

Thesis Title Institutional Arrangements in Communal Resource Management :
A Case Study of a Karen Village in a Protected Area
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ABSTRACT

The study of "Institutional Arrangements in Communal Resource Management : A Case Study of a Karen Village in a Protected Area" has its objectives to (1) explore the functioning and adaptation of the existing communal forest and land resource management system, (2) examine how institutional arrangements affect the capacity of community to engage in self-governance and self-management of common-pool resources, (3) analyze the effect of institutional changes in communal resource management system, and (4) recommend the appropriate institutional arrangements for collective action in co-management regime.

Field research is conducted in Sanepong village in Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary, Sangklaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province for the period of 4 months -- November 1996 - February 1997. Qualitative approach is used in this study with a number of methods including participant-observation, informal interview, in-depth interview, focus group discussion and participatory rural appraisal. This study employs the dynamic framework for analyzing the common property presented in Oakerson (1992 : 41-62).

It is found that the Karen communal resource management system creates livelihood security and provides mechanisms for the equitable use of resources with minimum

conflict. Rules of resource use, production sharing, and conflict resolution in resource allocation are agreed upon by all members. The system encourages patterns of agricultural practice that support ecosystem conservation and resource sustainability. In addition, the system also continually adapts itself under natural, technological and labor constraints in order to make the community and ecosystem survive.

According to Oakerson's framework, four attributes are discussed in this study : physical and technical attributes; decision making arrangements; patterns of interaction; and outcomes. It is found that obvious topographical village boundary and clear identification of users are the factors that encourage the strength of the communal resource management system. The institutional arrangements are developed from the Karen beliefs in animism in nature, ancestral spirits, and Buddhism, all of which jointly create customary rules in resource use. The violators of the rules have to face the spirit's penalty which means fruitless production, illness, death, or sin. The institutional arrangements exist under the patterns of interaction among villagers who venerate the nature, cooperate with each other and coordinate with other outside agents, as well as adapt themselves in response to external influences.

According to the insiders' appraisal, the most important problem that creates crucial impacts on the communal resource management system is the demarcation of the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary to cover the village and communal forest areas. The demarcation causes the breakdown of communal rights in resource use and the dependence of the village on the wildlife sanctuary regulations. Additionally, some of the villagers themselves do not pay enough attention to strictly practice their rituals, according to their beliefs. The villagers recognize the changes and propose ways to solve the problems by revitalizing their culture and beliefs in order that the communal resource management system, as well as the ecosystem, can be sustained. They also suggest that the state and communal forest management systems should be co-managed to make them more coordinating for a more efficient conservation of natural resources.