

Daovieng Sitthirath 2011: Forest Resource Utilization of Ban Luk 32 Community, Xay District, Oudomxay Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Master of Science (Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resources Management), Major Field: Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resources Management, Interdisciplinary Graduate Program. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Tipparat Pongthanapanich, Ph.D. 96 pages.

This study analyzes the socio-economic condition, forest resource utilization and conservation awareness of the ethnic groups in Luk 32 Village, Xay District, Oudomxay Province, Northern Laos. The main data were obtained from a household survey using a questionnaire. There were 100 samples from five ethnic groups. The basic statistics and qualitative data were analyzed.

Around 90.00 percent of the respondents are male. The results show that 77.00 percent of the respondents did not go to school or finished only primary school; the majority of the sample households had big families of six or more persons especially in Hmong, Khamu and Laolum; the average annual household income was 40,144.88 baht with Laolum and Hmong having a relatively high average household income; and the households' occupations were harvesting wood and non-wood forest products, employment, and farming. The majority of Khamu and Hmong's households earned a living by harvesting the forest products (85.71 and 75.00 percent). The sample households harvested 11 types of forest products namely fuel wood, bamboo shoots, broom grass, forest vegetables, mushroom, wild fruit, wildlife, herbs, rattan shoots, edible insects, and orchids. The use value of 3,623,651.00 baht/year or 11,467.25 baht/household/year was estimated. This comprises the value generated from household consumption of the products of 5,140.81 baht (Hmong, Khamu and Phunoi from high to low, respectively) and from sale of the products valued at 6,326.44 baht (Khamu, Hmong and Loalum). On the three indicators of the conservation awareness i.e. 1) optimal forest resource use, 2) forest protection, and 3) forest resource rehabilitation, it was found that the level of awareness of each group was not significantly different for each indicator. A high percentage of respondents had medium and high levels of awareness (51.00 and 32.00 percent, respectively) Loalum had the highest percentage of awareness (55.56 percent) and Phunoi had the lowest (35.29 percent).

The results imply that the people in the community of Lak 32 Village, Xay District, Oudomxay Province, Northern Laos mainly rely on the forest products for livelihood. On the other hand, the study shows that some of the ethnic groups earn incomes from non-forest based sources; this might relieve the pressure on the resource, lessen resource use competition, and reduce forest degradation. People's knowledge and understanding of forest resource utilization would contribute to better conservation awareness. The concerned government agency should continuously provide relevant knowledge and raise awareness of the community. This would conserve resources by promoting its optimal and sustainable use.

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Thesis Advisor's signature