national and local stakeholders

The main activities for REDD implementation have been capacity building for Afforestation and Reforestation Clean Development Mechanism (AR-CDM) and

analysis of forest area changes.

In addition, a wide range of other activities and stakeholders, some with foreign support, has been identified: a study on forest carbon reserves measurement implemented by the Government; capacity building for national and local stakeholders through national and regional training courses (UN-REDD); capacity building on monitoring and evaluation; a national forest survey since 1991 in the context of climate change supported by FAO; establishment of Forest Sector Monitoring Information System (FOMIS); establishment of a forest fire prevention and information system by the Government supported by Finland; determination of forest carbon reserves measures, supported by GTZ, SNV, AusAID, USAID, Finland; a study on a REDD benefit sharing system; preparation for international negotiations and presentation of results of the UN-REDD program (see below) in Vietnam at COP15 (Copenhagen, 2009) and further international negotiation sessions.

Coordination of donors, partnerships and REDD-related projects

A huge interest in REDD implementation is apparent in Vietnam. Apart from the abovementioned programs, international/local NGOs and private companies are conducting their own initiatives relating to REDD which can be summarized as follows: a REDD model established by WWF and SNV in Cat Tien National Park; REDD related projects including negotiation capacity building (Vietnam and Region) implemented by ICRAF Vietnam and funded by NORAD; greenhouse gas emissions from land use conversion (REALU); and Voluntary Carbon generated from German companies' initiative and implemented in Quang Ninh, Kon Tum and Lam Dong provinces.

A four-year global project implemented by CIFOR, in which Vietnam is taking part, focuses on REDD pilot and communication. Another global project focusing on defining land carbon reserves is funded by NORAD and implemented by SNV.

Coordination is done mainly through donors meetings, trainings and workshops and other activities. A REDD working group has been established and has monthly meetings to discuss action plans. Stakeholders in this working group are the Department of Forestry, Lam Dong province Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (the province is piloting both REDD and PES programs), donors, international and Vietnamese NGOs and civil society organizations on climate change.

REDD advantages and prospects, limitations and challenges

Several advantages and prospects of REDD have been identified, among these:

- high commitment of the Government to REDD development and implementation;
- cooperation and attention from many organizations;
- support from programs and strategies such as NTP-RCC, PES.

Also seen as an advantage is that REDD supplements the PES policy and creates a benefit sharing mechanism. It also reduces greenhouse gas emissions while enhancing biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement for local people.

Some limitations and challenges however are also recognized. REDD requires a high level of forest management, so it is necessary to check and complete policies and institutions. It further needs effective cooperation between government agencies and projects/programs. At the moment, organizations implementing REDD lack technical capacity for collecting, analyzing and reporting information and data related to forest carbon, especially at the local level. The budget requirements for REDD implementation is high, i.e. USD 13.7 million to 92 million for 5 years, but financial resources are lacking and currently not sufficient for implementation process.

Investment for REDD program

The Vietnam Government has made big financial investments in relation to REDD, among these: forest land allocation and leasing 2007-2010 (USD 45 million); national environment monitoring system, including establishment of satellite reception station on land (EUR 20 million); development of forestry land cadastral maps (USD 20 million); region based forest re-planning and classification (VND 76 billion, USD 4.5 million); 5 million-ha Forest Plantation (Program 661) (VND 4.515 billion, USD 252.6 million or USD 50.5 million/year); mangrove forest recovery and development 2008-2015 (USD125 million); sustainable sloping agriculture 2008-2012 (USD27 million and 315.500 tons of rice); national forest information, monitoring and assessment system (USD 5 million).

UN-REDD Program in Vietnam (2009-2010)

The UNFCCC conference in Bali recognized Vietnam as one of the top five countries in the world most affected by climate change. It has thus become one of nine pilot countries under the UN-REDD Program that seeks to address deforestation and forest degradation through capacity building at national and local levels. The objective of the UN-REDD Program is “to assist the Government of Vietnam

in developing effective REDD regime in Vietnam and to contribute to reduction of regional displacement of emission.” The program will contribute to the broader goal of ensuring that by the end of 2012 “Vietnam is REDD-ready and able to contribute to reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation nationally and internationally.”

The Department of Forestry in cooperation with the Forest Sector Support Partnership leads and coordinates a national UN-REDD program network. The REDD activities are mainstreamed into district land use plans. This includes participatory forest carbon reserves inventory and monitoring method to be set up with the participation of individuals, agencies and organizations to whom forests are transferred. Other activities are the drafting of a transparent and equal payment and benefit sharing mechanism and improving REDD awareness among local people and staff. Pilot activities are conducted in Lam Dong.

Gender equity is one of the program principles. The program provides for the participation of women in planning and decision making on sustainable natural resources protection and development. Ethnic minorities are also important stakeholders in REDD since they depend on natural forests for their livelihood. Since their tenure rights on forest and forest land are critical, they should contribute to more sustainable forest management and monitoring of the state of the forest ecosystem. This is most valid for minority groups with a long history of association with a particular forest, rather than migrant ethnic communities such as those from the depleted forest regions of the northern to central highland.

Rotational farming and resettlement program

But how does REDD actually affect the ethnic minority communities who live in forest areas and rely on these resources for their livelihood? This section discusses the traditional practice of rotational farming, as drawn from the case study conducted in several indigenous mountain communities, and the impacts of the government’s resettlement program that aims to replace this integrated system of cultivation and way of life with sedentary farming.

The case study was conducted in the following ethnic minority communities:

1. Suoi Nhung village, Phuc San commune, Mai Chau district, Hoa Binh province. Ethnic group: Dao Tien
2. Cha Day and Pa Hang villages, Pa Co commune, Mai Chau district, Hoa Binh province. Ethnic group: H’ Mong.
3. Thung Ang and Thung Mang villages, Hang Kia commune, Mai Chau district, Hoa binh province. Ethnic group: H’Mong.

4. Kep A and Bo Peng commune, Bac Me district, Ha Giang province. Ethnic groups: H'mong and Dao – long skirt.

Practice of rotational farming

Rotational farming is a common agricultural system practiced by the indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia in which forest areas are slashed and burnt down for growing crops, then abandoned once the land becomes inadequate for crop production. The process is periodically repeated when the soil regains its fertility through natural vegetation.

Rotational farming in Vietnam can be categorized according to its rotation period:

Progressive rotational farming (forest fallow): land is extensively used to cultivate crops until the soil is exhausted. Farmers then migrate to another area, leaving the land fallow for a long time, sometimes for a few decades or even longer. Abandoned land can recover full fertility by this method and the ecological structure of the forest is almost fully protected.

Cyclical rotational farming (bush fallow): by this method, farming and fallow phases are periodical and last for over 10 years, sufficiently to allow for nearly full recovery of the soil's fertility. Production of the next farming cycle, however, is about 10-15 percent lower than that of the previous period. At present, this is a common type of shifting cultivation in Vietnam; still it will not last for long given the current pace of population growth. The best crops at the beginning years of these two types of cultivation yield only about 1/5-1/3 compared to sustainable farming on alluvium flat land.

Sustainable rotational farming: the fallow period under this method is not predetermined. Land is only abandoned when it is so exhausted that one is forced to shift elsewhere. This type of cultivation is currently very common in Vietnam as the available forests for swiddening are limited; also the government's land management policies are tightening.

According to preliminary statistics, Vietnam has approximately 3 million ethnic minority people practicing rotational farming mostly in the mountainous areas. The swidden area is about 3 million to 3.5 million hectares.

In the north, the Hmong people, living in mountains that are at least 500 m high, are the biggest practitioners of rotational farming, followed by the Dao, Thai, Tay, Nung and Muong groups. In the center (from Thanh Hoa to Binh Thuan), those who most engage in this farming system are the Hmong, Dao and Thai people in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces; and in the rest of the region especially in the central plains and southeast provinces, these are the Van Kieu,

Sedang, H're, Co Ho and Khmu. Gia Rai, Rhade, Bhanar, Sedang, Gie Trieng and Co Ho.

Major plants and animals related to rotational farming system

Rotational farming promotes biodiversity and the conservation of indigenous and local seeds and animal breeds. While generally little difference exists in plant and animal species among different groups and regions, there is a big difference among types of soil and land condition. Based on the usage value, classification can be as follows: food plants (rice, corn..), vegetables (pumpkin, beans..), spices (ginger, pepper..), fiber (cotton, pandanus..), plants for dyeing (Indigo plant, gardenia, ramie leaf..), stimulants (tea, tobacco, opium...), fruit (banana, papaya, orange...), animal (buffalo, cow, goat, pig, dog, ...) and poultry. The above are local plant and animal species and varieties that are adaptive to severe environmental conditions such as drought, lack of nutrition and disease, but the quality is acceptable and they are easy to grow and raise. These are suitable to traditional cultivating customs and form a precious gene source.

Over a long period, many local species are replaced by alien breeds or those from plains areas, especially provisional plants such as rice, corn, or cattle and poultry. White and yellow corn are being supplanted by modern varieties such as Bioseed, 999, LVN10, DK9698. Indigenous rice varieties such as Rau and Pe lenh and black or white sticky rice are replaced by high-yielding varieties; and local cattle and poultry by high production breeds such as Tam hoang chicken, xiem lai duck, Mura buffalo and Sin cow.

At Pa co, Hang kia (Hmong), Nhung, Phuc San (Dao) in Mai Chau district and in Kep A, Khuoi Ken and Bo Peng in Bac Me district, however, the study found that the trend is to preserve local species, especially those related to local customs observed during the Tet holiday. The Hmong mainly use white, yellow or flower sticky rice to make banh chung and rau, white and yellow rice for worship dishes. Notably too the market's increasing preference is for wild products with high quality than high-breed varieties. This market demand contributes to recovering and developing local products and consequently, conserving their genes.

Vietnamese resettlement program, 1968-2002

The Vietnam government however has enforced a program aimed at encouraging the minorities in mountainous areas to permanently settle down in an effort to stop the practice of rotational farming and its particular way of life. Over the last few decades, it has carried out a series of resettlement projects aimed to stabilize people's lives, increase production and income, satisfy current needs especially

food, and gradually improve social services such as health care, education and communication.

From 1968 to 1990, the Government invested VND 14.644 million for settled farming and living. The change in land management policy brought land conflicts in the beginning of the 1990s. It spawned migrations and several tribes who did not have any farming land went back to shifting cultivation and their old way of life.

From 1996 to 2002, 200 projects were carried out in 40 provinces and 90,000 households were settled with a total investment of VND 480 billion from government and local funds. This investment aimed to relocate 50,000 households.

After 40 years of the “Settling Cultivation and Living” program, achievements have sufficiently been made in creating and improving production and service infrastructure such as transportation, water resources, household water, accommodation, medical centers, schools and others. Knowledge and awareness of people have increased adequately due to new production methods and interaction with Kinh culture and other ethnic groups. This government policy has partly resolved the mountainous nomadic lifestyle, stabilizing socio-economic status, improving ethnic relations, and maintaining national security and defense for the area.

Difficulties and challenges of settlement program. The settlement program however has shortcomings and has not fully achieved its goal to eradicate rotational farming. It faces problems and challenges which, as identified by the program management board, are the following:

1. Despite the duration, the 40-year settlement program has not produced the expected results. Improvements have been made in certain areas but the rate of poverty is still high and some places are considered really poor. The socio-economic status is low in comparison with country average standards. Currently, the population under support is high with 26,000 households of 1,541,000 inhabitants settled, but they still carry out shifting cultivation. Some 15,000 households of 84,000 members continue rotational farming and way of life, and 20,000 households freely move in special forests and protected forests and need to be relocated.

Some 270,000 households have to be supported with production land, accommodation, safe water and other basic services. In most villages, which are assumed to be areas of settled cultivation and living, from 15-20 percent of the inhabitants may return to their old way of life due to lack of productive land, and domestic and irrigation water.

2. The psychology of a community cannot be changed in one or two days. The population covered by the program is big and spread out in large areas difficult to access. This requires huge investment in terms of manpower and properties.

3. The local customs of the affected people were not studied or considered during the settlement process. Their involvement in the reconstruction of lives was limited due to language and culture barriers. Most of the time, they were passive and not adaptive to changes. Most projects use standard formats and focus mainly on infrastructure, development of water resources, and opening up fields. The planning of projects is carried out at district level, thus investigation and evaluation of needs of the local people are shallow and lack professionalism.

4. The program implementation showed weak planning as evidenced by the land used, which is unsuitable to the people's customary cultivation methods and local expectations. There is thus a risk of farming land being sold or exchanged, and planning of forest-agricultural farms may affect the community's land resources. In several places, construction and development were not uniformly developed, leading to inefficiency. Agriculture and forestry support was also lacking, resulting in unsatisfactory levels of production and product consumption by the people.

5. The inadequacy was also manifested in limited investment in the program, which was mainly supportive when actual needs were much greater. In 13 years (1990-2002), the average investment for resettlement was about VND 4 million/household, inclusive of investments for infrastructure and production development.

6. The management process was inadequate in terms of evaluation and monitoring and statistical analysis. Even the reported number on rotational farming and lifestyle in local areas was not reliable.

Impacts of resettlement program

While the resettlement program has brought some positive changes to the life of ethnic minorities such as infrastructure development, it has also caused adverse impacts especially the loss of indigenous culture and knowledge and a deteriorating plant and animal diversity.

Improved infrastructures in areas of fixed settlement: The resettlement policies have proven effective in transforming aspects of the ethnic peoples' life, among which is the installation and improvement of the infrastructure system for manufacturing and services such as transportation, water resources, water supply, dwelling, medical centers and schools.

In every commune a medical centre, a primary school and a road leading to the commune center have been constructed. Social services such as education and health care have also improved significantly.

Changes in ethnic minority lifestyle and culture. A big setback, however, is that many ethnic minority customs and wisdom have disappeared. More and more young people speak the mainstream language and wear modern clothes, and TV

and radio are used in nearly every household. Ethnic minority music and songs are now rarely performed in communities.

Young people also do not know the traditional knowledge and practices in clearing new land for cultivation. New farming practices and techniques have been introduced as a result of exposure to and dealings with the Kinh and other ethnic groups.

Cash crop and market-orientated cultivation has developed widely. With the ban on shifting cultivation, a cash-oriented economy has supplanted self-sufficiency. New farming techniques, high-yielding seeds, good roads and communication systems also facilitate movement of products and exchange, bringing ethnic peoples closer to the market economy.

These changes however have brought new problems. Ethnic minorities in Hang Kia, Pa Co and Phuc San and Minh Son are very dependent on high-breed seed supplies from outsiders, and not getting good seeds means they may not have a good crop. Furthermore, corn prices in Hang Kia and Pa Co are dictated by middlemen.

For the H'mong peoples in Hang Kia and Pa Co, while they cultivate high-yielding corn they do so only for commercial purposes, and do not feed it even to the pigs because it is bitter.

Disappearing plant varieties and traditional knowledge on rotation farming. As a result of the government prohibition on rotational farming and the introduction of new high-yielding varieties, indigenous plant species are disappearing along with the traditional knowledge and cultivation practices related to them. In Pa Co commune, the H'mong used to have more than 15 rice and corn varieties which have been reduced to only 5-6 being cultivated today. In Suoi Nhung only 7-8 of the former 25 varieties remain.

Forest vegetables that are a very important food for ethnic minorities are also vanishing with sedentary cultivation. This is not only in quantity but also in quality, as those produced in fixed fields exhibit lower eating quality. Alternative cultivation methods are also hardly practiced, reducing crop diversity.

Similarly herbal plants are gradually dying out, and thus knowledge on their medicinal use is no longer handed down to the next generation. Monoculture in agriculture is abolishing indigenous knowledge and diversity of crop plants.

Poorer animal diversity. Just like plant diversity, animal species also become poorer in areas where sedentary farming is developed due to lack of grass and salt from burned plants. In forest conservation areas, while some animals return, they are inferior and never include the rare species. The H'mong in Hang Kia and Pa Co seldom go hunting today, and thus the custom of sharing forest animals is also

hardly practiced.

However it must be recognized that the resettlement results have not yet met expectations due to the following factors. The community's consciousness, psychology and traditions are hard to change, the ethnic people's customs and habits are not well understood, and their involvement in the resettlement process was limited as language and culture barriers made them passive and less adaptive.

Effects of rotational farming

Aside from the above, several conclusions can be made on rotational farming as drawn from the case study:

Social and economic consequences: Over thousands of years, rotational farming has contributed to the Vietnamese ethnic minorities' rich and colorful cultures, which nurture, preserve and develop the historical heroic poems of the Central Highland, customs for living, production, and relations with nature. It fosters a close community with a self-sufficient economy.

Environmental consequences and biological diversity When the forest area is large enough and population density is low, rotational farming at certain levels does not destroy forest resources but rather creates diversity of fauna and flora in forests (Forest will always be in dynamic balance, accelerating the splitting process). In addition, various plants, animals and their gene pool are preserved for future use.

However, when the population increase is significant (from 25 million in 1945 to 85 million after 60 years), it creates pressure on various regions in Vietnam. Rotational farming in such circumstances would create negative consequences in terms of social management and environment. Forest resources including soil quality are degraded severely, and some recent reports of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development reflect the grave situation of natural forest damage in the central highland by uncontrolled migration from the North. Converting hundreds of thousands of hectares of natural forests for food production and other purposes, the migrants caused many environmental problems. Hundreds of species of flora and fauna have disappeared, while many others are threatened by habitat loss and numerous degraded land areas.

REDD Impacts on Ethnic Minorities and Rotational Farming

With its focus on forests, REDD has significant impacts on the land rights of the ethnic minority communities living in mountain areas and their practice of rotational farming. With REDD the value of forests increases and therefore it can-

not be expected that governments would address the demands of ethnic minority communities for the recognition of their rights to their lands and territories. The compensation payments for forest conservation may also lead to increased land speculation in forest areas. And unless REDD programs take measures to secure and recognize customary land rights of these communities, there is a serious risk that more forests will be taken over by migrant settlers and private companies.

Further, in REDD implementation, resource use and management practices that rely on the use of fire are coming under increased pressure, particularly in the case with rotational farming. Fire is the key technology in shifting cultivation. Fire has been an important tool in land use and forest management of all ethnic minorities living in the forests of Vietnam. However, their use of fire, just like many other aspects of their resource management systems, has often not been properly understood by non-indigenous peoples, above all by foresters, park rangers and other state agents in charge of the management and conservation of forests and biodiversity. As a result, such practices have been discouraged and in most cases even declared illegal.

