

SELF- DIRECTED STUDY TITLE :

Variation in Farming Practices as related to
Resource Availability : A Case Study in Tasseng
Dongbang Laos

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the pattern of farming practices carried out by farmers in a rural area of Lao PDR. Specific objectives of this study were: (1) to investigate the pattern of existing farming practices in the study area, (2) to identify the key factors that are strongly influencing farming practices, and (3) to understand the pattern of farmers' decision making in farming practices based on above factors.

This study used a case study approach in a combination with agroecosystem analysis methodology. The data was obtained from secondary sources. The study site covered five villages of Dongbang subdistrict in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

The study revealed that most farmers in the study area were subsistence farmers. Farming activities were carried out based on rainfall. Paddy land was the most important resource for farming. Only small paddy area was irrigated. Rice cultivation was therefore the main activity of the livelihood system.

There were three types of paddy land: lower paddy fields with irrigation, moderately upper paddy fields and upper paddy fields next to upland. All upper paddy fields were under rainfed conditions. The size and location of individual paddy fields seemed to be related to the length of time that holders had been settled in the village.

Three types of farmers were classified by local key informants, according to economic status, they were relatively rich, medium and poor farmers. Among the three type household resources vary in terms of size and location of paddy land, and capital base. The variation in farming practices was related to the availability of resources that farmers possessed. It was observed that they utilized their land and capital in order to accomplish the family's objectives. Farming problems that farmers faced were also different among the three farmer types. The main factors that influenced farming practices were the limitations of size and location of paddy land, irrigation water, and capital base.

Farmers tended to take risk minimization as found in the case of rice variety selection.