Changing rotational farming customs of ethnic minorities is not easy as it is linked to their traditional cultures. Interviews of Hmong and Dao people revealed that local people maintain their cultural values. One unchangeable custom is to worship deities and ancestors during the Tet holiday. Worshipping requires the use of rice, glutinous or sticky rice, and chickens and pigs raised by traditional methods to produce natural products. The existence of rau, pe lenh and black sticky rice also shows that the Hmong and Dao grow rice not only for worshipping but for their own consumption, and thus to preserve rare varieties. The study showed that despite government efforts and measures to ban it, rotational farming is unchangeable for ethnic minority people in Vietnam.

In the name of forest conservation, governments all over the world and particularly in Asia have long sought to eradicate this form of land use. The climate change discourse now provides them with additional arguments for banning rotational farming. Not only rotational farming, but also other forms of land use practiced by ethnic minority peoples – controlled burning of forests to improve habitat diversity for game or pastures for livestock, collection of fuel wood, cutting trees for house construction and other purposes, even the gathering of non-timber forest products – are now considered a form of “forest degradation” under REDD programs. And since REDD aims at reducing deforestation and forest degradation, the ethnic minority communities are and will increasingly be targeted in such programs. This will have a severe impact on their way of life and livelihood security.

Recommendations

Rotational farming contributes to the conservation of traditional cultures. It not only provides food for the ethnic minority people in mountainous areas but is also a means to conserve indigenous knowledge in farming and traditional seeds that ensure diverse gene resources. Thus rotational farming must be protected in appropriate ways. Some recommendations towards this as well as on REDD implementation and protection of ethnic minority rights in Vietnam are as follows:

On rotational farming and protection of ethnic minority peoples

- At local level: where possible such as in areas that have less pressure on cultivable land and the environment, ethnic minorities should be allowed to continue the practice of rotational farming with more support from the State.
- At national level: before developing new plans to assist ethnic minority groups, previous pertinent policies and programs should be evaluated and reoriented to adapt not only to food production and environmental conservation but also to traditional customs and cultures of these groups.
- Food security policy should be a priority for mountainous areas and should include government support for local people to develop plantations or natural forest protection.
- The economic development of mountainous areas must be strongly supported, especially in infrastructure and local capacity building to enable ethnic minority people themselves to manage their natural resources sustainably and to facilitate their access to markets.
- Increase the value of forests (not only forest products but also various other functions), which will enable ethnic minority people to get more benefits from them.
- Create more jobs from forest products.
- In order to protect forests successfully, effective cooperation within communities is needed, thus besides valid laws, suitable traditional social structures should be restored. People should be encouraged to set up their own rules for forest protection and implement and monitor them.
- In order to work with ethnic minorities, it is necessary to develop teams of actors who are highly committed, skilful, have the potential to work with ethnic minority communities, and can help to harmonize selected traditional and new technologies, as well as valid laws with customary law.

On REDD and ethnic minority rights

- Ethnic minorities must not only be the subject but the receiver and owner of

REDD programs.

- Before implementing REDD, work should be done to ensure that all people who live in or near forests can access forest land in an equitable and satisfactory manner.
- Establish community-based organizations and a network to promote cooperation among ethnic minority communities in implementing REDD.
- Develop a consultation channel at commune level that the community is able to access, especially regarding REDD and other relevant policies.
- Develop and train key farmers at village level to be 'REDD experts' who can facilitate the participation of their communities in the REDD process. They can form a network of REDD experts for better cooperation and sharing during the work process.
- Set up institutions and principles for communities that allow them to set up and operate a self-payment mechanism among local carbon sellers. This mechanism, which should be monitored by the local authority, can help compensate local REDD experts at community level.

Part Two

Occupations and Livelihoods
(NE India, Malaysia,
Philippines and Cambodia)



Photoby Dr Christian Erni, IWGLA

Traditional Occupations and Livelihood Practices in Northeast India

by Thingreiphi Franthing

Introduction

The Northeast Region (NER) of India or “Paradise Unexplored” comprises eight states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The region is characterized by rich and abundant natural resources, vast land, favorable climate, thick forest, diverse flora and fauna, water and rich mineral reserves. However, it is also marked by high levels of poverty, thus representing the classic paradox of ‘poverty in the midst of plenty.’ The Northeast Region covers an area of 255,000 square kilometers and has a total population of about 39, 263, 769.¹ It is home to a wide range of land race food crops and plants including ornamental, medicinal and aromatic, canes and bamboos.

The region’s topography can be broadly divided into (a) the Northeastern Hills and Basin which accounts for 65 percent of NER’s total area; (b) the Brahmaputra Valley, 22 percent; and (c) the Meghalaya Plateau, 13 percent. The upland areas are characterised by steep-sided valleys and ridges with narrow valley bottom and flood plains which offer limited scope for terracing.

There are over 220 scheduled tribes in the region with a total population of 10,354,4893 or about 12 percent of India’s total tribal population (2001 Census). The indigenous peoples² in NER are of Mongoloid stock speaking Sino-Tibetan languages. The main tribal groups are the Nagas, Mizos, Lushais, Hmars Kukis, Chins, Zomis, Hmar, Bodos, Dimasa, Karbi, Kachari, Borok, Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Garo, Adi, Aka, Apatani, Nissi, Monpa, Paites, Zos, among others. Many indigenous groups are recognized as “Scheduled Tribes” by the government of India.

The tribal groups of NER share a number of common features such as the clan system but differ ethnically, linguistically and socio-culturally. Some, like the Bodo and Dimasa, live in the plains but most of the others inhabit remote hilly areas. Some tribes are large and others small. In Arunachal Pradesh, the

1 2001 Census

2 The terms ‘indigenous peoples’, ‘indigenous populations’, ‘indigenous communities’, and ‘tribal’ are used interchangeably in the paper.

Adi and Nishi tribes form 26.9 percent and 21.7 percent respectively of the state's population whereas the Aka tribe makes up a mere 0.6 percent. In Meghalaya, the Garo and Khasi together make up 90 percent of the state's population. Mizos are 80.3 percent of Mizoram's population. In the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, more than 80 percent of the population are tribals while in Arunachal Pradesh, they make up about two-thirds of the total population.

However, in the other states of Assam, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura, non-tribals dominate demographically. In Assam, two areas -- North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong -- have tribals as the majority. In Manipur, while the five hill districts (out of a total of nine) of Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul have high tribal populations, they still constitute less than 40 percent of the total population. In the case of Tripura, the demographic constitution drastically changed over the last five decades; its tribal population that was over 58 percent in 1951 had declined to 31 percent in 2001. Dhalai, which has a tribal population of 54 percent, is the only tribal majority district in Tripura. In Arunachal Pradesh too, the tribal proportion declined from around 90 percent to 64.22 percent within the same period.

The indigenous communities of NER have well-defined institutions and live in their respective territory in self-sufficient village systems. Tribal villages are well-defined units having their own territories, lands and forests. The village is headed by a hereditary Chief or Headman who administers the village with the help of village councils commonly known as Village Authority (VA) represented by clan elders.

Women, as a general rule, are excluded from traditional institutions within these tribal groups but enjoy greater equality than their counterparts in non-tribal societies. However, women are widely respected for spearheading roles in social reforms, conflict prevention and peace building, and superior management skills. They are also the mainstay/backbone of the tribal economy which revolves significantly around agricultural activities; women are the main labour force, especially in jhum cultivation. Unfortunately they lag behind men in critical areas including access to education and health care, and control and power over property (An exception to this is the Garo and Khasi tribes who follow a matrilineal form of society where women inherit properties even to the exclusion of men). While women have negligible roles in village affairs, they play central roles in decision-making of household affairs especially in relation to agricultural activities such as deciding crop mix, sowing time, seed selection, labour management, marketing and retaining control over income earned and in developing strategies to cope with unforeseen risks.

A majority of the population lives on subsistence agriculture and their main

economic activity is shifting cultivation or sedentary terraced cultivation. Other activities such as hunting, fishing, black pottery, basketry, blacksmith, spring salt processing, livestock and forestry supplement their economy.

The tribal life is community based, and natural resource management practices follow common resource management policy governed by traditional mechanisms of customary laws and norms. These societies have deep sentimental attachment and socio-cultural orientation to their land and territories in which their identity and culture is rooted. This relationship is often expressed through folk songs and dances, beautifully designed hand woven ethnic attires and woodcarvings, among others.

A strong sense of collective effort is present in the indigenous communities of NER. For instance, a strong mutual help working system is central to their economic activities, particularly in agriculture. Other activities such as constructing houses, festivals, community rituals, managing community drinking water ponds, village gates and roads, are collective efforts. Further surplus products are saved for the community and utilized for generating individual and community assets; individual families with surplus share their wealth with others.

Importantly forests, rangelands and farming systems are managed collectively. The people meet their needs through time-tested traditions and methodologies of resource management. Land and forest resources are often collectively owned and utilized to meet individual and collective needs. Often, land and forest resources use is for subsistence and not for commercial profit. As Alier and Changkija observed, "The principle of co-existence between the natural environment and human beings is thus developed and presented as a distinctive physical phenomenon in this mountain region." (Alier and Changkija 2003:334)

These customary practices and traditions of tribes in the region have contributed significantly to preserving and protecting biological diversity and the environment.

State of Manipur

Manipur shares an international border with Myanmar (Burma) in the east, and is bounded by Nagaland state in the north, Assam in the west, and Mizoram in the south-west. It covers an area of 22,327 sq km (8,620 sq miles).

Topographically, it can be described as hills that surround a central plain with a freshwater lake at its centre. The hills, with an average height of 1,800 meters above sea level, are cloaked with dense forests that contain large stands of teak and bamboo, oak, magnolia and pine. The climate is temperate in the valleys and cold in the hills. The average annual rainfall is 1,650 mm (65 in).

Three major ethnic groups constitute the people of the state. They are the Meiteis, Chin-Zomi-Kuki group and Nagas. The Meiteis who are predominantly Vaishnavite Hindus and pangans (Manipuri Muslims) occupy the central plain and comprise 60 percent of the total state's population, while the Nagas and Chin-Zomi-Kuki who are hill tribes make up about 36 percent. The Chin-Zomi-Kuki and the Nagas are umbrella names of various tribes. As per the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Lists, the Constitution of India recognizes a total of 33 tribal communities (both Chin-Zomi-Kuki and the Nagas) in Manipur. They are: Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Kharam, Koirao, Koirang, Kom, Kuki, Lamkang, Mao, Maram, Maring, Lushai, Monsang, Moyon, Paite, Purum, Poumai, Ralte, Sema, Simte, Sukte, Tangkhul, Tarao, Thadou, Vaiphei, and Zou. The Thangal, Zeme and Mate tribes are still in the process of being recognized as Scheduled Tribes. Manipuri and English are the official languages.

All tribal villages have a well defined land use system within their village boundary.



The difference in land holding system is significant in recovering from events that adversely affect the livelihood of the people such as natural disasters or man-made calamities.

For instance, in Mornoi and Bahiang villages, which are Kuki villages, during ethnic clashes, the village chief sold off the village land. As a result, after the conflict abated, the villagers could not go back to their original homesteads or their livelihood activities. Villagers had to migrate elsewhere or look for other livelihood in urban areas.

Among the Nagas, a three-tier land holding system is present: community, clan, and individuals. In marked contrast, among the Kukis, the village chief has ownership of the whole village land. In the case of the Chin-Zomi-Kuki group, the chief owns all the village land and upon whose favour, villagers utilize the land.

Case Study: shifting cultivation in upland Manipur

The case study presented here involves the broad topic of conflict and livelihood that was narrowed down to focus on shifting cultivation practices. The study was conducted in the upland areas of Manipur consisting of five hill districts, but due to time constraints and communication challenges, only the villages with conflict history and accessible during the rainy season were covered.

The research team^{3*} developed a simple matrix of tools and strategies for data/information gathering which was expected to serve the purpose of the study, although for a more exhaustive exercise it may not capture all the issues of conflicts and livelihood. Data and information were collected from primary sources: members of village authorities, women's groups, students' groups and other village folks whom the team met. The tools used in gathering data/information included focus group discussions, key informant interviews, story telling, transect walk and Seasonality Matrix. Seasonal dependency exercise was conducted only in one village (East Tusom). A total of 82 participants joined the focus group discussions and 33 participants in the key informant interviews.

Table 1. Number of Participants in FGD

Representation	Chandel	Churachanpur	Senapati	Tamenlong	Ukhrul	Total
Farmers	2	3		3	16	24
Village Authority	3	1		1	4	9
Women	6	3	2	4	8	23
Church	5		1	2	2	10
Youth/ Student	3	3		6	4	16
Total	19	10	3	16	34	82

3 * The research team consisted of Ms. Thingreiphi Lungharwo and Mr. Kh. Sami Ignitius of the Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights (South Office).

In Senapati district the team's proposed visit to Punamai village was not possible due to prevailing conflict situation in the area. Villagers had fled and were taking shelter in other neighboring villages against the backdrop of atrocities committed by state armed forces. The incident took place when women of the area were taken out of a peace rally in protest against the excesses committed by Manipur State Armed Forces. Two college students were killed, many were wounded and suffered bullet injuries, tortured, assaulted and arrested.

Table 2. Number of Participants in Key Informant Interview

Representation	Chandel	Churachan- pur	Se- napati	Tamen- long	Ukh- rul	Total
NGOs	2	2			2	6
Village Authority	2	1		1	3	7
Women Leaders	2	1	1	1	2	7
Church Leaders	2		1	1	2	6
Youth Leaders	1	1		3	4	7
Total	9	5	2	6	13	33

Livelihood practices

As in other tribal populations, agriculture constitutes the central economic activity of the people within the case study areas. It is supplemented by trade in forest products including firewood, small game, non-timber forest produce and others.

Two types of agricultural practices can be generally observed: wet terrace farming and shifting cultivation. Wet terrace cultivation is particularly limited in terms of crop plantation, mono-cropping of rice is often the sole practice. It is supplemented by paddy-cum-fish activities in areas where there is permanent availability of water/irrigation. Shifting cultivation offers a much wider choice and flexibility in adapting to the climate or terrain in terms of crop varieties or systems.

The study focused on shifting cultivation as a livelihood practice.

Practice of shifting cultivation

Shifting cultivation is a predominant livelihood activity in the upland areas of India's Northeast Region, including those in Manipur. Almost 70 percent of the indigenous populations are dependent on it.

Shifting cultivation can be defined as a community way of farming system in

the upland areas characterized by short ‘cultivation phase’ followed by relatively long ‘forestry phase’ referred to as ‘fallow period’. It is a system that is dynamic over time and space and is based on the most efficient and ecologically viable system.

To have a better understanding of the shifting cultivation system, a landscape level view and acknowledgement of the institutionalised natural resources management practices in maintaining the system is required. Local institutions are vital in shifting cultivation for equitable sharing of land resources, planning, fire management, setting calendars and norms for conservation and landscape fallow management.

Villages which practice shifting cultivation generally have a well-defined land use system, owing to the fact that tribal economy and knowledge systems revolve around the life support system—Land and Forest. It is designed in such a way to meet their needs including catchment reserved for water source, cattle grazing areas, settlement areas, kitchen garden, community burial area, forest reserved for timber extraction, forest reserved for animal sanctuary, bamboo reserve, agricultural area, green belt reserved around settlement areas for maintaining village micro-climate and others. These knowledge systems are meant to nurture and manage the resources at its most efficient but sustainable way without disturbing the ecological balance.

Two forms of shifting cultivation are practiced in upland areas of Manipur: 1) systematic cycle with one-year cultivation phase commonly known as pamlou, meaning field with trees and 2) intensive jhuming with 3-5 year cultivation phase known as kanglou or dry field. Far from the popular misconception that jhum cultivation takes place arbitrarily and adversely impacts the environment, sound scientific practices and rationale developed over centuries inform the practice and contribute to the preservation of ecology.

Systematic rotation/cycle with one year cultivation phase

As the name suggests, the community follows a systematic cycle within the jhum land. In this type of jhum-based land use, major portions of the village territory are reserved for jhum cultivation and the activity involved is communal in nature. In this system, jhum lands have been demarcated for centuries. The demarcated areas for jhum are further divided into blocks. For instance, in East Tusom, there are 22 blocks delineated for jhum (See Resource Map of E. Tusom). The blocks are further divided into jhum plots, which are allotted to each household within the village according to availability of family labor on rotary basis, or the eldest son of the family is given preference to choose first in some cases. The delin-

soil depends on the condition of the forest which in turn determines the economy of the community. Consequently, and contrary to popular misconception that fallow lands are degraded open forest with free access, they are scientifically and systematically managed forest lands to promote and encourage quick and proper regeneration of forest and soil rejuvenation. In practice, shifting cultivation is a rotational agro-forestry system rather than the generally believed practice of unsustainable slashing and burning of forest as a means for agriculture.

Clearing of forest is carried out between January and February after the Ram-hao (New Year) festival, and after a specific announcement that jungle clearing can commence. The clearing of the forest has ritualistic and social importance and is accompanied by folk songs and traditional hoo-hooh chants. If a family lags behind in clearing their allotted patch, it is a common practice for those families who have cleared their portions to contribute their labor to such families. Aside from promoting social cohesiveness, it also ensures that fire-setting of the jhum area is uniform.



A fire-setting about to conclude. The spread of fire for such a large area is carefully controlled by cutting firebreaks around the jhum area. These firebreaks are first set on fire before setting fire to the main jhum area.

Fire setting, which generally occurs in March, is also a community activity as is the preparation of firebreaks. Fire setting is a necessary activity for enhancing soil fertility, easy removal of logs, minimum tillage and to control pests and weeds outgrowth.



Dibbling of seeds in process

Sowing is carried out after the seed sowing festival. Dibbling is usually practiced and spacing is maintained according to the crop variety. Crop selections for particular areas are done through the assessment of soil type, moisture level, reach of sunlight, among others. Sowing is followed by weeding and sequential harvesting. The harvested crops are well preserved; for instance cucumbers which are harvested in October are kept till March-April without affecting the quality of the fruit. They also plant crops that can be harvested from the fallow land before the next harvest.

Intensive jhuming with 3-5 year cultivation phase

In the past, this type of cultivation practice was generally associated with alder based cultivation. This system is predominantly found in areas where the people also do wet-terrace cultivation. However, this practice has now extended to other available land for cash crop cultivation. It is generally found in the foothills where road connectivity is comparatively better and there is a higher level of market influence. The site selection for cultivation is based at the individual household level. The intensification of cultivation in this practice is made possible through the mixture of innovations like crop selection of nitrogen fixing crops in the first year, crop combination with paddy as major crops in the second and third years, followed by maize and runner crops in the fourth and fifth years. Mulching, diversion of water,

contour bunding, and burying of biomass rather than burning are well adopted practices to prevent soil erosion. In a way, this can be categorised as modification of jhum cultivation as secondary forest regeneration is absent but reduced to grass-land or shrub land in this type of practice.



An example of log contour bunding in an intensive jhuming area

Good practices and lessons learned

Many good practices are associated with shifting cultivation that deserves credence. But the multifaceted benefits and social safety net engrained within shifting cultivation are little understood. Some of them are presented below.

1. Shifting cultivation contributes to biodiversity conservation.

Farmers produce a wide range of traditional food crops that are adapted to up-land agro-ecological condition through mixed cropping and sequential harvesting in the jhum field. This complex multi-cropping system creates agro-biodiversity and makes in situ gene pool conservation possible which is absent in other agricultural systems. Different ages of the fallow forest provides different products for livelihood, both commercial and subsistence. It also creates diverse landscape elements and host innumerable flora and fauna which are not known and acknowledged (See Table 3 below). This richness of biodiversity is possible only with the knowledge and efforts developed and evolved by shifting cultivators over centuries. In some villages, the community maintains wild life sanctuaries within fallow land, which shifts as and when required.

Table 3. Dependency Matrix in East Tusom of Ukhurul District

Variety of Products in Jhum Field		In Fallow Land	
Products	Number	Products	Number
Rice	12	Wild Vegetables	27
Maize	3	Medicinal herbs	61
Chilly	4	Mushroom	16
Tuber	5	Bamboo shoots	3
Onion	4	Wild animals	27
Gourd	5	Wild birds	47
Rice bean	3	Wasp	7
Soya bean	2	Honey bee	6

2. Collective efforts and ensuring social security

Sharing and exchange or contribution of labor associated with shifting cultivation promotes social cohesiveness and sense of belonging to the community. Besides reducing drudgery, making work enjoyable and productive, collective efforts also fill labor gap where there is gender division of labor or when any family faces misfortune. It is also a platform for sharing knowledge and innovative work, seed banks, and guard against wild beasts and birds, rodents, among others. Community participation in fire line/firebreak clearing and keeping vigilance when fire-setting is a collective responsibility. This activity is synchronized with other neighboring villages as well.

Practices such as sharing surplus with less fortunate families is rooted and intrinsically connected to the rationale of maintaining a strong work force which will ensure economic robustness. For instance, hunger in a family negatively affects the labor pool.

3. Observation of norms and practices

As shifting cultivation is the mainstay of these communities, norms and practices associated with it are strictly followed. The observation and respect for the norms and practices contribute significantly to landscape management and hence the sustainability of shifting cultivation. For instance, no cutting of timber or fire-setting can take place in areas identified as fallow lands; killing or hunting of particular animal species, or during breeding season, or within specified areas is similarly prohibited. Social taboos, and the rare social sanctions, associated with these norms and practices ensure their adherence.

4. Address equity in resource allocation

Land resources are managed by traditional institutions in such a way that every family has access to resources required to meet their needs. Economic activity is dictated by needs and not by commercial interests or greed. Land resource alloca-

tion is done according to equitable identification of factors such as the needs of a family/individual and their ability to utilize their allocated land. Redistribution of land among those who need more and who require less is a common practice. This is an efficient system in handling poverty and food security in villages where the community is left alone with no support services.

5. Jhum products are organic.

Jhum products are organic in nature. The fallow management for soil rejuvenation and fire setting for enhancement of soil fertility, which are time-tested traditional knowledge, makes the use of pesticides and weedicides redundant. The focus on organic production encompasses a holistic approach from production to consumption rather than confined to production alone. Given proper knowledge and market linkages, the organic nature of jhum products makes it highly marketable and safe for consumption.

6. Resilience of shifting cultivation

It is observed that farmers shift to jhum cultivation during unfavorable climatic condition like drought. This is because of the reliability in sequential planting and harvesting options and usability of diverse crop varieties within the complex multi-cropping jhum system. The product from the fallow land also offers high flexibility to cope with seasonal and climatic change. The flexibility associated with jhum cultivation is also the most efficient system for managing resources, particularly keeping in mind the unfavorable topography and climatic conditions of the area for wet terrace cultivation.

Challenges

Ethno nationalism and armed conflict situation in the region

The Northeast Region of India represents a unique socio-cultural framework and faces a unique set of problems. The major factors have been the influx of non-locals, political and administrative changes disturbing the traditional values/system after India's independence, and closure of borders disrupting traditional trade flow and cutting off communities from their kinsmen.

The diverse ethnicity and multiple political aspirations deeply rooted in the right to self-determination have posed serious challenges to policy makers who are often unable to take these factors into account in framing/designing policies and implementation of development programs within the region. Thus, the region is embroiled in geo-politics and backwardness on account of administrative apathy. The underdevelopment of basic infrastructure and shortcomings in planning policies incongruous to social realities and needs of the people have given birth to various kinds of socio-economic and political conflicts, an extreme of which is

the prevalent armed revolutionary/insurgency movements. The resulting counter-administrative policies have been dichotomous and suppressive in nature.

Instead of directing energies towards addressing the economic, social and political needs of the people through encouraging participation in decision making, developing agriculture or allied income generating activities, the state has focused on militaristic strategies. Extensive reliance is placed on paramilitary forces, and recruitment of “anti-terrorism” forces has increased on the pretext of maintaining law and order.

Ill-conceived policies and law have also resulted in discriminatory outcomes, and whether intentional or not, there is a strong perception that the state relies on “divide and rule” policies. This has further alienated tribals from the centers of administration, and has also created rifts between different communities, tribals and non-tribals, hills and valley people, among others. The end result is a cycle of violence, conflict and confrontation between the people and the state, and between the people themselves.

The conflict situation itself breeds and perpetuates unaccountability and lack of transparency, and is accompanied by social unrests, suspicion, and loss of trust and fear psychosis. In such a situation, the possibility of retaining a productive livelihood system is very unlikely.

In recent times, a shift in policy seems to be in the offing. The initiation of political dialogues and peace processes between the Government of India and various ethnic revolutionary groups or factions appear to be a trend. Nevertheless, militaristic strategies and “divide and rule” policy are manifest in the operation of laws such as the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) and Inner Line Regulation Permit System.

In February-March, 2009 a month long standoff at Shirui Village between the Indian state armed forces and cadres of the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim, an armed Naga underground group, resulted in the village missing crucial seasonal agricultural activities resulting in food shortage the following year.

As the backdrop of an agro-based region, particularly in Manipur, the impact of socio-political conflicts between ethnic groups and with the state has negatively affected and taken a huge toll on the livelihood of the indigenous peoples in the region.

Conflict disrupts the cycle of activities associated with shifting cultivation, causing irreparable damage to the economy and livelihood. It also results in forced migration and displacement of people from their lands. This further results in cultural dislocation and loss of identity for the tribals.

Lack of market linkages

The topography and terrain of the hill areas of Manipur, coupled with inefficient administration, poor communication and transport infrastructure, results in the lack of poor market linkages for selling surplus products. In those cases where access to markets is limited, the price and marketing of products is controlled by commercial traders who exploit the naivete of tribals.

The problem is further compounded by the fact that in recent times an increasing tendency towards commercial cropping has emerged. This has taken place at the high cost of challenging sustainable practices and security of livelihood for villagers.

The challenge is to shape the market in such a way that the profit margin for small seasonal traders (who are selling their surplus) is not so low that they will turn towards a higher production system at the cost of sustainability and environment.

State policies: land alienation and loss of forest areas

The lack of understanding of the positive implications of shifting cultivation has resulted in the formulation of policies and laws which discourage the practice and result in land alienation.

The challenge is tied to the oral tradition of tribal societies in the region. Generally speaking, an oral traditional system is a central characteristic of tribal societies. The use of black and white documents is barely a century old at best for many, while only a few decades old for others. By and large, norms and customs passed through oral traditions are prevalent.

Traditionally, the ownership and control of lands and territories, as a consequence, are shaped by this oral tradition. This results in the inability of the tribals to prove their ownership when their lands and territories are sought to be taken by the state.

According to tribal customary laws and practices, no part of the tribal land is transferable to a non-tribal. An exception is made in the case of transferring land to the government for establishing official buildings, schools, hospitals and others. This system is honored and protected by constitutional provision, and tribals are not required to pay land tax but only a nominal house tax annually.

Among the Nagas of Manipur, customary laws determine land use pattern in essence, and outside the purview of state laws such as the Manipur Land Reforms and Land Revenue Act, 1960. This means that there is no government khas land

in the hills of Manipur. This has been confirmed in judicial rulings.⁴ However, the state of Manipur has, through dubious means, alienated land from the tribals. Some examples are given below.

- Land has been alienated in the guise of extending credit facilities in Churachandpur. Laws to acquire and alienate land of the tribals have been enacted. As a result, low lying agricultural areas of Churachandpur district have been converted to revenue land of the state without the proper consent of the tribals. Interestingly, the tribals still pay the nominal annual hill house tax.
- Large scale projects in the name of development are now becoming a menace to the livelihood and survival of tribals. Large tracts of tribal lands, which were being utilized as farmlands, forest lands and other uses have been taken away by the state to implement development projects without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous populations living in the area. For instance, the Mapithel Dam Project has already displaced many villages, and once completed would affect 574.43 sq km of tribal land. The affected areas consist primarily of paddy fields and jhum lands. Other examples include the Tipaimukh Dam project affecting Tamenglong and Churachandpur district, the North East India railway line expansion project in Tamenglong and others.
- The case of Joint Forest Management (JFM) is also a bone of contention between the government and tribals. The government's concept to involve the people in protecting and regenerating degraded forest in other parts of the country had been used deceitfully by the Manipur government to gain proprietary rights over forest land of the tribals. On 8 June 2000, the Governor of Manipur issued a notification for participation of villagers in regeneration, protection, conservation and management of degraded forest. In reality, such notification is not required, for the forests in the hills of Manipur state have been entirely managed by respective communities for centuries without any problem. The statement in the notification Section 1 thus reads, "The illicit cutting of trees from the Government Forests by the people residing nearby is ever increasing day by day apart from encroachment by some organized groups for jhum cultivation..." Despite the absence of proper survey of such land, the blanket implementation of JFM encompassing rain forests, community forest, agricultural fallow land has resulted in conflicts over resource use and management and the usurping of traditional systems and laws. The end result is the loss of livelihood of the jhum dependent hill tribes. So far 280 Joint Forest Management Committees are said to have registered in the

⁴ For example see the order of the Judicial Commissioner in the Luitong Khullakpa case of 1961.

state, affecting about 93,941 hectares of forest.

The background context is that state reserve forest is merely 9 percent of the total 78 percent forest cover in the state. Out of the state total geographical area of 22,327 sq km, a significant 20,089 sq km (90%) comprise tribal areas.

Erosion of role of traditional institutions

As control over land and the use of resources accruing from it is central to the worldview of indigenous peoples, any imbalance and threat in their control and ownership over their lands and natural resources have a negative impact on their social, political and economic systems.

The abovementioned challenges have cumulatively resulted in weakening traditional institutions of the villages, which has a cyclic effect on the livelihood of tribals. Norms and customs that determine the sustainability of livelihood practices are no longer maintained properly, challenging the security of the people.

In Manipur, the decline of traditional institutions has been further accelerated by government-sponsored formation of various committees such as the Village Education Committee, Village Development Board, Village Energy Committee and others. While village authority members are present in these committees, their establishment has the resultant impact of weakening or reducing the influence of traditional institutions.

Tapping market value in potential niche crops

Shifting cultivation system enables innovation of niche products of commercial value that can be enhanced further for economic development without compromising the main principles of shifting cultivation. However, some questions need to be addressed. For instance, how can intellectual property rights over the traditional knowledge evolved by indigenous communities over centuries be protected or secured? In Ukhrul district, a particular species of King Chilly, one of the hottest in the world, is regarded as having originated from Chatric village; many legends associated with the King Chilly of Chatric abound. However, once it became popularized, the Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) applied for intellectual property rights of King Chilly and received it. This is a well-known case but there are other crops/seeds, such as the many moisture resistant varieties of beans, rice, maize and others developed by the indigenous communities of NER for which intellectual property rights are owned by others.

Recommendations

1. Different legal regimes are needed to govern land rights for the North East Region as opposed to the whole country. While some special constitutional safeguards and laws apply to the NER, these are not enough and are often modeled on laws from other parts of the country, and therefore, often suffer from the inability to respect and recognize the concept of collective ownership and use of land and forests prevalent in the NER.

2. Micro-level planning addressing the community's land management system and the benefits arising out of such practices need to be studied and understood. Common property resources are the basic tenets of shifting cultivation. To promote social capital and other benefits, existing communal tenure arrangement should be strengthened rather than focusing on privatization.

3. Strengthen, capacitate and formalise the customary institution for improved local level governance, community-based natural resource management practices, tenurial access and control.

Annexure 1

SEASONAL DEPENDENCY MATRIX OF EAST TUSOM VILLAGE

Products	Months					
	January Tharao	February Marun	March Mayo	April Khaying	May Kharam	June Makha
JHUM						
Rice	Rice	Rice	Rice	Rice	Rice	Rice
Maize						
Sticky Maize						
Yam	Yam	Yam	Yam	Yam		
Soybean	Soybean	Soybean	Soybean	Soybean		
Ricebean	Rice Bean	Rice Bean	Rice Bean	Rice Bean	Rice Bean	
Pumpkin	Pumkin	Pumkin	Pumkin	Pumpkin	Pumpkin	
Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucumber		
Ash Gourd	A. Gourd	A. Gourd	A. Gourd	A. Gourd		
King Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly
Chilly	Chilly	Chilly	Chilly	Chilly	Chilly	Chilly
Jobstear	Jobstear	Jobstear	Jobstear	Jobstear	Jobstear	
Cowpea						
Millet	Millet	Millet	Millet	Millet		
Ginger	Ginger	Ginger	Ginger	Ginger	Ginger	
Prinjal	Prinjal	Prinjal		Prinjal	Prinjal	Prinjal

4 Remove the negative perception of shifting cultivation and accountability fixed on shifting cultivators for loss of forest and increasing climate change. Instead, invest in adaptive research and extension to document and scientifically validate traditional shifting cultivation practices.

5. Provide formal recognition of the innovative practices associated with shifting cultivators in terms of biodiversity conservation, ecological enhancement and social benefits.

6. Fallow land should be recognized as forest on agricultural land. This is particularly significant in the light of the present misconception that shifting cultivation is considered to be taking place on forest land, whereas in reality fallow forest is an integral part of the system; it cannot be allocated for other purposes like permanent afforestation, wasteland development, protected forest and resettlement programmes.

7. Gender equity needs to be addressed where equal opportunities are provided in terms of representation and in consideration of gender specific roles involved in shifting cultivation.

	July Marang	August Phai	September Pi	October Tatraha	November Ngaphei	December Khayon
				Rice	Rice	Rice
	Maize	Maize				
			S. Maize	S. Maize		
					Yam	Yam
					Soybean	Soybean
					Rice Bean	Rice Bean
		Pumpkin	Pumpkin	Pumpkin	Pumpkin	Pumpkin
		Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucumber
		A.Gourd	A.Gourd	A.Gourd	A.Gourd	A.Gourd
Chilly		K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly	K. Chilly
		Chilly	Chilly	Chilly	Chilly	Chilly
					Jobstear	Jobstear
			Cowpea	Cowpea	Cowpea	
				Millet	Millet	Millet
						Ginger
			Prinjal	Prinjal	Prinjal	Prinjal

Bitter Tomato	B.Tomato	B.Tomato		B.Tomato	B.Tomato	B.Tomato
Bitter Gourd						
Ladysfinger						
Green Gourd						
Naga Onion	N.Onion	N.Onion	N.Onion			
Yongpa	Yongpa	Yongpa	Yongpa	Yongpa		
HOME GARDEN						
Perkia	Perkia	Perkia	Perkia			
Squash	Squash	Squash	Squash			Squash
Namrei					Namrei	Namrei
Namra			Namra	Namra	Namra	
Master Leave	M. Leave	M.Leave				
LIVESTOCK						
Piggery						
Through Out The Year In Almost All The Household , More For Income Except During Festival For Meat						
Poultry		Chicken		Chicken	Chicken	
Dairy						
FALLOW FOREST						
Meat From Small Game	Meat	Meat	Meat			
Wasp						
Honey				Honey	Honey	
Ants				Ants	Ants	Ants
Insect Larvae		Larvae	Larvae			
Bamboo Shoot						B.Shoot
Mushroom					M.Room	Mroom
Angguyee					Angguyee	Angguyee
Solo Ann					Soloann	Soloann
Ratha Ann					Ratha	
Aza Ann					Aza Ann	Aza Ann
Hannah Han			Hannah	Hannah	Hannah	
Kongreihan			Kongrei	Kongrei	Kongrei	
Anjee Ann				Anjee	Anjee	Anjee
Phantong Ann			Phantong	Phantong	Phantong	
RIVER						
Fish	Fish	Fish	Fish	Fish	Fish	Fish
Snail			Snail	Snail	Snail	
Prawn			Prawn	Prawn	Prawn	
Crab				Crab	Crab	
Frog					Frog	Frog
Toad			Toad	Toad	Toad	
Beetles	Beetles					
Larvae			Larvae	Larvae	Larvae	

ato		B.Tomato	B.Tomato	B.Tomato	B.Tomato	B.Tomato
		B.Gourd	B.Gourd	B.Gourd	B.Gourd	B.Gourd
		L.Finger	L.Finger	L.Finger		
		G.Gourd	G.Gourd	G.Guard		
			N.Onion	N.Onion	N.Onion	N.Onion
		Yongpa	Yongpa	Yongpa	Yongpa	Yongpa
					Perkia	Perkia
1	Squash	Squash	Squash	Squash	Squash	Squash
ci	Namrei	Namrei				
						M.Leave
				Chicken		
		Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat	Meat
			Wasp	Wasp		
				Honey	Honey	
	Ants					
				Larvae	Larvae	Larvae
ot	B.Shoot	B.Shoot				
n	Mroom	Mroom	Mroom	Mroom		
tyee						
in						
nn	Azaann	Aza Ann				
			Hannah	Hannah		
	Anjee					
				Fish	Fish	Fish
			Crab	Crab		
			Toad	Toad		
						Beetles



Photoby Dr Christian Erni, IWCLA

Transmitting indigenous knowledge on traditional livelihoods to younger generations in Malaysia

by Anne Lasimbang

Indigenous Peoples: an overview

Malaysia is made up of three regions namely the Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak. Sabah and Sarawak are located on the island of Borneo while the Peninsular is on the mainland between Thailand and Singapore. (Refer to Map 1)

Map 1 showing location of the 3 regions of Malaysia



Malaysia has a total population of about 28.6 million, of which indigenous peoples account for 12 percent or 3.4 million. The majority of indigenous peoples are found in the Borneo regions of Sarawak and Sabah, with a small number in the region of Peninsular Malaysia (refer to Table 1 below).

Table 1. Estimated indigenous peoples population of Malaysia, 2005

Region	No. of Ethnic Groups	Population
1. Peninsular Malaysia	18 ethnic subgroups	147,412
2. Sarawak (Borneo – East Malaysia)	25 ethnic subgroups	1,852,766
3. Sabah (Borneo – East Malaysia)	39 ethnic subgroups	1,441,237
Total population		3,441,415
Percentage to the total population of Malaysia (28.6 million)		12%

Source: Statistics Dept 2005

There are over 60 different indigenous groups in Malaysia, each with their unique and diverse language and culture, although they all share the common feature of traditionally having close ties to land and natural resources and living all aspects of life according to adat (customary law). Table 2 lists the major indigenous groupings in Malaysia.

Table 2. Major indigenous groupings in Malaysia

Area	Major Ethnic Groupings
Peninsular	Semai, Jakun, Temuan, Temiar, Semelai, Jah Hut
Sarawak	Iban, Penan, Bidayuh, Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah
Sabah	Kadazandusun, Murut, Bajau, Rungus, Orang Sungai, Lundayeh

The indigenous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia are also known as Orang Asli. They number about 147,412 representing a mere 0.5 percent of the national population. Anthropologists and government officials have traditionally regarded the Orang Asli as consisting of three main groups comprising 181 distinct tribes or subgroups according to their different languages and customs. The Senoi are the largest of the three major groups constituting 54 percent of the Orang Asli population, followed by the Proto-Malays at 43 percent and the Negrito (Semang), the smallest at 3 percent. The Negrutos are usually found in the northern region of the peninsular, the Senois in the central region, and the Proto-Malays in the southern region.

Table 3. Orang Asli population as of December 2003

Negrito	Senoi	Proto-Malay
Bateq (1,255)	Chewong (664)	Jakun (27,448)
Jahai (1,843)	Jah Hut (5,104)	Orang Kanaq (83)
Kensiu (232)	Mah Meri (2,986)	Orang Kuala (4,067)
Kintaq (350)	Semai (43,892)	Orang Seletar (1,407)
Lanoh (173)	Semaq Beri (3,545)	Semelai (6,418)

Mendriq (164)	Temiar(25,725)	Temuan (22,162)
Total 4,001	81,826	61, 585

Source: www.coac.org.my

In Sarawak, the indigenous peoples are collectively called Orang Ulu or Dayak, comprising approximately 28 ethnic groups, which include the Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Kayan, Kedayan, Murut, Punan, Bisayah, Kelabit, Berawan and Penan. They constitute around half of Sarawak's population of 2.3 million (See Table 4). Most of them live in longhouse settlements housing 20-100 families along the huge rivers, such as the Rajang, Baram, Keluan and Limbang. They fish in the rivers and grow fruit and rice, practicing rotational cultivation and supplementing their diet through hunting and gathering forest produce in their customary forest around the longhouses. A small number of the Penan community still lead a nomadic life, hunting and gathering, while the rest of the community has now either settled or is partially settled. The rural indigenous communities depend on the river for their drinking water, food, washing and transportation.

Table 4. 2006 Sarawak Census

Ethnic Group	Number	% of Population
Iban	681, 300	28.9
Chinese	601, 162	25.5
Malay	524, 365	22
Bidayuh	141, 450	6
Kelabit, Kayan, etc	188, 600	8
Melanaus	130, 800	5.5
Non-Malaysian	86, 700	3.7
Non-Sarawakian Malaysian	9, 300	0.4
Total	2, 363,677	

Source: "Housing Census of Malaysia, 2000," Department of Statistics, Malaysia

The 39 different indigenous ethnic groups in Sabah are called natives or Anak Negeri, and make up around 60 percent of the 2.4 million population of the state. The main groups are Dusun/Kadazan, Murut, Bajau, Rungus, Orang Sungai and Lundayeh.

The largest ethnic group is the Dusun/Kadazan, which comprise about one-third of the population. They are traditionally farmers practising wet rice or hill rice cultivation with some hunting and riverine fishing. The various subgroups within the Dusun/Kadazan group, which include the Kadazan of Penampang and Papar, the Lotud, the Rungus and other subgroups from the Tempasuk, Tambu-

nan, Ranau and other districts, share a common belief system with variations in customs and practice. This ethnic group uses the Kadazandusun language as their mother tongue.

Table 5: 2000 population of Sabah

Ethnic Group	Number	% of Population
KadazanDusun (Rungus, Lotud	427, 556	17.2
Murut	79, 266	3.3
Bajau	297, 846	12.4
Malays	252, 210	10.5
Chinese	316, 800	13.2
Other Bumiputra	326, 672	13.6
Others	115, 200	4.8
Non-Malaysian	513, 600	25.0
Total	2, 402, 000	

Source: "Housing Census of Malaysia, 2000," Department of Statistics, Malaysia

In Sarawak and Sabah, laws introduced by the British during colonial rule recognizing the customary land rights and customary law of the indigenous peoples are still in place. However, they are not rigorously implemented, and some are even ignored outright by the government, which has tended to give priority to private companies over the rights and interests of the indigenous communities for large-scale resource extraction and monocrop agriculture.

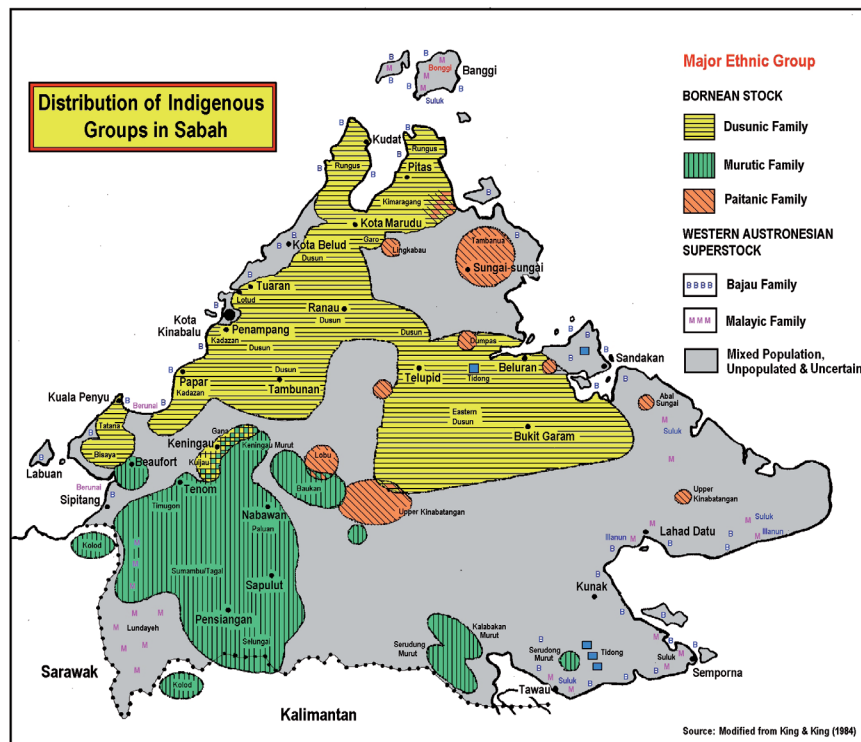
Rungus and Kadazandusun: reviving traditional livelihoods

The traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples in Malaysia are hunting and gathering, small scale subsistence farming, making crafts, rituals and healing. While some indigenous peoples still maintain their traditional way of life, many others have gone into public life as white and blue collar workers, businessmen, civil servants and politicians. For those who have retained their traditional way of life, they face many challenges due to dwindling and degraded natural resources, and in addition many areas have been declared as protected areas. Traditional livelihoods like hunting and gathering have thus been on the decline. Other traditional livelihoods such as craft making that require natural materials are also affected by this development. However, new livelihoods have emerged due to ecotourism, such as jungle trekking guides that require traditional knowledge. Other traditional livelihoods have been revived, among these craft making and traditional healing as an alternative to western medicine.

This section presents the results of case studies on traditional livelihoods in

two selected indigenous communities in Sabah, formerly known as North Borneo before its independence through Malaysia. These are bead making and weaving by the Rungus community in Pitas and traditional herbal healing by the Kadazandusun in Penampang.

Map 2 Distribution of indigenous groups in Sabah



Bead making and weaving by Rungus Community in Pitas

The Rungus ethnic group resides primarily in the northern part of Sabah in the area surrounding Kudat and Pitas. They have a distinctive language, dress, architecture, customs and oral literature. The Rungus people are well known for their beautiful and delicate beadwork and weaving, which distinguish them from other ethnic groups in Sabah. Beadwork and weaving are done by the women folk and sold as valuable ceremonial clothes. Beads and woven clothes are worn both by men and women of the Rungus community. The more simple beads are known as litai mainly used as a daily adornment while the ceremonial pinakol is a broad band of innumerable beads. Two pinakol are worn diagonally over the shoulders. The patterns tell of ancient stories, and it takes much patience, sometimes an entire

month, and skill to complete a set of pinakol, which usually sells for around RM 350 in the market.

Weaving is done using belt looms consisting of several designs. A variety of clothing with ritually significant patterns including skirt, male jackets, female blouses and male trousers are normally done by weavers. In the olden days, skilled weavers achieved a higher status, and weaving skills were closely associated with the role of the priestess and the spiritual medium.

The PACOS Trust started working in Kg. Liu Pitas in 1996 when it selected this village as its field training area for its community organizing training programme. During that time the whole district of Pitas was one of the poorest districts in Sabah. The Bengkoka Peninsular, where Pitas is located, is a degraded area due to extensive logging that was later taken over by the government for a monocrop tree plantation of *Acacia Mangium*, resulting in the loss of customary territories in Kg. Liu.

After seven years of community organizing in this village, the villagers were able to start a community learning centre to teach their preschool aged children early literacy in preparation for entering the government primary school. Through this centre the leadership of the women in this village as well as eight neighbouring villages was built. They formed a group to look at other needs of the community that could be addressed, and identified as top priorities were land tenure, access to clean water, food security and strengthening their socio-economic activities.

The women also came up with the idea of using the learning centre as a place to learn traditional knowledge on beading and weaving because this knowledge was fast disappearing in Liu. In 2007 at the time when the women started their classes, there were only two elders who had this knowledge. Six women enrolled themselves in the beading and weaving classes, starting with simple patterns and slowly progressing towards more difficult ones. Cotton, a source of thread, was also cultivated, adding to the biodiversity of the area. During their training, the group had opportunities to go on exposure and exchange visits organized by PACOS. Five women graduated from the one-year course, and their works were exhibited at the community learning centre.

With the completion of the classes, the villagers were very proud to have a new group of younger women who have the knowledge of beading and weaving. They continued producing their beads and some of these have been sold to visitors to the learning centre.

“We almost lost our knowledge on traditional weaving but through the weaving lessons at the community learning centre, we have regained that knowledge.

We will ensure that this knowledge will not be lost” spoken by the women of

kg. Liu Pitas, Sabah, Malaysia.

Herbal Healing by Kadazandusun Community in Penampang

The Kadazandusun live on the west coast as well as in the interior of Sabah. They form the largest ethnic group in Sabah and are predominantly wet rice and hill rice cultivators. Their language belongs to the Dusunic family and they share a common animistic belief system with various customs and practices. Their ancient beliefs are that everything has life such as the rocks, trees and rivers. (Refer to Map 2)

The Kadazandusun community of Penampang has a vast knowledge of herbal medicine. Herbal knowledge has saved the community from extinction due to sickness and disease before the advent of modern medicine. This knowledge had been passed down from generation to generation, and healers have in the past received payment for curing illness and righting ritual imbalance. However, due to the opening of land as a result of modern development and the influence of religions, much of this knowledge is fast disappearing.



Photo by Ms Anne Lasimbang, PACOS

Penampang is also located just outside of Kota Kinabalu, therefore the pace of development is also very rapid, especially the opening of land for agriculture and housing. This has resulted in less forest area and wilderness where herbal plants used to grow abundantly. Further, the use of modern medicine is increasing, with a government clinic and general hospital located not very far from their village. Young people in the village have been spending less time with their elders as they need to be in school for long periods.

In March 2000, with some funding support from the GEF Small Grants Programme, the Kipouvo Community Herbal Garden was launched as a pilot project and a showcase of indigenous herbal medicine. Located within the village, the Herbal Garden is about eight kilometers from the town of Donggongon or a mere 15-minute ride away. This garden was established with the cooperation and support from the community who identified an area in their village that had the most number of herbal plants growing in one place. They established a village herbal group and contributed through community labour in cleaning, beautifying and making the garden a cheerful place.

In line with the mission of the initiators, the Herbal Garden was set up because the security of the forest is threatened. With its existence, useful plants can therefore be protected from extinction. The Garden has in total 48 identified types of herbs and has an herbal specialist supported by the Kipouvo Community Village Herbal Group. Various activities were implemented to educate the younger generations on the importance and the usage of traditional herbal medicine. The Garden was also used to run Science and Geography classes and attracted many visitors interested in herbal medicine.

The Village Herbal Group hopes that the Herbal Garden will be able to educate the children especially on indigenous knowledge and on the importance of the forest. It will facilitate the learning system for children on types of plants or herbs that are useful and broaden the knowledge on special herbs in our daily lives.

“Our traditional knowledge on herbal medicine had kept us alive for generations, we must ensure that that we do not forget it” spoken by Madam Poroi, medicine woman from Kipouvo Village.

Good practices and lessons learned

The two case studies above show the efforts by grassroots communities to address the loss of traditional knowledge on livelihood. If the knowledge is still intact, there are teachers who are willing to pass it on, and its transmission is possible if there are learners willing to learn and use it. These cases demonstrate that the projects to revive beadwork, weaving and herbal medicine are good practices and show the way through a number of lessons learnt:

1. Community empowerment

In the two case studies, a people's organization was set up in each area to manage resources and to ensure participation from all levels of the community. These community organizations or groups played an important role in motivating and mobilising the villagers, and in facilitating the implementation of the activity. The transfer of traditional knowledge was an entry point to organize the community to

come together and act on something that they felt important to the community. Synergies were achieved when people united and worked under the umbrella of the people's organizations. Centralised activities and gathering organized for the various communities created solidarity. These occasions for interaction among the communities enabled the sharing of knowledge on different projects. Subsequently, this created for the communities a vast pool of ideas and provided new learning processes beyond what the project expected. As a result, communities became more open to learning from each other, enhancing the cooperation levels between leaders and their communities.

Community empowerment through training and exposure in both case studies was important to ensure the activities would be sustained. For instance, Kg. Kipouvo villagers continued their activities even without funding. They used the medicine garden to teach young children as well as to showcase to visitors the biodiversity and importance of herbal plants to the community. In addition, cooperation among residents in the village also grew, as shown through activities such as gotong royong (community labour).

2. Ecotourism activities

Ecotourism development has spawned new interest in a village's natural attractions, culture and traditional knowledge and opened a market niche for traditional crafts and culture. This has helped create pride and interest in indigenous communities to revive their traditional knowledge as well as to see the value of environment conservation.

3. Available Organisation(s) willing to network and link up communities

The interest to transfer traditional knowledge is strong if there is motivation to do it. And one such reason for the villagers is the knowledge that others are interested in their knowledge and that it can be a source of income for them. The two villages in the case studies did not have many contacts with outsiders but organizations like PACOS and LEAP (Land Empowerment and People) were able to assist them to network and link with outsiders. These organizations brought in visitors to the two villages and marketed their products.

4. Role of women in passing on traditional knowledge

Gender awareness and the involvement of women as project leaders were considered some of the key success factors for the two community projects. Women are the knowledge keepers especially of traditional herbal medicines. With this in mind, women were elected into village working committees to implement the activities. When women held important posts in the village working committees, they made sure that the activities were managed well. The project provided opportunities for building the capacity of women at the grassroots. Although they were

shy and lacked confidence in the beginning, given support and encouragement, they were willing to get involved and were committed to the activities. They were motivated by the benefits to their community, family and self.

5. Rights

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) has given new perspectives to the communities' effort in promoting and protecting their indigenous knowledge. The UNDRIP articles especially 2, 13, 20, 27, 31, 32 and the International Labour Organization Convention 169, which reiterates the right of indigenous communities to maintain, protect and practice all elements related to their conception of economic development and recognizes the importance of community-based subsistence economies and traditional activities, has given communities encouragement and a way forward.

Key issues and challenges

Challenges and issues remain in transmitting traditional knowledge on traditional livelihood to the younger generations in Malaysia. Among these are the following:

- The education system of Malaysia does not allow for traditional knowledge and skills to be taught in the formal system. It also limits the interaction between elders who hold the knowledge and the youth. Most of the youth have to reside in residential schools during their secondary education as schools are located in cities or towns far from their villages.
- There is a communication gap between younger and older generations because learning the indigenous language is seen as unimportant and unable to bring any economic benefit even if language is an essential part of culture as it embodies many indigenous values and concepts. Non-recognition of indigenous languages and the introduction of mainstream language as the national or official language and medium of instruction and interaction in the government education system have resulted in this communication gap between the generations.
- The younger generations have difficulty in seeing the importance of applying the traditional ways or the inheritance of traditional knowledge in their life, such as traditional medicine and the traditional crafts. These two things have their own respective influence in application by society at the present time.
- Inter-generational transfers of knowledge are dwindling. Indigenous peoples are losing knowledge especially on traditional health systems and health practices involving midwives, herbalists, shamans and masseurs because

these are hardly recognized by the state. As a result they are looked down by society and not many young people want to be associated with them.

- Tying traditional knowledge to the cash economy or its commercial value has also impacted on attitudes towards transmission of this kind of knowledge. Some traditional knowledge related to livelihood cannot be measured by money alone and once lost will never be recovered.
- Cohesiveness of many communities is on the decline, with many of them being more inclined towards nuclear families. Their employment does not allow more time for community interaction as more time needs to be spent in their place of work.
- Much of indigenous peoples' knowledge and livelihood is closely linked to the natural resources around them. The loss of indigenous territories -- land, forest, water -- due to various factors as mentioned earlier is a major hurdle for indigenous communities in their effort to keep their knowledge and livelihoods intact.

Recommendations

Considering the above, the following recommendations are made:

- Organise awareness programs among the youth and stress the importance of traditional knowledge to attract them to explore and learn traditional things.
- Use the new media and social networks such as Facebook and You Tube in awareness programs and transmission of knowledge.
- Conduct activities like dialogues to determine the best driving force or motivation in young people to acquire traditional knowledge.
- Organise cultural camps where young people have the opportunity to learn the knowledge of elders.
- Introduce traditional knowledge as part of the formal curriculum in college or university.
- Set up community learning centres where elders can serve as resource persons in a more organized manner to pass traditional knowledge to young people.

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Photo by Ms. Robeliza Halip

Roles of indigenous women in traditional livelihoods in the Philippines

By Jill K. Cariño

Overview: indigenous peoples

The Philippines is rich in biodiversity and is a culturally diverse nation. Of its 76.5 million population (2000 census), about 18 percent or 14-17 million are indigenous peoples who belong to nearly 110 ethnolinguistic groups. The indigenous peoples are mainly found in Northern Luzon (Cordillera Administrative Region or CAR, Cagayan Valley, Region 2), Central and Southern Luzon (Bicol and Palawan areas), and Mindanao and Visayas. The biggest concentrations of indigenous peoples are in Mindanao (61%) and in the Cordillera Administrative Region (33%).¹

The major groups of indigenous peoples in the Philippines are:

Igorot - the generic and collective term for the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera mountain range in northern Luzon

Lumad - a generic term used by others to refer to the indigenous peoples of Mindanao, who make up the largest number of indigenous peoples in the country

Mangyan - a generic term for the indigenous peoples of the island of Mindoro and Sibuyan island.

Negrito - a generic term for indigenous peoples with distinct physical features – short, dark skin, curly hair – living in different regions of the Philippines from north to south. Around 30 groups of Negrito have been identified.

Other smaller groupings of indigenous peoples are the *Bugkalot* or *Ilongot*, *Ibanag*, *Gaddang*, *Ikalahan* and *Isinai* in the Caraballo Mountains of Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Nueva Ecija; the *Remontado* of Rizal, Quezon, Negros and Sibuyan; and the *Tumanduk* of Panay. (IWGIA 2008: 427-432; ADB 2002: 7-8; Tebtebba 2004)

Having resisted Spanish, American and Japanese colonization, indigenous peoples in the Philippines have generally maintained their indigenous belief systems, worldviews and ways of life while the Filipino majority was assimilated into the

¹ Statistical data on indigenous peoples are not available. This figure is based on the 1993 census which included an ethnographic component, computed with an estimated population growth of 2.54%.

socio-cultural, economic and political system instituted by the colonizers. Until now, many indigenous peoples still occupy their ancestral domains throughout the archipelago, observing customary laws and ways of life that are in varying degrees of persistence and disintegration.

Legally the 1987 Constitution marked a departure from the State's historical attitude towards indigenous peoples - from attempting to integrate and assimilate them to 'recognition' of their rights, including those to their ancestral domain, traditional indigenous institutions and practices. Furthermore, it called for legislation providing for the applicability of their customary laws.² The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) was enacted in 1997 specifically to give effect to this recognition.

However, indigenous peoples remain one of the poorest, under-represented and marginalized sectors in the country. The human development indices for the Philippines are the lowest in those regions and provinces where there are dominant or large populations of indigenous peoples.³

The IPRA requires that the Government adopt measures to uphold indigenous peoples' rights in the economic, political and social spheres of life. In practice these measures are not taken. A 2003 study by the International Labor Organization and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) found that only three government agencies had projects specifically targeted at indigenous peoples. A similar finding emerged from a 2007 study, which found that of 99 projects purportedly designated for indigenous peoples conducted by various government agencies, only 8 percent were in practice specifically targeted at them.⁴

Socio-political and economic conditions

Social services are generally under-funded in the Philippines as a result of inadequate budgetary provision.⁵ The 2008 budget shows that regions with highest concentrations of indigenous peoples get the least budgetary allocations from the national Government (CAR – 1.22%; CARAGA – 1.38%; Region IX – 1.58%).⁶

2 1987 Constitution of the Philippines Article XIV, Section 17

3 Human Development Report 2004: 29. It is difficult to accurately estimate this in the Philippines owing to the absence of disaggregated data.

4 Initial Assessment of the Extent and Impact of the Implementation of IPRA', 2007, The Legal Assistance Centre for Indigenous Peoples (PANLIPI) p63

5 Cited from the position paper submitted by IBON Foundation to the Philippine Supreme Court's Forum on Increasing Access to Justice: Bridging Gaps, Removing Roadblocks (June 30-July 1, 2008)

6 2008 Department of Budget and Management Budget of Expenditure and Sourcing of Finance (DBM BESF)

As a result of this, social service provision in indigenous territories is far below that of the rest of the country. As noted in the Government report,

“In a rapid field assessment conducted by the UNICEF-Philippines together with the NCIP on the situation of IP [indigenous peoples] children, youth and women in 17 provinces nationwide, it was found out that basic services do not normally reach the IP communities since they lack representation in governance, specifically at the local legislative councils and other policy-making bodies where they can represent the needs, problems, and aspirations of IPs/ICCs [indigenous cultural communities]. This right to equitable representation in governance has been neglected despite the provisions in the Local Government Code of 1991 and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 addressing this concern.”⁷

The grossly inadequate funding of the Local Government Units in areas populated by indigenous peoples is compounded by the fact that many of these areas tend to be remote with low population densities which require special measures to address the physical access and cultural appropriateness aspects of service delivery. There is also a lack of adequate interface with and respect for traditional institutions by local government units. Illustrative of this is that the requirement for Indigenous Peoples’ Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans to be incorporated into local government plans is not being realized.

Economic Activities

Indigenous peoples’ communities are found in the forests, mountains, lowlands and coastal areas of the country and are in varied levels of socio-economic development. They are engaged in a mix of production systems including swidden farming in mountain slopes, settled or sedentary agriculture of rice, corn and vegetables, hunting and gathering in forests, livestock raising, fishing along coastal areas and rivers, and production and trade in local handicrafts.

Some indigenous peoples like the Dumagats of Quezon and Aetas of Zambales have retained their nomadic way of life, hunting and gathering in the forest, while also engaging in swidden agriculture at the marginal to subsistence level. Others like the Igorots in the Cordillera and many of the other indigenous peoples in the country are also now engaged in a mix of off-farm and non-farm activities, such as handicrafts production, small-scale mining, construction work, service and other occasional/seasonal labor.

⁷ NCIP Organizational Performance Indicator Framework National Commission on Indigenous Peoples p13

Agricultural production and other economic activities in the community are generally not sufficient to meet the needs of indigenous communities for the whole year. Even if they have surplus products to sell in the market, they do not get much cash due to very low buying price of their products. Those in the interior areas are thus forced to seek employment outside their village to earn some cash for their basic needs.

Many indigenous peoples engage in cash-generating activities such as small business and trading of local products to augment their farm produce and meet their basic needs. A few are employed in government or private institutions and earn a regular salary. Some cash income also comes in the form of pension from insurance institutions. Others are dependent on remittances of family members who are regularly employed in urban centers or abroad.

Outmigration from the interior villages to the nearest town centers and cities has noticeably increased in recent times. The men usually take jobs as construction workers, farmhands in plantations and other big farms, drivers and miners. The women work as domestic helpers, market vendors, weavers or other odd jobs such as harvesting, packing vegetables, hauling gravel and sand, fetching water and others. Employment is usually on a seasonal basis.

Many indigenous women are migrating overseas to become contract workers or domestic helpers due to the lack of livelihood opportunities in the country and the poverty they experience in their communities.

These outside influences have caused changes in the economic systems of the indigenous peoples. We can generally say that today, most of the indigenous peoples are engaged in subsistence agriculture but, by necessity of survival, are increasingly being integrated into the wider market economy in the whole country.

Indigenous women and traditional livelihood activities

Traditional subsistence agriculture

Indigenous women in the Philippines are very much a part of the traditional subsistence agriculture in their communities and play a major and critical role in traditional agricultural production. They do most of the work in the farms apart from clearing the fields before cultivation.

In the Cordillera region, the indigenous peoples engage in upland wet-rice cultivation in rice terraces constructed along the steep mountainsides, augmented by swidden farming of rice, vegetables and other crops. In Mindanao the indigenous peoples are largely engaged in swidden farming. The following describe some

indigenous communities and the livelihood activities traditionally engaged in by women.

Tulgao: Wet-rice and swidden farming⁸

Tulgao is located in Tinglayan municipality in Kalinga province in the Cordillera. Rice is the primary crop planted in wet cultivated terraces. The construction, development and cultivation of rice fields is a labor-intensive process and is generally the task of the men in the community. With only a few hand tools for clearing, cutting and digging, it takes about 2-3 years to build a single rice field until it becomes productive. First, the land is cleared of brush and other vegetation, then dug and leveled to the required size. Stones are carried from the river and stacked and arranged in hillsides to build the terraces and along irrigation canals. Women help by carrying black soil to spread on the fields.

Organic farming is the traditional practice without application of chemical fertilizers. The farmers leave the rice fields to fallow for several months to allow regeneration of soil nutrients before planting starts. Also, traditional varieties of rice have been noted to have stronger resistance to pests.

Women are involved in each stage of the production cycle from plowing and cleaning to transplanting, weeding, cleaning, harvesting and drying of the rice. Women regularly tend the rice fields, cleaning and weeding them. They also spend many hours maintaining irrigation canals and the regular repair of terraced slopes of rice fields. Harvesting usually involves men, women and even children. Before the harvest, a woman first selects 10 rice stalks that she wraps in a woven blanket (*lingliwen*) to be stored in the rice granary (*agamang*) for use as seeds for the next planting season. After this, everyone follows to do the harvesting work.

Another task of the women is the daily pounding and winnowing of rice for household consumption, which is an all-season activity. On the average, women, and sometimes children, spend about an hour a day pounding rice to produce a *ganta* (2.5 kg) of milled rice ready to cook.

Swidden farms (*uma*) provide a secondary source of food and income for most households in Tulgao. Planted are legumes, native cabbage, tobacco, sugar cane. Swidden farming is done by both men and women, although women play greater roles in the production of legumes and vegetables -- clearing, burning, final cleaning, sowing, weeding, harvesting, drying, winnowing/pounding/cleaning of the produce and marketing. Since women are the planters, they are also the seed collectors. Seeds for the next crop are selected during harvesting and drying. These

⁸ SIBAT, The Role of Indigenous Women in Traditional Agriculture in the Philippines, Women's Wisdom, PAN-AP, 2005

seeds are sorted out and sun-dried and then stored in tin cans, bottles or dried squash (*kafoy*).

Rituals are performed at various stages of the production cycle to seek the blessing of Kabunyan for a bountiful harvest, usually performed by a male elder, with women in a supportive role. The women usually do the initial planting in the first rice field to be transplanted with seedlings (*lafu*), which signals the beginning of the planting season.

Aduyungan: Wet-rice, swidden farming and cooperative labor systems⁹

Aduyungan is a barangay in the municipality of Mayaoyao in Ifugao. There are four types of plots in the village: *muyong* (woodlot) for firewood and fruit trees, *payao* (rice fields) where rice is grown in the rainy season and vegetables in the dry months; *uma* (swidden farms) for sweet potatoes and corn; and *latangan* (house lots). The farms are mainly rain-fed while potable water comes from natural water sources such as rivers, streams, creeks and springs.

Wet-rice and swidden farming are the primary activities in Aduyungan. Rice, camote (sweet potato), corn and beans are the main products, which also serve as the staple food of the community. In many upland areas of Ifugao province, rice grown in irrigated rice fields lasts for only four months. In the remaining eight lean months, corn and camote serve as the staple and beans augment the food when available or when corn and camote are in short supply.

Though men and women are involved in farming, women are considered the principal agricultural producers in Aduyungan because they are involved in practically all stages of farming, including land preparation, in both wet-rice and swidden farming.

Two systems of cooperative and exchange labor are followed in Aduyungan: the *ub-ubbu* practiced throughout the farming season and the *baddang* done during harvest. In the *ub-ubbu*, which is a form of labor exchange used for both rice and camote growing, a group of villagers agree to work together in each other's farms for easier and faster work. They set procedures on the sequence of work and the length of time to be exchanged. Besides speeding up farm work, this system allows women to attend to domestic chores and other household work. *Ub-ubbu* is commonly practiced during planting, weeding and cleaning.

Baddang, which literally means support, is both a ritual and a form of community cooperation during the harvest season. It is usually held to signify that an

9 SIBAT, *The Role of Indigenous Women in Traditional Agriculture in the Philippines, Women's Wisdom*, PAN-AP, 2005

inherited rice field is passed on to the next heir. On the day of the baddang, the in-laws, relatives, neighbors and friends of the heir go to the rice field and help harvest the rice. A feast follows the harvest, with rice wine and pork served to all participants. The end of the baddang signals the transfer of ownership of the rice field.

Subanen: Corn production and animal-raising¹⁰

The Subanen is the biggest of the 18 indigenous Lumad groups in Mindanao. Subanen communities are in varying degrees of assimilation into the dominant mainstream society. Traditional practices are slowly losing their significance for the people. With the land and its people barely surviving, so also are their traditional practices.

Most Subanen communities live on subsistence farming, primarily upland swidden cultivation. Corn is their major and staple crop while cassava, sweet potato, vegetables and fruits are grown on a limited scale as supplementary crops. The produce from this rain-fed farming, however, is insufficient to meet even the basic food requirements of most families.

Corn production takes up much of the communities' time and effort but has limited yield. It demands the participation of both men and women, even children, in all phases. Both men and women take part in land preparation, the most labor-intensive phase, as well as in sowing and weeding. Rain is an important consideration for sowing the corn, which usually starts in April or May when the first rains are expected to fall. Seeds are selected from the middle portion of the stored cobs, and traditionally it is the women who select and store the seeds. Cleaning the cornfields of weeds and other unwanted vegetation helps ensure a good harvest while discouraging pests from attacking the young corn.

Poultry, pigs and goats are raised to provide meat to the family and to augment family income and for performance of rituals. Women play a significant role in backyard gardening, livestock raising and selling seasonally their garden products and livestock.

Erumanen ne Menuvu and food security:¹¹

Traditionally, Erumanen ne Menuvu women have a major responsibility as home managers and caretakers of the children and husband. Most of them are

10 SIBAT, *The Role of Indigenous Women in Traditional Agriculture in the Philippines, Women's Wisdom*, PAN-AP, 2005

11 Jeanyline Megrino, SCC-CEREA. *The Role of Erumanen ne Menuvu Women in Ensuring Food Security. Harvest in Peril*, EED-TFIP 2004

confined to doing household chores, but this is not a fixed role as women sometimes take over men's work when they are out of the home farming or in town.

Erumanen ne Menuvu women have maintained their traditional ways of ensuring food security. They gather and produce food and earn an income to purchase it. When food is short during the dry season, they go to the forest and gather wild vegetables and kayos. Kayos is toxic when not processed well so they ensure that it is prepared and cooked properly for their families. Women are also skilled in weaving bags, plates, mats and decors out of nito grass and leaves of the romblon or buli tree; they sell these to augment the family income and to prevent hunger. They raise chickens, pigs, goats and cows which they sell in times of food shortage to have cash with which to buy their basic food needs. Chickens are intended for family consumption when there is no other food available.

Some Erumanen ne Menuvu women try to conserve indigenous seeds in the way their ancestors taught them. They store the seeds in sacks and keep these in their houses. Bundles of seeds, particularly of corn, are hung above the hearth in each household. The people believe that indigenous seeds are better because they can be planted and replanted without degenerating and do not require synthetic fertilizers.

B'laan Community and Seed Keeping¹²

Farming is the main source of income in the B'laan community of Datal Nay in Sarangani province. Farmers engage in settled traditional agriculture on slopes and plains, growing rice, corn, sugarcane, banana, abaca, papaya and root crops. On hillsides they practice shifting agriculture or kaingin. Farm production is done through cooperative labor (kasbakas), in which community members go around and work in the individual farms of members. Crop production is mainly for food and household subsistence and partly for cash. The community experiences three to four lean months each year, so households plant root crops, such as cassava and sweet potato, to tide them over during this time. The farmers also sell farm produce for cash to buy basic necessities, such as salt and rice. Chickens and pigs are raised both for food and cash.

Traditional rice varieties collected in 2006 numbered 100, with 60 of these being actually planted. Women farmers retain the ability to identify and characterize the different rice varieties through their uses (eaten for hunting forays, ceremonies, among others) and their features (maturity, sticky, aromatic, tall, taste, among others).

12 SIBAT, Seed Keepers: B'laan Women and Indigenous Knowledge in Traditional Crop Production. Promoting Indigenous Knowledge for Food Security. EED-TFIP 2009

The women's significance as seed keeper is acknowledged in the ritual of planting the very first seed. After a landowner digs with a wooden pole around the altar (botni) set up in the middle of the farm to make offering to the spirits, his wife or a woman first plants the glutinous rice or mlikat lagfisan which is a most important variety to the B'laan. Planting the glutinous rice seed signifies the role of the B'laan woman in ensuring good seed variety for cultivation.

Everybody plants ordinary rice varieties soon after, through cooperative work -- one variety at a time. In this practice of traditional cooperation, collective planting is accompanied by melodious chanting. The husband carries a stick to dig holes in the soil, followed by the wife who plants the seeds. Other women will fall in line behind the wife to plant in the other holes. The last woman in the line will cover the seeds with soil. By tradition, a minimum of three varieties of ordinary rice are chosen by the women for each planting time. Planting more than one variety is made to ensure diversity, to control pests, and to ensure that most saved seeds are planted.

During harvest or kamto, the women are the first to enter the field before the rest of the family and the community. The conservation and selection of seeds is primarily the women's responsibility. They select at random the upper panicles of the rice plant exhibiting the following characteristics: full bodied or fully-matured and with sturdier grains. They save the seeds of plants that are most vigorous, yield highest, taste best and show least damage from pests and diseases. .

Harvested seeds are stored and planted in the next cropping season, as these maintain their highest quality for a whole year. Women manage the stored seeds and see to it that all seeds are viable. The sets of rice varieties planted in the farm are different from the set of varieties stored. Each family thus can have in their keeping a minimum of ten varieties. Selected seeds for planting are kept in their respective storage containers to secure stocks for the next planting season.

Women also do the daily pounding and winnowing of rice for the daily meals three times a day except during lean months when they have to harvest root crops more often for food. It is the women and mothers who make certain that there is food to prepare and served for mealtime.

In seed conservation, the tasks of B'laan women are tied not only to seed keeping, but to the entire process of selecting, maintaining and preserving seeds to ensure quality of food production (with good yield, resistance to pests and other problems), availability of food (with good eating quality) on the table, traditional plant-based medicine for the family, and faith in rituals and festivities that preserve the indigenous fabric of the community's life.

Tumandok of Panay¹³

The Tumandok are found in the heart of Panay island, living in the mountains where the headwaters of the island's main rivers flow. They are predominantly farmers, and their most common method of farming is kaingin (swidden). This farming system is a highly labor-intensive and climate-dependent method that requires extensive land area and demands the participation of all able hands; thus women and children work side by side with the menfolk.

Tumandok women are an essential workforce in subsistence agricultural production. Their labor is needed in all activities in the kaingin production cycle except for land preparation, which is mainly man's work. Bunglay or land preparation for secondary crops after harvest is mostly women's work. They also engage in activities for additional income such as raising swine and fowl, gathering edible river snails, mushrooms, edible ferns and other foods that grow wild.

Women also join hunting activities and receive a share of the hunt equal to that of everyone else who participated -- men, women and children. They participate in most methods of fishing, except for certain ones, which are exclusively done by men.

As active participants in production, the women take part in the community's social and political life by attending village meetings and assemblies. They are free to state their opinions in settling disputes as third party witnesses or as representatives of the parties involved. Women too act as government functionaries in barangay (village) councils.

Tumandok women serve as healers, traditional midwives, and singers or chanters of the ambahan, talda and sugidanon.

Traditional small-scale mining

Ibaloi of Itogon, Benguet¹⁴

Traditional small-scale mining has been part of the history of the Cordillera peoples since the 16th century. Both men and women engage in this economic activity, applying a crude but environment-friendly technology. In Itogon it has provided a stable source of livelihood for the indigenous peoples for generations.

There are two methods of traditional gold extraction; one is pocket mining or digging small tunnels to extract ores, and the other is gold panning in rivers. In

13 OFFERS- Panay. Tumandok. Harvest in Peril, EED-TFIP 2004

14 Women Workers Program. Women and Health in the Mining Communities of Itogon, Benguet. 1993

both, the indigenous Ibaloi and Kankanaey of Itogon devised an equitable sharing system of the proceeds. They also extract only what they need to sell for basic necessities.

Until today, traditional small-scale mining remains a major source of income for the indigenous peoples of Itogon. Pocket mining as practiced here requires a great deal of manual labor using simple and little equipment. Pocket miners first determine where to find the gold ore through sampling. If a sample shows a satisfactory amount of gold, they open a mine tunnel in the site. Using handheld hammers, pickaxes, spades and crowbars, they construct a permanent adit. Lighting their way with carbide lamps, they dig tunnels vertically and horizontally, following the ore vein. They chip off the ore and collect these in sacks, which they transport to the outside using wheel barrows.

Pocket miners usually operate in teams of five to six men or women. They mine in the tunnels for about three months, gathering the ore, which they then process on the fourth month, before returning to their tunnels to start mining again.

Processing is done by first hammering the selected ore into small stones. The ore is then milled with water into grains in a ball mill. Using flowing water, the grains are sluiced and flushed down an inclined trough lined with sackcloth. The cloth traps the heavier mineral-bearing grains, while the water carries off the lighter soil materials or tailings. The mineral particles trapped in the cloth are rinsed off, then panned in a circular metal dish. The gold is recovered by gravity separation, then collected for refining. The run-off tailings, called *linang*, is also collected so that whatever mineral particles remain may later be retrieved from it.

The miners then refine the gold particles. The gold is treated with soda, wrapped in cellophane and cooked in a small clay dish over a steady charcoal fire. The gold melts and is allowed to harden to the shape of a small pellet, which is then sold at the going market price.

Women play an active role in the small-scale mining process. They participate in extracting the gold ore from the tunnels, in processing the ore by hammering, sluicing, panning and refining the particles. Part of the women's share in the proceeds is the *linang*, which they process further to retrieve the remaining gold content. Women have also been active in defending their land and small-scale mines from encroachment by large-scale mining companies.

Through the years, the Itogon people have developed their indigenous cultural practices and customary law governing the mining process. One of these practices is the *sagaok*, which is a system of sharing the gold in a productive tunnel with the community. Under this system, the team of miners operating the tunnel open their mine for others to extract ore for a day.

Banao of Balbalasang, Kalinga¹⁵

The discovery of gold in the mountain area of Gaang, Kalinga in the 1970s marked the beginning of small-scale mining in the territory of the Banao people. The local people learned the technology from non-Banao small-scale miners and people from Banao who had worked in the mines in Benguet province. To prevent a gold rush and to settle inter- and intra-tribal conflict regarding ownership and access to the mines, the Banao elders initiated the Banao Bodong Federation, later renamed Banao Bodong Association. The BBF resolved the issue of ownership by declaring that the Banao tribe collectively owned the gold resources within Banao ancestral territory. It formulated rules on who should have access to the mines, limiting the entry of non-Banao, at the same time performing the tribe's customary practice of sharing.

Women carry out a whole range of activities in the small-scale mining industry. In Gaang, the women's involvement in actual mining includes tasks related to ore processing such as crushing, grinding and washing and amalgamation. Aside from the indigenous knowledge involved in gold mining and processing, the Banao also absorbed the cultural beliefs and practices of the transmitting culture, such as the belief that women should not enter the tunnels as the gold will be difficult to find if women are around.

Most women work as entrepreneurs and haulers. As entrepreneurs, they manage small stores that carry foodstuffs, cigarettes and other household items. Haulers are those who carry baggage from the roadside up to the mining community, which is seven kilometers away. A few women are engaged in gold trading and have become wealthy. However, this is also a risky undertaking as gold traders are targets of robbery.

Although women do not work in the tunnels, their involvement in processing still exposes them to danger as they use mercury in the amalgamation process. It is for this reason that the Banao Bodong Association discourages women, especially pregnant and lactating mothers, from residing in Gaang.

*Traditional handicrafts: weaving*¹⁶

Loom weaving is an indigenous craft in the Cordillera that is passed on from mother to daughter. Weaving is traditionally done by women to produce skirts, belts, blankets and other items with indigenous motif and design. In recent years,

15 Geraldine Fiag-oy, Kalinga Banao Tribe: Self-determined Development in Small-Scale mining and watershed protection. Tebtebba 2010

16 Women Workers Program. The Weavers and Knitters of Baguio City and La Trinidad, Benguet, November 1994

weaving has become an important source of income for the indigenous women who have migrated from the rural areas in the Cordillera to seek employment in the urban centers of Baguio City and La Trinidad. Many indigenous women engage in weaving as a means of livelihood in response to the demand of the tourist market in Baguio City.

The women weavers are of two general types: the first type are employed as workers in a few large handicraft enterprises in the city such as Narda's Handwoven Arts and Crafts and the Easter School Weaving Room. The second type and majority of the women weavers are home-based workers who are either self-employed or are sub-contractual workers who are paid for each piece they produce by financiers, suppliers or middlemen who supply the materials and then market the products.

These home and community-based women weavers compose a large part of the City's labor force and contribute significantly to Baguio's informal economy. They are often the breadwinners in the family and their skill in weaving is an important resource in making ends meet. Their household income generally falls below the poverty line. Thus, they do not have enough money for their basic needs and resort to borrowing money when emergencies arise or to support medical, education and other expenses of the family.

The majority of weavers rely on financiers and suppliers to capitalize their weaving activities. These financiers not only provide the capital but also control the whole process of production to marketing. They also dictate the designs and prices.

However, because these women are not officially employed, they are not properly recognized by the Department of Labor and Employment, and financiers are able to get away with not providing the mandated minimum daily wage and other labor benefits. These workers are thus underpaid, denied of any benefits and are highly dependent on the financiers for their livelihood and economic survival.

For those who are able to purchase their own materials, their income is unstable and irregular due to the fact that the tourist industry is seasonal. Their income falls sharply during the off-season and they face problems of insufficient capital, lack of regular outlets for products, and rising cost of materials. They also have to cope with stiff competition from big suppliers and financiers who dictate prices for their products.

*Traditional healing*¹⁷

Traditional beliefs and healing practices form part of indigenous peoples' health care. Faced with the challenges of survival, these traditional practices are valuable to indigenous peoples as first-aid remedies, day-to-day health care and even life-saving measures. Given their efficacy and rationality, these are readily available alternatives to the inaccessible and costly conventional and western health care.

Traditional beliefs and healing practices reveal a close relationship of the indigenous peoples with their communities and their physical and spiritual environment. An imbalance within and between each of these spheres is translated into a malfunction of the physical, emotional and mental capacities or well-being of the individual, resulting to affliction (diseases, sickness or illness). These traditional practices are the indigenous peoples' way of striking a balance between such elements and maintaining the health, peace and harmony among themselves and their communities.

In the Cordillera, the women usually act as hilot or midwives, herbalists who use medicinal plants to treat illnesses, and/or priestesses who conduct healing rituals. Mambunong, mombaki, man-ated, mansip-ok are some terms used to refer to persons performing such rituals, either as healers or priests/priestesses. Sup-ok or seb-ok is the practice of consulting an elder who can see through the supernatural and the cause and remedy of the sickness. Traditional healers make use of herbal and medicinal plants from the forests to treat illnesses.

Among the B'laan, health care is a traditional role of women, related to their task of food gathering and as traditional healers and spirit communicators called almos. The latter are older women who gather herbs for curing ailments and thus have the knowledge of their kinds and uses.¹⁸

Conflict Resolution and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge

Talaandig of Sungco, Lantapan, Bukidnon¹⁹

The mothers of the Talaandig tribe in Sungco, Lantapan, Bukidnon are organized into the Mothers for Peace. They play a big role in resolving conflicts within the community and beyond, and in keeping the peace with neighboring villages

17 Erlinda Castro-Palaganas, et.al. Health Consequences of Gender-Based Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices. UP-CSC. 2004. P. 129

18 SIBAT. Seed Keepers: B'laan Women and Indigenous Knowledge in Traditional Crop Production. Promoting Indigenous Knowledge for Food Security. EED-TFIP 2009 p. 96

19 Philippine Traditional Knowledge Network, Report on Cross Visit to Lantapan, Bukidnon, 2008

and outsiders. One case is their restoration of the peace in Mapawa, a neighboring village where the people had started to evacuate because of a feud within a clan that had resulted in the death of four persons. The women put into practice the customary process in conflict resolution, which they learned from their elders. They started by talking with each party to get a deeper understanding of each side of the case. At this stage, they did not accept any food or refreshments so they would remain impartial and could not be blamed of siding with one party. Because of this, they experienced fatigue, hunger and thirst in walking to the houses in Mapawa in their desire to help solve the problem.

After thoroughly studying the case, they called all parties concerned and told them of their judgment to exact four carabaos for the four deaths. They advised the parties that this was the better option to the expensive process of court litigation. The parties asked for a lighter fine, in pigs rather than carabaos to which everyone agreed. They set a date for a reconciliation ritual in which a plate was broken, and cords of a rattan vine were cut, symbolizing the repair of the conflict and restoration of peace.

The Talaandig women are also active in enforcing the community protocol on outsiders including government officials who want to enter their ancestral territory. They assert that outsiders observe the tribe's rules if they wish to enter the community.

The women further play a pivotal role in the Talaandig School of Living Tradition established in 1996 to help preserve the traditional culture, music and arts. This was to counter the influence of Western and modern culture which was prevalent at that time. The school was instrumental in preserving and transferring the culture and knowledge of the cultural experts to the youth. Tribal elders supported the effort and played the role of teachers.

One such teacher is Bai Magila, an expert dancer and a master chanter. She started dancing when she was 10 years old, and now in her 70s, she still dances and teaches dance to children, adults, young girls and boys every Monday in the School of Living Tradition. The master chanter also teaches the children their traditional song which she learned from her elders as she listened to their lullabies. She further imparts to the children common sense and ways of listening.

Another teacher is a master sewer and embroiderer. When she was a small girl, she saw her elders embroider and was interested in learning the craft and follow in her grandmother's footsteps. They performed a ritual so that she would learn it. Each design has a meaning, and not everyone is entitled to use them on their clothes. The sun, moon, and snake are used by those who are successful in resolving conflicts.

The Talaandig School of Living Tradition started with eight children who wanted to learn how to dance and to listen to stories of their ancestors. The women are volunteer teachers, who teach once a week without a salary. They teach children as young as one year old. They do not use books, only nature and the forest as their source of knowledge. Now, they also teach letters and numbers to prepare their children for public elementary school.

Good practices and lessons learned

Indigenous women's tasks in food production are important and multiple, demanding most of the women's time and effort in practically all phases of the agricultural production cycle, in sedentary as well as swidden farming. They possess traditional skills and knowledge in indigenous farming systems in all phases of production that are necessary to ensure viable and sustainable production. Their knowledge extends through the whole range of agriculture-related work and practices, from seed preparation, soil, plant and pest management to post-harvest processing and storage of food crops.

Especially important is the selection and storage of seeds for the next cropping season. Despite changes in agricultural conditions and contexts, traditional knowledge on seeds has remained a women's domain. They continue to perform their roles in seed selection and management. And these tasks and knowledge have been retained primarily due to the survival of traditional rice varieties and other seeds in the community.

Indigenous women play a key role in the practice of cooperative and exchange labor, which is a legacy of communal production relations and ownership of productive resources. Besides making farm work faster and easier, these practices, referred to by different terms in different cultures, strengthen a vital component of communal labor practice - the absence of labor exploitation.

The women's role in production is in addition to their daily household responsibilities of cooking, cleaning and childcare, which are mainly the women's responsibility.

Apart from agricultural production, women do other traditional occupations as secondary sources of income and livelihood such as backyard gardening, livestock raising, handicrafts, small-scale mining and other off-farm jobs like vending or daily wage odd jobs to augment the family income and tide them over during lean months.

Further, indigenous women play important roles in traditional healing practices that are important for indigenous communities with little access to modern western health care provided by the government. They also assist in conflict resolution

within their own communities as well as with other villages.

Finally, indigenous women are carriers of cultural and agricultural traditions of their communities. Innate in their reproductive role is their task of transmitting and inculcating these indigenous knowledge systems and community values to their children. Through this, the responsibility of nurturing the land, resources and culture is passed on to the next generation.

Key issues and challenges

Various problems and issues challenge the continuing practice by indigenous women of their traditional livelihood activities:

- The role of indigenous women in agricultural production is inadequately recognized and appreciated. Work that brings cash is generally appreciated more than work that is perceived as part of household labor. The labor of women who remain at home to tend the farm and the family is seen as part of the normal production process.
- Indigenous peoples' rights and access to land and resources and livelihood are denied by extractive industries and land conversion, displacing indigenous peoples and preventing them from practicing their traditional occupations and livelihood including farming and small-scale mining.
- Modernization and liberalization of agriculture undermines traditional sustainable agricultural system and causes extinction of indigenous varieties of crops and seeds.
- Small yield and low market price of products of traditional agriculture and other production systems are usually not sufficient to meet needs of the family, household and community. Many indigenous communities experience lean months for as much as four to eight months a year, during which food supply of rice and other staples is low. This forces indigenous men and women to migrate outside their communities in search for other livelihood opportunities.
- Erratic climate changes adversely affect the agricultural cycle, disrupting the synchronized agricultural calendar, making uncertain the proper time for the different stages of the cropping cycle, causing loss and damage to crops, giving rise to new and more pests, thus leading to food insecurity.
- Discrimination of women is still an issue since women agricultural and non-agricultural workers are usually paid lower wages than men. Among the Subanen, for example, work that is seen as more laborious deserves a higher pay, e.g., land preparation by men is paid higher than farm maintenance work by women. In the Cordillera, women are paid less bundles of rice for a

day's work in a farm than the men.

- With the depletion of forest resources, the practice of traditional healing and the healers are being lost. Traditional pest management practices using herbs from the forests are also slowly dying out.
- Traditional swidden farming had been sustainable in the past. After cultivation for two to three years, swidden farmers rest the land to allow regeneration and shift to new lots. However, availability of frontier land for swidden farming is dwindling with the influx of migrant population in search of more fertile lands. This has caused over-cultivation, loss of soil fertility and encroachment into forests.
- Indigenous women weavers are not recognized as workers in the informal economy, denying them rights to fair wages and benefits for their labor.

Recommendations

In light of the above discussion, the following recommendations are made towards improving the social and political environment to ensure that indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women, are free to exercise their right to practice their traditional livelihoods and other economic activities:

- Policy advocacy to strengthen indigenous peoples' practices of traditional livelihoods for sustainable development and promotion of their wellbeing in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Conventions 107, 169 and 111.
- Policy advocacy to prevent extractive industries like mines, dams and logging that undermine indigenous peoples' traditional livelihoods, marginalize indigenous peoples/women, and exploit their land and natural resources that are the basis of their traditional livelihoods.
- Recognize and make visible the contribution of indigenous women in agricultural production. Give fair and equal pay (in cash or kind) for their work in the farms.
- Encourage indigenous women to continue practicing traditional livelihoods and traditional knowledge in agriculture and skills in handicrafts that generate cash towards ensuring food security.
- Provide women with secure and equal access to and control over productive resources including credit, land and water, improved technology, machinery appropriate to their needs.
- Promote investment in food security programs that benefit small-scale food producers and strengthen their own capacity to design and implement these programs.
- Encourage the planting of diversified food crops and support local produc-

tion systems to ensure food security

- Encourage and equip indigenous farmers (both men and women) to apply sustainable and organic agriculture and conserve agro-biodiversity to sustain food security. Strengthen women's participation in conserving agro-biodiversity, preserve existing indigenous seeds and retrieve vanishing indigenous seeds through a functional seed-banking program at the community level.
- Reinforce positive traditional values of indigenous peoples, which help them cope with hardship, poverty, climate change. This can be done through education and cultural revival programs that could be integrated into formal and informal education systems and community-based living museums and learning centers and programs for active transmission of traditional knowledge. Gender education is also recommended for both men and women to promote mutual respect and recognition of gender roles in traditional occupations and livelihood activities.
- Implement programs to conserve remaining resources and biodiversity. Support indigenous systems of natural resource management, programs to revive soil fertility and wean the soil from dependence on agro-chemical inputs, and initiatives to shift to organic farming of traditional varieties.
- Alternative sustainable livelihoods should be designed by the community people themselves to ensure that these are appropriate, responsive to community needs and do not undermine existing indigenous values of solidarity and cooperation.
- Promote accessible and appropriate health care and education that recognizes and takes into consideration traditional healing practices of indigenous peoples.
- Recognize indigenous women weavers as a labor force, according them mandatory standards in the Labor Code such as fair wages, humane working conditions, benefits and the right to organize.
- Strengthen indigenous peoples' and indigenous women's organizations at the grassroots level and raise their capabilities to protect their traditional livelihoods, values, land and resources, biodiversity, resource management systems.
- Raise awareness and social consciousness on the rights of indigenous women as indigenous peoples, women and workers through the conduct of culturally sensitive and gender sensitive education programs.
- Form cooperatives among indigenous women weavers and other workers to develop their self-reliance and economic independence from financiers. Provide capital, develop markets and product design in support of indigenous handicrafts.

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An indigenous Bunong member of the honey group placing a tag number on a bee tree in the Mondulkiri protected forest. Tagging of bee trees is part of the sustainable harvesting monitoring and forest protection system of the honey group.

Photo by Amy Maling

From forest to market: NTFP¹ livelihood development trails of indigenous communities and their partners in Cambodia

by Femy Pinto

Introduction

Next to agriculture, harvesting and collection of non-timber forest products or NTFPs for food and household income help to sustain over 2,000 rural villages and over a million people in Cambodia, especially those living in or around forest areas.² Research has shown that NTFPs contribute anywhere between 10 percent to 50 percent livelihood value to forest-based communities.³ This is estimated to be anywhere between US\$30 to US\$400 annually per household. NTFPs serve as a vital safety net in times of food shortage. Lack of water, pest infestation and others have been noted to affect rice production. NTFP collection and wage labor are common coping strategies when food is scarce. For example in a study in Mondulkiri⁴ up to 80 percent to 90 percent of Bunong households studied in two communes collected liquid and dry resin to sell in order to have cash to buy rice. Resins, forest honey and honey products like beeswax, provide higher cash values to poor income forest-based communities of at least a \$100 annually.⁵

Collection of tree resins for cash income have progressively increased in Mondulkiri as well as in other indigenous communities in Preah Vihear and Kompong Thom provinces⁶ since the 1990s due to an increase in traders in the area. In oth-

1 Non-timber forest products are defined as “all biological products from forests other than timber such as wild fruits, wild honey, nuts, medicinal plants, resins, spices, canes, vines, fiber products and others that are extracted for human use.” de Beer, Jenne and Melanie McDermott (1996). *The Economic Value of Non-Timber Forest Products in Southeast Asia*. IUCN, Netherlands.

2 An estimate of over a million hectares are considered high-value forests in Cambodia (ie. evergreen or semi-evergreen forests) and are located within a 5 km radius of villages/settlements. Cambodia’s estimated forest cover is around 58%.

3 Community Forestry International, ed. *Proceedings of the Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) Workshop and Seminar*. 7-8 December 2006. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

4 Nikles, Brigitte. *Livelihood Strategies, Forest Resources and Conservation: Two Phnong Communes in Mondulkiri, Cambodia*. Masters thesis in Social Anthropology. December 2006. University of Zurich, Switzerland.

5 Community Forestry International, ed. *Proceedings of the Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) Workshop and Seminar*. 7-8 December 2006. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

6 Swift, Peter. Prey Lang. undated research.

ers, a similar increased trend of NTFP collection for cash income such as collection of sleng seeds and samrong (malva nut) has also been noted as buyer-traders emerge in the areas.⁷ Otherwise, such NTFPs are collected only for domestic needs. NTFPs for indigenous communities are also valuable sources of traditional medicine, household materials and a basic part of their diet such as wild fruits and wild vegetables including mushrooms, edible vines and bamboo shoots.

Harvesting of NTFPs is bound by culture and traditional beliefs, which serve a vital regulatory function in limiting extraction volumes, in generally ensuring use of least invasive harvesting methods, and in designating areas for open or prohibited use (e.g. spirit forests). When combined, these practices and beliefs which are still trusted and

supported in many communities, have resulted in sustainable subsistence level harvesting of many NTFPs. While there is an unwritten communal license to collect forest resources as much as they want and need, seldom are forest foods and other products collected excessively because it is seen as inappropriate and wasteful.⁸

Traditionally, indigenous people regard natural resources as communal property used to support a subsistence lifestyle. Now, increasingly however, private commercial interests are exploiting these same natural resources for profit. At the same time, the commercialization of forest products has also helped to create exploitative trading practices of forest products and wildlife to which indigenous communities are increasingly and inevitably being exposed.

In addition, logging activities and economic land concessions have created a major shift in the use and ownership of land and forests, subsequently shrinking the size of areas for traditional rotational farming practice and NTFP collection, thereby also affecting indigenous communities' food and income security. In a number of cases, economic land concessions by its virtue of private stewardship of the area have de facto barred indigenous peoples from practice of both traditional rotational farming and collection of NTFPs. Apart from external policy-related factors, land and resource scarcity, changes in land use patterns and customary use of forests are also impacts of migrant settlement, which has brought new agricultural and forest management practices to communities.

Under the current economic development policy, disproportionate attention is observed to be given more to the expansion of agriculture plantation investments,

7 in Koh Nhek district in Mondulkiri province for strychnos (sleng) seeds and in Veunsai district in Ratanakiri for samrong (malva nut).

8 Nikles, Brigitte. *Livelihood Strategies, Forest Resources and Conservation: Two Phnong Communes in Mondulkiri, Cambodia*. Masters thesis in Social Anthropology. December 2006. University of Zurich, Switzerland.

tourism and urban sector development, natural resource extraction-based industries such as hydropower and mining than to the development of common property resources and traditional livelihoods for and by forest-dependent indigenous communities. Some efforts in Cambodia today facilitate indigenous communities to navigate an increasingly market-driven system through the promotion of their traditional livelihoods and the assertion of their community rights to manage and sustainably use their natural resources.

Wild honey collection in Mondulkiri province

Mondulkiri province, located in the northeastern region of Cambodia, covers 1.5 million hectares of the country. It is forest-rich, 91 percent of the area is primary and secondary forest, which offers a conducive habitat for large mammals, birds and honey bees. Mondulkiri is also home to indigenous Bunong, comprising the majority population in the province. In a WWF socio-economic study and livelihood analysis conducted in cooperation with NTFP-EP,⁹ honey hunting has been found to be a common forest activity, particularly for own consumption because of the medicinal value of forest honey. Over the years, however, the increasing demand for honey products from village traders has prompted villagers to collect more honey to sell and not just for personal consumption. Bunong honey hunters will normally collect honey and resin at the same time they go to the forest. Honey, however, is collected seasonally while resin is available year-round, thereby the latter is more relied upon for emergency cash.

The dense forests of Mondulkiri with its tall trees and thick foliage provide a natural nesting place for honey-producing bees. Honey hunting is done individually as well as by groups, ranging from 3-6 members. Honey hunting in groups involves helping each other to scout for bee hives, collecting and preparing the materials to smoke the honey comb, and to guard and direct the climber of bee movement.

Currently, the honey hunters use only 10 percent of their harvests for their personal consumption and the rest are sold to traders at meager prices. In 2007, honey was sold to traders at a price as low as \$2.50/liter (10,000KHR). On a 3-month time frame (March-May), collection can be achieved at an average of 3 times per month. In Pichrada district, Bunong honey hunters in two communes that have been organized estimate that the volume of honey production in the area averages

9 Maling, Amalia. Socio-economic Profile of Communities around the Mondulkiri Protected Forest. November 2007; and Aquino, Arlynn, Livelihood Sustainability Analysis in Mondulkiri Province. 2008. WWF Greater Mekong Cambodia Country Programme. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

10,000 liters per season.

Sustainable *forest* management and *market* access support

A wild honey project was initiated in Mondulkiri to address the livelihood issues of the Bunong communities. By doing so, it was felt that this could also help to enhance forest management and protection in the area. A consultative project development process took over a year, entailing community discussions, field studies and participation in workshops. Bunong community representatives, accompanied by NGO staff, also went on an exposure trip to India to see a community based project around the development and local marketing of organic and natural products that are traditionally harvested and produced by the Adivasis in the Blue Mountains (or the Nilgiris region).

Then in 2008 with some funding support, two Bunong communities in Krangteh and Puchrey communes in Pichrada district, assisted by WWF and NTFP-EP,¹⁰ began a pilot project on sustainable wild honey harvesting and marketing. The project continues today, covering eight villages in the two communes with over 90 members and almost 200 families participating and benefiting in the project. A joint management structure has been agreed among the community organization leaders and members of Prey Rodang (in Puchrey) and Prey Krung Ratuon (in Krangteh) to manage and operate their joint honey business.

The project is located within the Mondulkiri Protected Forest (MPF), which is an expanse of forest covering over 300,000 hectares and is part of a larger protected area landscape – the Eastern Plains Dry Forest. The MPF is currently managed by WWF under an agreement with the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Environment.

Since the inception of the project in 2007, the Bunong communities of Prey Rodang and Prey Krung Ratuon with assistance from WWF, NTFP-EP and other partners have achieved a number of things:

1. They have strengthened their own small honey groups by organizing themselves at a community level for purposes of consolidating income, strengthening the management of their forest, and also fortifying their negotiating position with honey traders.
2. They have improved their traditional honey hunting practices by including

¹⁰ NTFP Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia is a regional collaborative network of NGOs and community based organizations that work with forest-based communities to strengthen their capacity in sustainable management of natural resources. NTFP-EP was conceived in 1996 and became a registered NGO (for its network secretariat base) in the Philippines in 2003. The programme started in Cambodia in 2006.

additional principles on sustainable harvesting (ie. not cutting the entire hive, which may kill the bees in the colony) and hygienic collection to ensure bee survival and improve both the volume and quality of their harvest.

3. They have designated bee trees for conservation or limited collection in order to ensure bee survival in the area.

4. They have tagged bee trees (over 2000 trees) and mapped their honey collection area (over 17,000 hectares), which helps them to track the honey source to monitor sustainable harvest, product quality as well as to monitor forest activities, including illegal and forest encroachment activities.

5. The organized groups have taken strong interest with other community members to enlist and apply for community protection forestry (or conservation forestry) with the Forestry Administration to further strengthen their tenure and use of forest resources in the area. The area applied overlaps with their honey collection area.

6. Their honey enterprise activities have built self and group confidence to present their concerns and issues to local authorities, the provincial government and line agencies.

7. They have triggered a shift in the terms of honey trade particularly at the village level, raising honey prices from a meager \$2.50/liter to up to \$6.00/liter, increasing their direct income benefit from sustainable honey collection.

8. They have raised the level of community solidarity in their villages, pride in their identity and traditional livelihood skills, and a greater sense of protectiveness in their forest resources. Since 2009, the communities have hosted an annual honey festival, which has revived forest collection rituals to open and celebrate the honey season.

9. Since 2008, the community has generated gross honey sales of at least \$15,000 under a locally labeled Mondulkiri Wild Honey, which is distributed in Mondulkiri province but has also reached markets in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap provinces.

10. They have taken leadership in the promotion of sustainable honey harvesting and

collective/community-based honey enterprise in a national network of honey collectors. The project has extended to other communities in other provinces through their hosting and accommodation of visitors from other communities to share their experiences and knowledge about sustainable honey collection. The leader of the honey group has also taken on an over-all leadership role in the national honey network by voting of the members.

11. Finally, as a key member of the national honey network, the honey hunters of Mondulkiri carry a strong voice in the national marketing and branding of Cambodian wild honey. Behind the marketing is a strong principle of sustainable harvesting, forest protection, and respect and support for traditional livelihoods particularly of indigenous communities.

Lessons and Challenges

1. Linking traditional livelihoods to the market stands more chances of gaining acceptance and active participation by communities than livelihood that introduces completely new techniques and practices to communities. It also cultivated more pride and confidence among them to organize themselves on a project that they felt was about something they have good knowledge and where they already have skills. The resources around which the livelihood is based are resources to which they have strong affinity.

2. Take things a step at a time. The pace of the project was not a race for results. Community members were not pushed to participate in the project and for those who joined, they also were not pushed to collect a lot of honey to sell and to sell only to the honey group. Each group started with less than 15 members and now has more than 40. Each group started with 200 liters of volume to consolidate and now is consolidating more than twice as much after seeing not just the income gain but also the step by step process of taking their product to the market.

3. Market engagement presented risks to communities in terms of maintaining and strengthening trust in each other particularly as money is involved. Mutual transparency and accountability between the leaders and members and between the honey group and the support staff and facilitators could not be emphasized enough as building trust is at the core of the honey enterprise. Activities and finances, issues and market feedback were reported and reflected upon at agreed meetings by all involved in the project.

4. While the progress in community management is underscored, the quality and review of assistance provided to communities is also crucial. Assistance to communities must be responsible, accountable and not self-motivated. The community must also be given the space to reflect and provide feedback on this matter.

5. The community's market engagement presented more vulnerability to competition and unscrupulous behaviour from market actors who grabbed the business opportunity in wild honey from Mondulkiri. In a particular instance, a local company used the community's project photo as their commercial honey label. In another instance, a trader snagged the opportunity to buy the first harvest of honey from the members while the group was still waiting for their buying capital to be

released from the bank. Due to some delay in the release of funds, some of the members sold some of their honey to the trader instead.

6. Community rights and good organization strengthen community roles in the marketplace, more so if this is supported by local authorities and line agencies under a harmonized legal framework that grants recognition of tenurial and usufruct rights of indigenous communities over their customary forests and natural resources.

7. Communities must have access to some support (ie. technical, moral, financial and political) before and while communities are engaging with markets. However, this support must only be facilitative and must not overrun the communities if the enterprise is meant to be truly theirs.

8. Know your market and respond to what the market wants. Such is true; however the market demand does not have to be absorbed by one supplier if it is beyond its current capacity. In this particular case, a networking strategy to other provinces was agreed in order to spread the risk and not to overburden the fledgling Mondulkiri Wild community honey enterprise. The network however maintains a common approach and principle of community-based honey enterprise development, adherence to sustainable harvesting, incorporating forest protection and management activities at community level and giving attention to sharing benefits equitably among community members.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The wild honey project in Mondulkiri adopted community-based, demand and supply-driven market engagement activities. The interventions included support in promoting indigenous knowledge and at the same time introducing improvements in harvesting techniques to enhance product acceptability in the market.

Wild honey collection is a traditional livelihood of indigenous communities in Mondulkiri, which is one of key evidences of their rightful tenure over the forests and of their traditional use of forest resources. It is highly recommended that the Royal Government of Cambodia's protected forest management framework is reviewed as a potential avenue to strengthen the role and tenure of indigenous communities in forest management, and at the same time to strengthen traditional livelihoods.

Finally, it will be beneficial to the indigenous community-run wild honey enterprises to garner regulatory support in terms of community's market entry and engagement.



Photo by Nabwong Chuaychurwong



Part Three

Summary Report: Asia
Regional Seminar on
Indigenous Peoples and
Traditional Livelihoods;
key issues, challenges and
recommendations



Summary Report

Asia Regional Seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Livelihoods

A: Introduction

The Asia Regional Seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Livelihoods, held on 16-18 August 2010 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, gathered 70 participants from national, regional and international organizations from 11 Asian countries. They represented key indigenous peoples (IP) organizations, government institutions with a special mandate on IP issues, UN organizations and donors. Cambodia government officials and ILO and UNDP representatives also attended the seminar, which was hosted by the Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), ILO Cambodia, and co-organized by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and UNDP RIPP.

The opening session was addressed by the Secretary of the Rural Development Ministry, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues member Raja Devasish Roy and ILO representative Albert Kwokwo Barume. The MRD Minister HE Chea Sophara and Siem Reap Governor HE Sou Phirin officially closed the seminar.

B: Objectives

The seminar's overall objective was to promote the recognition and strengthening of traditional livelihoods in Asia, within the broader context of indigenous peoples' rights as guaranteed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO Convention 169, and in relation to food security and climate change.

In addition, it aimed to highlight the challenges indigenous peoples confront in the pursuit of traditional livelihoods in the face of globalisation and the market economy. It explored positive trends and good practices from participating countries, such as recognition of collective rights to land and resources, and self-determined development, among others. This was to allow the participants to benefit and be motivated from the experiences of others, despite the many challenges ahead.

The discussions on good practices and lessons learned and their possible replication were expected to facilitate a process, whereby government and indigenous institutions could assess their specific needs for capacity building and technical assistance to create an enabling environment for the pursuit of traditional livelihoods

and sustainable development in indigenous territories.

C: Proceedings

i Methodology

The seminar employed a combination of participatory methods: country/case study presentation, workshops, plenary sessions, interaction, dialogue, open forum and discussion, and thematic group discussion. The workshops highlighted the opportunities and challenges, good practices and lessons learned from different countries in their approach to addressing traditional livelihoods, including land and resource rights and traditional knowledge. The country studies were followed by an open forum that further clarified issues and enabled sharing of experiences among the participants. A community visit to indigenous villages in northern Siem Reap province was also organized as well as a solidarity night and cultural events.

ii Content

The seminar focused on key aspects relating to traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples, including access to land and natural resources; traditional occupations, local governance, traditional institutions and knowledge, food security, climate change, concept of 'self-determined' development and the role and responsibilities of national governments in this regard. In total, eight panel presentations and discussions, and six working group discussions were held during the seminar.

(See attachment for the Seminar program)

iii Group Workshops

Two group workshops were held: the first focused on traditional livelihoods and indigenous peoples. The participants were divided into four groups which discussed key issues and challenges in the practice of shifting cultivation and gave recommendations for strengthening indigenous peoples' sustainable livelihood practices relating to shifting cultivation and actions for advocacy.

The second group workshop tackled four areas: strengthening indigenous peoples' rights to traditional livelihoods, promoting traditional livelihoods and self-determined development, replication of good practices of traditional livelihoods and adaptation, and food security. The participants also shared major challenges at the national level and discussed possible areas of capacity building.

(See section on group workshop results)

iv Community Visit

The participants went on a community visit to Rolum Run Thmey village located about 60 km from Siem Reap town and 12 km from national road 65 leading

to the Thai-Cambodia border. The village is inhabited by the Khmer and Kouy indigenous groups, who are mostly farmers who grow paddy rice, vegetables, chilies, and other cash crops as part of their livelihood. In a sharing session in the local Buddhist temple/pagoda, the participants and villagers talked about their livelihoods, traditional occupations and the general situation of the villagers.

The problem of the community is inadequate infrastructure development; they lack a good road and transportation system for marketing their agricultural products and to facilitate access to health services and schools. The villagers also face shortage of food due to less paddy production that forces them to rely largely on the forest for survival. The indigenous community has mostly lost their traditional culture, tradition and language. However, some elders can still speak their language and conduct traditional worship and other ceremonies.

v Closing Session

H.E Sou Phirin, Siem Reap Provincial Governor shared his impressions on the organization of the seminar in his province, which is considered the ancestral and historical land of the Cambodia people. He warmly welcomed the participants who came from different countries and enjoined them to visit the city and its temples.

H.E. Sim Son, Secretary of State of MRD summarized the two-day workshop and concluded by sharing the process of the workshop, presentations and the key message of the seminar for each day.

H.E. Chea Sophara acknowledged the efforts of his colleagues in MRD and ILO as well as other international organizations in organizing the seminar. He shared the Cambodian government's programmes and policies for the development of indigenous peoples, such as those relating to culture, education, vocational training, healthcare, environment, land, agriculture, water resources, infrastructure, justice, tourism and industry, mine and energy.

He also acknowledged that indigenous peoples in Cambodia currently face many challenges, such as health, education, and transportation lack even while they give attention to their development through development projects following the government poverty reduction strategy. They will continue to speed up development activities for them in accordance with the royal government's rectangular strategy and taking into account changes and progress in livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management and economic development in indigenous areas.

D: Achievements of Seminar

The seminar succeeded in bringing out the good practices as well as the economic and social benefits of traditional livelihoods and occupations of indigenous

peoples in Asia. These were highlighted in case studies conducted and presented by local researchers who shared their findings in the seminar. At the same time it identified the issues, gaps and challenges that indigenous peoples have to overcome in the continued practice of their traditional livelihoods.

The seminar also enabled participants to increase their understanding on the national implementation of laws and policies, which they can use to strengthen their network, lobby and advocacy work to promote recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in their respective countries. But it also brought out the need to increase the level of general understanding about traditional occupations under the framework of national laws, policies and international laws and instruments including ILO Conventions 169, 111, 107 and UNDRIP.

Finally, a strategy and action plans were formulated which the participants and their organizations/communities can take up to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to practice their traditional occupations and knowledge in their respective countries. ###

Attachments

1. Group Workshop and Recommendations
2. Seminar Programme

Annex I

Group Workshop and Recommendations

In two workshop sessions, the participants sought to elucidate the practice of traditional occupations particularly shifting cultivation, identify issues and challenges, and based on these draw up recommendations and actions for advocacy to strengthen indigenous peoples' rights to their traditional livelihoods.

Workshop 1

The first workshop focused on 1) key issues and challenges in the practice of shifting cultivation and 2) the ways and actions by which this traditional livelihood, which indigenous peoples have proven viable and sustainable, could be strengthened and supported.

Practice of Traditional Livelihoods

- The participants affirmed that shifting cultivation remains a traditional livelihood for many indigenous peoples. In Cambodia, the indigenous peoples are dependent on shifting cultivation, which generates 40-60% of their products. This is supplemented by collection of nontimber forest products (NTFP), husbandry, handicrafts and traditional business to support them

throughout the year. In some indigenous communities, the people engage in paddy field agriculture to produce rice in addition to shifting cultivation.

- In Bangladesh, Nepal and Northeast India, forest and land laws do not sufficiently recognise the right to practice shifting cultivation. In some countries, government programs even adversely affect the rights of shifting cultivators. Alternative livelihood options for instance are promoted through cash crop oriented programs, which adversely impact food security and create negative perceptions about shifting cultivation. Indigenous/traditional innovations, knowledge and practices in this system of farming are not documented properly at local and national level.
- In South Asia none of the laws and acts makes reference to shifting cultivation, and in some cases, their application has given rise to conflicts that affect its practice. International laws which recognize traditional occupations are also not enforced at the national level, and cases of violations are inadequately documented. ILO Conventions acknowledging rights of indigenous peoples to traditional occupations are either not recognized or not implemented.
- Vietnam and Laos have undertaken resettlement programs aimed at putting a stop to shifting cultivation. Vietnam further does not recognize indigenous ownership of lands and resources, which has weakened or caused traditional sustainable practices to disappear. Extinction of traditional knowledge related to shifting cultivation is due to enforced limitations/prohibition shifting cultivation.
- In Malaysia and the Philippines, dams, mines, large scale monocrop plantations, commercial agriculture and adoption of high-yielding varieties, protected area schemes and land use conversion have all distressed traditional occupations.

Issues and Challenges

- In Cambodia a major challenge indigenous peoples face is the limited enforcement of pertinent laws and policies. The government has already adopted many legal frameworks and policies that support indigenous peoples, such as the land law, forestry law, policy on indigenous peoples' development, guidelines on indigenous peoples' identity, legal entity registration, and sub-decree on procedure of collective land registration. However, their weak enforcement as well as non-identification and -recognition of indigenous communities on their lands and natural resources are creating problems for their traditional land use. This is compounded by the rapid commercialization of land. There is a trend of converting lands used for shifting cultivation to industrial plantations or modern farms. The low knowledge and skills of

indigenous peoples in new technologies and the poor system of information, public transportation and other public services available to them have driven out markets for their products.

- In addition to the above, indigenous communities in Cambodia are not sufficiently consulted, informed and involved in decision making, such as in the granting of land or mining concessions that affect their lands. Climate changes such as irregular rain, drought, flooding, insect infestation as well as poor agricultural equipment, high illiteracy and low skills are other big challenges affecting their traditional livelihood. Others are their lack of marketing knowledge, inadequate market services for their products and globalization.
- In South Asia, in addition to the absence of laws and policies on shifting cultivation, indigenous peoples in some countries suffer from insufficiency of legal recognition of their rights. Their rights to traditional occupations and customary laws are neglected or not recognized directly or indirectly at the local level.
- In some countries, there are no legal documents that mention shifting cultivation but some relevant legal instruments that do have also been conflicting in their application.
- The participants from Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia and China noted that shifting cultivation persists in varying degrees in most of Southeast Asia. But they identified the lack of legal recognition of indigenous peoples and their rights and government development programs as major problems. In Thailand some ethnic groups have not been recognized as Thai citizens, and in Vietnam and Laos indigenous peoples are considered ethnic minorities and have not been allowed to practice shifting cultivation after the implementation of new resettlement programs. In the Philippines and Malaysia, laws do not favor indigenous peoples, as the governments in these countries have constructed dams and undertaken mine exploration and large scale monocrop plantations on their lands. In China, the government policy prohibits indigenous peoples from cutting trees in upland areas. In all these countries the common problem is the non-recognition of indigenous land ownership, which has caused loss of land and resources and with these, disappearing traditional knowledge on shifting cultivation
- Some indigenous peoples however are taking action. In the Philippines they are asserting their rights to land, territory and resources through enforcement of customary laws. In Malaysia they have taken initiatives to campaign and advocate with government to address displacement of indigenous peoples due to development projects. In Yunnan, China the local government supports shifting cultivation as a means of addressing food security,

biodiversity conservation and ecotourism promotion. And in Thailand the indigenous peoples have started engaging with the government, which has resulted in the recognition and adoption of rotational cultivation as a traditional livelihood source of local communities. The government has recently adopted a policy on shifting cultivation but it has yet to be implemented. The national campaign activities have drawn the support of media and academe for shifting cultivation as a sustainable livelihood of indigenous communities.

Recommendations for promoting shifting cultivation

For indigenous communities, shifting cultivation is a model of traditional farming which ensures cultural identity, supports livelihood and maintains sustainable land and natural resource management. The following recommendations are thus made:

Laws and Policies to:

- Strengthen indigenous peoples' rights and customary laws to prevent encroachment of their lands and natural resources;
- Recognize their customary laws, forest laws, practice of shifting cultivation, and traditional knowledge as a scientific system for preserving forests and environment.
- Promote their rights to self determination and self-determined development;
- Strengthen collaboration/cooperation between government agencies, civil society and development partners, and reinforce laws/policies related to indigenous communities' rights and interests;
- Acknowledge traditional scientific knowledge based system and apply Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which recognizes innovations and practices of traditional knowledge;
- Ensure full consultation of indigenous communities before any development project or concession on their lands is implemented;
- Strengthen land uses of indigenous communities through formulation of rules and policies on land use management that will enable them to practice effective shifting cultivation.
- Reinforce law enforcement, and specific to Cambodia, speeding up collective land registration for indigenous peoples

Capacity Building:

- Conduct capacity building for government and indigenous peoples organizations on application of Conventions in relation to national and international mechanisms, and continuing advocacy on development needs and strategies including identifying and targeting relevant actors in shaping policies and changing negative perceptions on shifting cultivation. This should include

academe, private sector and other relevant sectors;

- Undertake massive campaign to promote the value of shifting cultivation in contributing to forest/biodiversity conservation and food security and in combating climate change. Related traditional knowledge and practices should be transmitted to indigenous youth through building their capacity in preserving shifting cultivation.
- Document, promote and support existing models in the region that respond to indigenous peoples' food security, forests, productivity, appropriate development, and others including government programs/policies.
- Do research on shifting cultivation to reshape misleading notions and views. Good practices and models could be identified and documented for the purpose.
- Specific to Cambodia, carry out capacity building at various levels to enhance skills, and legal extension by appropriate methodologies.

Workshop 2

The second workshop highlighted the following issues; 1) strengthening indigenous peoples' rights to traditional livelihoods, 2) promoting traditional livelihoods and self-determined development, 3) replication of good practices on traditional livelihoods and adaptation, and 4) food security.

Strengthening indigenous peoples' rights to traditional livelihoods

The participants tackled the key issues related to indigenous peoples' rights in each country, the mechanism to promote these rights, the method to strengthen the right to traditional livelihoods, and the ways to implement existing laws or policies.

In most of the countries indigenous peoples and their customary laws do not have legal recognition. While indigenous peoples are recognized by law in the Philippines, its implementation is very poor. In Bangladesh the customary laws play important roles in indigenous communities but these are not recognized, making access to justice difficult. In Malaysia customary laws are similarly not acknowledged nor given attention by the government. The challenge in Nepal is the non-recognition of indigenous peoples' traditional lands and traditional livelihood systems such as hunting and NTFP collection. In India, bureaucratic institutional requirements have reduced indigenous peoples to marginalized and tiny minorities. The indigenous population in Cambodia is likewise very small, thus they get less attention or are generalized with other populations in the country. In addition, existing laws and policies are not fully implemented.

Challenges

- Philippine laws recognize indigenous peoples rights (e.g. IPRA) but the

problem is their proper implementation and application.

- In Bangladesh customary laws are not recognized in national law, and restitution of indigenous peoples' lands and traditional livelihoods in areas outside of the Hill Tracts should be made
- In Malaysia (especially Sarawak) the implementation of UNDRIP is very poor.
- In Nepal, hunter-gatherers are not recognized and have no land rights.
- In India particularly in the Tripura state, the indigenous peoples are marginalized through various means such as impossible bureaucratic requirements; in claiming rights, they have to show documentation of three generations. Today indigenous peoples there have become microscopic minorities.
- In Cambodia only 1% of the population is indigenous, and the policy on indigenous peoples was made possible only through civil society action and through consultation, discussion and mobilization of all indigenous peoples. For further advancement, the UN system is needed to push indigenous peoples' rights.

Recommendations

The capacity of indigenous peoples should therefore be built and strengthened and towards this, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- Strengthen customary laws (which are invoked even in international law) to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples and enforce customary governance at the community level; Strengthen gender aspects in customary laws, and promote action/services on protection and fulfillment of indigenous rights;
- Study customary laws further and preserve knowledge systems. The elders should educate the youth on customary laws. In this regard, use innovative/creative ways, employ help of the media and develop strategies for cultural education of the youth.
- Create and establish an indigenous peoples network on customary laws that will meet regularly and look at how to strengthen and improve their local implementation; conduct review on why implementation is not carried out and do advocacy for customary law enforcement.
- Conduct capacity building such as paralegal training on fundamental rights in the constitution and other relevant rights recognized in national laws and policies.
- Build the capacity of government officials to mobilize resources and support indigenous peoples to establish their own system and institutions to ensure exercise of rights.

- Promote and respect international systems and mechanisms that promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples including the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), particularly on traditional knowledge and preservation of biodiversity, and the UNDRIP, with particular focus on Free Prior and Informed Consent .
- Train indigenous peoples in government and indigenous representatives to advocate for proper implementation of existing laws and policies.
- Strengthen the relationship and collaboration between indigenous peoples and NGOS to lobby with government to promote indigenous peoples' rights and implement existing laws and policies.
- Treat gender as a stand-alone issue and raise women's value across all levels – including increased women's representation in all sectors.
- Strengthen and build capacity of indigenous peoples' network to protect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples, to raise indigenous concerns and issues with government, and to advocate for better solutions.

Promoting Traditional Livelihoods and Self-Determined Development

The group discussed major issues relating to livelihoods of indigenous peoples, which is not limited to shifting cultivation but includes weaving, husbandry, healing, basketry, medicine, wine making, midwifery, shaman practices, pottery, blacksmithing, architecture, crafts and others. A prerequisite for these is land/territory as well as knowledge to sustain these traditional occupations. To conserve indigenous knowledge on how to weave, use herbal medicine, how to sing, trainers/instructors/ teachers are needed to impart these skills. The school curriculum, public information and decision making should support self-determined development for indigenous peoples.

The challenges remain to promote and support traditional livelihoods and self-determined development of indigenous peoples. In India, indigenous peoples lack government support for market promotion and access to their agricultural products, thus they are unable to get a good income from their bamboo production. In Cambodia they find it difficult to raise animals when they have no access to their traditional territories which are granted to private companies. The Karen in Thailand and indigenous peoples in the Philippines have a similar problem of inadequate markets and promotion for their woven products. The same is true for the traditional music of CHT in Bangladesh and in Vietnam; this is disappearing due to insufficient government promotion and support.

Traditional hunting is also forbidden in most of the countries, which is leading to a shortage of food supply for indigenous peoples and loss of associated traditional knowledge. In Vietnam they do not have access to forests and therefore are unable to collect herbal medicines; this has also resulted in the disappearance of

traditional knowledge and health care system.

Recommendations

The development process must comply with UNDRIP, particularly the principle of free prior and informed consent. The right to self determination is also vital to allow indigenous peoples to participate in decision making at all levels. Other recommendations are:

- Promote and respect indigenous peoples' self governance at different levels and involve them in the decision making process for all development activities affecting them;
- For government, civil society and private sector to support and promote indigenous market systems, provide opportunity through a holistic approach to develop a market economy for indigenous peoples, and develop sectoral policies on health and education to promote their livelihoods.
- For government to guarantee in national law the rights of indigenous peoples to land, territory and resources, to freely practice their traditional knowledge and livelihoods for their own development; and to support their traditional livelihoods through sufficient budget allocation;
- Involve indigenous leaders, activists and organizations in developing programs and policies for indigenous peoples' development at national level.
- Respect and consider UNDRIP in any program and policy relating to development of indigenous peoples on national level.

Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation

The issues and challenges concerning food security are common to all the countries, and these are related to climate change, lands and natural resources, decrease in shifting cultivation, population increase/transfer, and effects on culture and tradition. The indigenous peoples are among those most affected by climate change and its impacts, but they also lack knowledge and have limited understanding of the issue and its impacts.

The indigenous peoples are good in natural resource management, producing natural and organic foods that supply the market with healthy products. Climate change however is causing drought, flooding and other changes which are decreasing farm production and forest resources, damaging crops and affecting agricultural activities. In some countries, so-called development activities are being undertaken by private companies and these are taking place in indigenous territories. Such activities are adversely affecting indigenous peoples' development, customary laws, traditional knowledge and practices. As a result, they are losing their traditional systems, illegal migration to their territories is rising, and their traditional livelihoods are eroding, causing food insecurity.

Recommendations

- More capacity building on disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation
- More capacity building and awareness raising programs on climate change to be provided by the government and NGOs.
- Government initiatives for long term livelihood programs based on traditional occupations to support food security. The government should extend sufficient funds and transfer technology to indigenous peoples to cope with climate change.
- Better disaster management programs particularly for indigenous peoples to secure their food supply in times of natural disasters caused by climate change and development projects like dams.
- Advocacy and lobby for government recognition and improvement of shifting cultivation and NTFP collection which ensure food security of indigenous peoples. ###

Annex II

Seminar Program

First Day

1. Opening Session: national anthem, introduction of participants, opening prayer, welcome remarks by organizers and key/opening message from the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development
2. Overview on indigenous peoples and traditional livelihoods by Ms Rukka Sombolinggi, UNDP RIPP Thailand
3. Overview on traditional occupations and relevant Conventions by Ms Stefania Errico, ILO Geneva
4. Shifting cultivation as a traditional livelihood in Bangladesh and the impacts of climate change by Goutam Kumar Chakma, Consultant. Bangladesh.
5. Traditional Livelihoods and ILO Convention 111: the case of shifting cultivation in Nepal by Kamal Prasad Aryal, ICIMOD Nepal
6. Traditional economies in Nepal by Fatik Bahadur Thapa, Nepal
7. Group workshop: Key issues and challenges in the practice of shifting cultivation; recommendations for strengthening IP sustainable livelihood practice relating to shifting cultivation and key messages and actions for advocacy

Second Day

Panel presentations: Traditional livelihoods in relation to food security; Roles of indigenous women, and Adaptation to climate change

1. Traditional livelihoods in relation to food security by Dr Prasert Trakansv-phakon, IKAP Thailand
2. Roles of women in traditional livelihoods by Ms Jill Carino, CPA Philippines
3. Climate change, REDD and rotational farming – by Ms Luong Thi Truong, CSDM Vietnam
4. Transmission of traditional knowledge on traditional livelihoods to the younger generations – Ms Anne Lasimbang, PACOS Trust Malaysia
5. Traditional occupation and livelihood practices in Northeast India and the impact of conflict: a case study in Ukhrul District, Manipur by Ms Thingreiphi Franthing
6. Traditional livelihood interphasing with market economy in Cambodia; good practices, challenges and recommendations by Ms Femy Pinto, NTFP Cambodia
7. Resin tree and life of indigenous people by Mr. Heng Bunthoeun, Cambodia
8. Promote legal protection for indigenous traditional livelihood in Cambodia by H.E Yim Chung, Director of DEMD, Cambodia
9. Group Workshop: strengthening IP rights on traditional livelihoods, promoting traditional livelihoods and self-determined development; Replication of good practices of traditional livelihoods and adaptation; Food security

Third Day

10. Community solidarity visit
11. Closing session; closing remarks by H.E. Chea Sophara, Minister of Rural Development, Cambodia.

